

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



“Behold,
I Come Quickly”

Vol. 93, No. 3

July–September, 2017

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

Illustrations: Good Salt on the front cover and Map Resources on pp. 4, 46, 80; Sermon View on pp. 30, 80.

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Foreword

The subject of the second coming of Christ—which is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, has been the blessed hope of the church in all ages. It is the keynote of the last message—the present truth—to be given to the world.

“An understanding of the hope of Christ’s second coming is the key that unlocks all the history that follows and explains all the future lessons.”—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

As a people who profess to be anxiously waiting for the coming of Christ, we should be watching every sign pointing to this event. This will be the greatest event in the history of the world. Although we are not to attempt to set a date for our Lord’s return, we are told that, by watching the signs given by the prophets, the apostles, and by Christ Himself (especially in Matthew 24), we should know that the second coming of Christ is very near—today it is even at the door.

According to the apostle Peter, we are not only to look for, but also to “hasten” the coming of the Lord (2 Peter 3:12). We can actually “hasten” His coming by being prepared to meet Him (Luke 12:36–38; Acts 3:19, 20; 2 Peter 3:14) and by doing the work that He has entrusted to us (Luke 19:12, 13, 15; 14:23; Matthew 24:14). If we neglect to do so, we will be held responsible for “delaying” the coming of the Lord. While we are studying these lessons, all Sabbath School students will have a good opportunity to examine themselves individually in the light of these questions: By my life, have I been “hastening” or “delaying” the coming of the Lord? If I have good reasons to believe that I have been “delaying” His coming, how can I make a U-turn in my life and start doing, wholeheartedly, what the Lord wants me to do? Clear answers to these questions will be found in these lessons.

It is not enough for us to believe in the soon coming of Christ, to know everything written about it, and to preach it to others. There are very many professed believers in the threefold message who are “in the broad way” while professing to be “traveling the narrow way.” They are deceiving themselves and others. Their inconsistency leads sinners to harden their hearts with the excuse: “ ‘There is no distinction between us. We are alike; we dress, and talk, and act alike’ ” (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 128). Such will be “weighed in the balance and found wanting” (*Early Writings*, p. 37). The present lessons show us how we can avoid this type of spiritual shipwreck.

May the study of these lessons lead each of us to deeper consecration as we come closer to Christ and closer to one another. Let us all unite in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit, for the closing of the work, so that we may be prepared in eager expectation as were the true people of God in 1844.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Dear Brethren, Sisters, and Friends
around the world:

As a people who are preparing for the second coming of Jesus, we owe a debt of gratitude to our forefathers who under the providence of God founded a country that affords the freedom of religion for all individuals. The United States of America is the third most populated country in the world with 324,227,000 residents. The nation's capital is located in Washington, District of Columbia, and is connected with the states of Virginia and Maryland by a 64-mile circumferential roadway. Being home to about 650,000 residents, including the national governmental officials, foreign diplomats and their families, and a weekly population of more than one million commuters from the Virginia and Maryland suburbs, Washington, D.C. is the 24th most populous city within the United States and the 7th largest metropolitan area city. This large city with its economic, political, and cultural commerce is fertile ground for the spreading of the gospel.

The work of reformation began in Washington, D.C. area in the late 1970s with only a handful of members. In 1980 a small house was purchased in Temple Hills, Maryland (a suburb of the District) and adapted as a church. This small chapel has served as a beacon of light in this large area. Many brethren have come through Temple Hills and helped build the ministry in this area. The chapel, which is being used for many years and accommodates approximately 30 people, has become too small for us to worship. With a growing membership and the regularly attending visitors, we are in need of a larger building. After much prayer and fasting, a decision was made to purchase a larger facility, strategically located in this metropolis city, permitting us to better fulfill the commission of our Lord to "Go ye therefore, and teach ALL nations" (Matthew 28:19, emphasis supplied). The gospel proclamation must spread to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and win souls for the Lord.

We appeal to all Sabbath School students to help us with this project in raising a new beacon of light in the capital of the United States. May God reward you richly as you donate liberally to His cause. We thank you in advance for your generous contribution to this worthy plan.

Your brethren and sisters from Temple Hills



A Glorious, Joy-Inspiring Hope

“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 14, last part).

“To God’s pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in ‘the region and shadow of death,’ a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is ‘the resurrection and the life,’ to ‘bring home again His banished.’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 299–303.

Sunday

June 25

1. ANIMATED BY GOD’S PROMISES

- a. Very early in history, what was the seventh patriarch from Adam shown in vision—and how did it motivate him in a powerful way? Jude 14, 15.

“By the spirit of prophecy [God] carried [Enoch] down through the generations that should live after the Flood and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. . . .

“In prophetic vision he was instructed concerning the death of Christ and was shown His coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave. He also saw the corrupt state of the world when Christ should appear the second time—that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation, denying the only God and the Lord Jesus Christ, trampling upon the law, and despising the atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor, and the wicked banished from the presence of the Lord, and destroyed by fire.

“Enoch became a preacher of righteousness, making known to the people what God had revealed to him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 85, 86.

2. JOYOUS CONFIDENCE

- a. Describe the way God's people in Old-Testament times expressed their hope in Christ's second coming. Psalms 50:1-4; 96:11-13.
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"The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 300.

- b. With what exalted language did the prophet Habakkuk describe Jesus' return? Habakkuk 3:3-6.
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- c. What comforting, encouraging promise is repeated to New Testament believers, and how should this influence us in a mighty way? Acts 1:10, 11.
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"The Saviour's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim."—*Ibid.*, p. 302.

"[Acts 1:11 quoted.] Precious, indeed, was this promise to those sorrowing disciples, that they should again see Jesus who was greatly beloved by them all. Precious also is this promise to every true follower of Christ. None who truly love Jesus will be sorry that He is coming again. And as they approach nearer to the coming of the Son of man, the true lovers of Jesus will look forward with joyous hope and will seek to get all ready to behold Him whom their souls loveth, who died to redeem them.

"Jesus is coming! But not to listen to the woes of mankind, and to hear the guilty sinner confess his sins, and to speak pardon to him; for everyone's case will then be decided for life or death. Those who have lived in sin will remain sinners forever. Those who have confessed their sins to Jesus in the sanctuary, have made Him their friend and have loved His appearing, will have pardon written for all their sins, and they, having purified their souls 'in obeying the truth,' will remain pure and holy forever."—*The Youth's Instructor*, April 1, 1854.

3. WORTHY OF OUR SERIOUS PREPARATION

- a. How can we gain courage from the hope expressed by Paul? Titus 2:11–13.
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“We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world.”—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

“God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While the attention of worldlings is turned to various enterprises, ours should be to the heavens; our faith should reach further and further into the glorious mysteries of the heavenly treasure, drawing the precious, divine rays of light from the heavenly sanctuary to shine in our hearts, as they shine upon the face of Jesus. . . .

“The desire of our Lord is that we should be watching, so that when He cometh and knocketh we may open to Him immediately.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 194, 195.

- b. How will Jesus appear to those who are eagerly awaiting His return? Hebrews 9:28 (last part).
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“Christ, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear ‘without sin unto salvation’ (Hebrews 9:28), to bless His waiting people with eternal life.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 485.

“Jesus is coming as He ascended into heaven, only with additional splendor. He is coming with the glory of His Father, and all the holy angels with Him, to escort Him on His way. Instead of the cruel crown of thorns to pierce His holy temples, a crown of dazzling glory will deck His sacred brow. He will not then appear, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; but His countenance will shine brighter than the noonday sun. He will not wear a plain seamless coat but a garment whiter than snow—of dazzling brightness.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, April 1, 1854.

4. LONGING FOR HIS RETURN

- a. What message in Luther's sermons resonated with the teaching of Paul with regard to the final-judgment hour? Hebrews 9:27.

"Luther declared: 'I persuade myself verily, that the day of judgment will not be absent full three hundred years. God will not, cannot, suffer this wicked world much longer.' 'The great day is drawing near in which the kingdom of abominations shall be overthrown.' "—*The Great Controversy*, p. 303.

- b. What conviction did other Reformers have, and what is likewise to be our main priority today? Revelation 16:15.

" 'This aged world is not far from its end,' said Melancthon. Calvin bids Christians 'not to hesitate, ardently desiring the day of Christ's coming as of all events most auspicious'; and declares that 'the whole family of the faithful will keep in view that day.' 'We must hunger after Christ, we must seek, contemplate,' he says, 'till the dawning of that great day, when our Lord will fully manifest the glory of His kingdom.'

" 'Has not the Lord Jesus carried up our flesh into heaven?' said Knox, the Scotch Reformer, 'and shall He not return? We know that He shall return, and that with expedition.' Ridley and Latimer, who laid down their lives for the truth, looked in faith for the Lord's coming. Ridley wrote: 'The world without doubt—this I do believe, and therefore I say it—draws to an end. Let us with John, the servant of God, cry in our hearts unto our Saviour Christ, Come, Lord Jesus, come.' "—*Ibid.*

"The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message.

"The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness. . . .

"It cannot now be said by the Lord's servants, as it was by the prophet Daniel: 'The time appointed was long' (Daniel 10:1). It is now but a short time till the witnesses for God will have done their work in preparing the way of the Lord."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 406.

5. ACTIVELY WAITING FOR THE DAY OF PROMISE

- a. Explain the responsibility of all who are serious about meeting the Master in peace when He returns. Amos 4:12 (last part); Zephaniah 2:3.

“Christ says, ‘I know thy works’ (Revelation 2:2). He knows whether you are living a life of perfection and if you love to talk and think of Him, and whether it is your joy to praise Him. Do we expect to get to heaven at last and join the heavenly choir? Just as we go into the grave we will come up as far as the character is concerned. . . . Now is the time for washing and ironing. It is the time to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“When the lawyer came to Christ and asked, ‘What shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ the answer was, ‘Keep the commandments.’ Here a positive question is asked by the lawyer, and he receives an answer just as positive.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 262.

- b. What will be the deep sentiment of all who wholeheartedly embrace Christ’s promise that He will come back soon? Revelation 22:20.

“I want to honor Him that sitteth on the throne. I want my voice to echo and re-echo through the courts of heaven. Will you be there? Then you must educate your voice to praise Him on earth, and then you can join the heavenly choir and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. God help us, and fill us with all fullness and power, and then we can taste of the joys of the world to come.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 128.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should I consider about the depth of my longing for Jesus’ return?
2. Why are the promises concerning Jesus’ return to provide us strength?
3. Why is it important to cultivate a real desire to share this truth with others?
4. How did the 16th century Reformers inspire faith in Christ’s return?
5. We are saved by faith, so what reveals genuine commitment in our faith?

Signs of Christ's Return

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31).

"Christ had bidden His people watch for the signs of His advent and rejoice as they should behold the tokens of their coming King."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 308.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 31–38, 304–316, 333, 334.

Sunday

July 2

1. A PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS

- a. What prediction did the Son of man make about the grand temple existing in His day—an event the disciples could not fathom? Matthew 24:1, 2.

"As Christ's attention was attracted to the magnificence of the temple, what must have been the unuttered thoughts of that Rejected One! The view before Him was indeed beautiful, but He said with sadness, I see it all. The buildings are indeed wonderful. You point to these walls as apparently indestructible; but listen to My words: The day will come when 'there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 627.

- b. What questions intrigued the disciples, and how was this intermingled with Christ's prophecies concerning the end of the world? Matthew 24:3.

"With the overthrow of Jerusalem the disciples associated the events of Christ's personal coming in temporal glory to take the throne of universal empire, to punish the impenitent Jews, and to break from off the nation the Roman yoke. The Lord had told them that He would come the second time. Hence at the mention of judgments upon Jerusalem, their minds reverted to that coming."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 25.

2. PROPHECY FULFILLED AFTER CHRIST'S ASCENSION

- a. What warning should we heed from the spiritual implications of the fate of the temple in A.D. 70, just as Jesus had prophesied? Isaiah 30:12, 13.
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"The blind obstinacy of the Jewish leaders, and the detestable crimes perpetrated within the besieged city, excited the horror and indignation of the Romans. . . . In their fury the soldiers hurled blazing brands into the chambers adjoining the temple, and then with their swords they slaughtered in great numbers those who had found shelter there. Blood flowed down the temple steps like water. Thousands upon thousands of Jews perished. Above the sound of battle, voices were heard shouting: 'Ichabod!'—the glory is departed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 33.

"Both the city and the temple were razed to their foundations, and the ground upon which the holy house had stood was 'plowed like a field' (Jeremiah 26:18)."—*Ibid.*, p. 35.

- b. Name some interesting points we can glean from how only those who had heeded the words of Jesus were spared. Luke 21:20–22; Psalm 27:5.
-

"For seven years a man continued to go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, declaring the woes that were to come upon the city. . . . This strange being was imprisoned and scourged, but no complaint escaped his lips. To insult and abuse he answered only: 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' 'woe, woe to the inhabitants thereof!' His warning cry ceased not until he was slain in the siege he had foretold.

"Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign. [Luke 21:20–22 quoted.]"—*Ibid.*, p. 30.

"[Luke 21:20–22 quoted.] This warning was given to be heeded forty years after, at the destruction of Jerusalem. . . .

"'Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day,' Christ said (Matthew 24:20). . . . Forty years after His crucifixion [the Sabbath] was still to be held sacred. For forty years the disciples were to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 630.

3. A PROPHETIC TIME PERIOD—THE DARK AGES

- a. What would eventually come upon the believers after the general destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Matthew 24:21, 22.
-

“From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth’s history—the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ’s view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 630, 631.

- b. How was this same historic period of tribulation depicted in prophecy in the book of Revelation? Revelation 11:2, 3; 13:5.
-

- c. What scriptural guideline about prophetic time helps us understand how to calculate mathematically the actual length of this period, keeping in mind that the the prophetic reckoning is a 30-day month with 360 days each year? Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6.
-

“The suppression of the Scriptures under the dominion of Rome, the terrible results of that suppression, and the final exaltation of the word of God, are vividly portrayed by the prophetic pencil. To John the exile on lonely Patmos was given a view of the 1260 years during which the papal power was permitted to trample upon God’s word.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 188.

“The forty and two months are the same as the ‘time and times and the dividing of time,’ three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people. This period began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity’ (Revelation 13:10).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

4. THREE LANDMARK EVENTS

- a. Just before the end of the 1260-year-prophetic-time period (since the actual persecution was “shortened”), what signs in nature showed that Jesus’ return was soon? Matthew 24:29, 30; Mark 13:24–26; Revelation 6:12, 13.

- b. Examining these prophecies one by one: According to the record of Inspiration and history, which occurred first? Revelation 6:12.

“In fulfillment of this prophecy [of Revelation 6:12] there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 304.

- c. How was the prophecy about the sun and the moon fulfilled? Mark 13:24.

“The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened.”—*Ibid.*, p. 306.

“May 19, 1780, stands in history as ‘The Dark Day.’ Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as given by eyewitnesses, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, . . . ‘The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come’ (Joel 2:31).”—*Ibid.*, p. 308.

- d. How was the prophecy of the stars fulfilled? Mark 13:25; Revelation 6:13.

“[Revelation 6:13 quoted.] This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfillment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded.”—*Ibid.*, p. 333.

5. PROVIDED TO MAKE AN IMPACT

- a. Besides the three great natural events Christ gave as signs of His soon return, name some other signs, and explain how they are rapidly fulfilling more and more. Matthew 24:6–12; Mark 13:7–9; Luke 21:9–11, 25–27.
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- b. What should we recall in seeing these signs? Luke 17:26; Jeremiah 8:11, 12.
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“Calamities, earthquakes, floods, disasters by land and by sea, will increase. God is looking upon the world today as He looked upon it in Noah’s time. He is sending His message to people today as He sent it in the days of Noah. There is in this age of the world a repetition of the wickedness of the world before the flood.”—*The Advocate*, December 1, 1900.

- c. Why can we be encouraged by prophecies being fulfilled? 1 Samuel 12:16; 1 Peter 2:9.
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“Those who accepted the advent doctrine were roused to the necessity of repentance and humiliation before God. Many had long been halting between Christ and the world; now they felt that it was time to take a stand. ‘The things of eternity assumed to them an unwonted reality. Heaven was brought near, and they felt themselves guilty before God.’ . . . Christians were quickened to new spiritual life. They were made to feel that time was short, that what they had to do for their fellow men must be done quickly.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 340.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In A.D. 70, why did God allow the magnificent temple to be destroyed?
2. Why was the lone man pronouncing woe against Jerusalem not spared?
3. How do we know that a day in prophetic time often equals a year?
4. Name the dates of the great three-landmark-signs of Christ’s soon return.
5. As I see the signs fulfilling, what impact should I allow it to make on me?

Messages of Warning for Our Day

“Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:9).

“The voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 166.

Suggested Readings: *The Great Controversy*, p. 270;
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 156–170.

Sunday

July 9

1. THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE

- a. To what time in the history of the world did Jesus compare our days? Matthew 24:37–39; Genesis 6:5, 13.

“The same sins exist in our day which brought the wrath of God upon the world in the days of Noah. Men and women now carry their eating and drinking to gluttony and drunkenness. This prevailing sin, the indulgence of perverted appetite, inflamed the passions of men in the days of Noah and led to general corruption, until their violence and crimes reached to heaven, and God washed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 163.

- b. What do believers have to face today? 2 Peter 3:3–6.

“The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

2. LEARNING FROM A STARTLING EVENT

- a. Besides comparing these last days to Noah's time, to what other historical scene did the Lord compare the hour of His return? Luke 17:28–30.
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"The state of the world now is similar to that which existed in the days of Lot, when Sodom's corruption called for the angel's visit to that wicked city, to see whether the cries coming up before heaven were of such a character that the inhabitants of beautiful Sodom—a city that had been so highly favored of God—had so corrupted their ways before the Lord that there was no hope of their redemption. God's wrath was revealed so signally because the corruption of the Sodomites was so deep."—*Southern Union Worker*, October 16, 1913.

- b. What sin was prominent in Lot's day? Genesis 19:5–7; Romans 1:21, 26, 27.
-

"[The Sodomites] crowded about the house of Lot, and as the crowd increased, vile speeches were made which revealed the state of corruption that existed among the people, and the worst suggestions were received and acted upon. The crowd became more clamorous in their cries to have Lot bring forth the strangers to them; for they had become so base through the indulgence of evil passions, that every good thought had been uprooted, and reason was so clouded that they would even do violence to the angels of heaven."—*The Signs of the Times*, October 9, 1893.

- c. Why is Sodom's fate a warning to all? Genesis 19:24–26; Luke 17:32, 33.
-

"The angels had come to see if there were any in the city who were not corrupted, and could be persuaded to flee from the impending doom that threatened Sodom. That night the evildoers added the last drop to their cup of iniquity, and the wrath of God could no longer be delayed."—*Ibid.*

"The warning that was given to Lot comes down to us who live in this degenerate age—'Escape for thy life.' The voice of the tempter is crying peace and safety. The evil one would have you feel that you have nothing to fear and bids you eat, drink, and be merry. Which voice will you heed, the voice of heaven, or the voice that lures you to destruction?"—*Ibid.*, October 16, 1893.

3. BECOMING BETTER STEWARDS OF OUR LIVES

- a. **What warnings are given about Sodom's spiritual decline? Ezekiel 16:49.**
-

"Many of those who have so long rejected divine guidance and guardianship are rushing on in the path of levity and selfish pleasure, yea, more, into baser acts and defilement of the body. As a consequence their minds are polluted, and religion is distasteful to them. Some have gone so far in this downward course, and followed so earnestly in the path of the Sodomites, that they are today nigh unto cursing, and the voice of reproof and warning is lost upon them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 39.

- b. **How are we, who are entrusted with great light, warned of degradations more serious even than those of Sodom? Hosea 4:6; Proverbs 1:24–30, 33.**
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"The Redeemer of the world, the compassionate Friend of man, discloses to our eyes the fact that there is a sin greater than the sin of Sodom. It is that of sinning against greater light. To those who have heard and have not heeded the gospel invitation to repent and have faith in Christ, the sin is greater than was the sin of Sodom. To those who have professed the name of Jesus, who have professed to know God, and to keep His commandments, and yet who have misrepresented Christ in their daily life and character, who have been warned and entreated, and still dishonor their Redeemer by their unconsecrated lives, the sin is greater than that of Sodom."—*The Signs of the Times*, October 16, 1893.

"Many who profess to believe the truth do not want God in their thoughts, any more than did the antediluvians or Sodomites. One sensible thought of God, awakened by the Holy Spirit, would spoil all their schemes. Self, self, self, has been their god, their alpha and their omega."—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 141.

"The sins of Sodom are repeated in our day, and the earth is destroyed and corrupted under the inhabitants thereof; but the worst feature of the iniquity of this day is a form of godliness without the power thereof. Those who profess to have great light are found among the careless and indifferent, and the cause of Christ is wounded in the house of its professed friends."—*The Signs of the Times*, October 16, 1893.

3. CHOOSING BETTER PRIORITIES

- a. To avoid Lot's mistake that had led his family in a downward path, what must we realize? Genesis 13:12, 13; 19:30–38; 1 Corinthians 15:33.
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“The corruption of Sodom in breaking the law of God was especially manifested in licentiousness.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 269.

“When Lot entered Sodom he fully intended to keep himself free from iniquity and to command his household after him. But he signally failed. The corrupting influences about him had an effect upon his own faith, and his children's connection with the inhabitants of Sodom bound up his interest in a measure with theirs. The result is before us.

“Many are still making a similar mistake. In selecting a home they look more to the temporal advantages they may gain than to the moral and social influences that will surround themselves and their families. They choose a beautiful and fertile country, or remove to some flourishing city, in the hope of securing greater prosperity; but their children are surrounded by temptation, and too often they form associations that are unfavorable to the development of piety and the formation of a right character. The atmosphere of lax morality, of unbelief, of indifference to religious things, has a tendency to counteract the influence of the parents. Examples of rebellion against parental and divine authority are ever before the youth; many form attachments for infidels and unbelievers, and cast in their lot with the enemies of God.

“In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families. We may be placed in trying positions, for many cannot have their surroundings what they would; and whenever duty calls us, God will enable us to stand uncorrupted, if we watch and pray, trusting in the grace of Christ. But we should not needlessly expose ourselves to influences that are unfavorable to the formation of Christian character. When we voluntarily place ourselves in an atmosphere of worldliness and unbelief, we displease God and drive holy angels from our homes.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 168, 169.

- b. Give various reasons why we must avoid the typical attitudes characteristic of today's culture. 2 Timothy 3:1–5; Isaiah 1:9.
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5. CHOOSING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT

- a. What does God say about where His people can prosper? Isaiah 32:18, 19.
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“My warning is: Keep out of the cities. Build no sanitariums in the cities. Educate our people to get out of the cities into the country, where they can obtain a small piece of land, and make a home for themselves and their children. . . .

“Our restaurants must be in the cities; for otherwise the workers in these restaurants could not reach the people and teach them the principles of right living. And for the present we shall have to occupy meeting houses in the cities. But ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903.

“Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation, where they can have orchards and where they can raise vegetables and small fruits to take the place of flesh meat, which is so corrupting to the lifeblood coursing through the veins. On such places the children will not be surrounded with the corrupting influences of city life. God will help His people to find such homes outside of the cities.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 310.

- b. Why must we heed the appeals for country living? Proverbs 15:31, 32.
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“There was a coming out, a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life. So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so it will be in the last days.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 166.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In facing those who scoff at Christ's return, what should we keep in mind?
2. Why do all need to be aware of the history of Sodom and Gomorrah?
3. What impact should the fate of these cities exert on the people of God?
4. Am I in danger of repeating the mistake of Lot—and if so, how?
5. What are the benefits of country living?

False Ideas at the Time of the End

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

“There are dangerous heresies that will be presented as Bible doctrines; and we are to become acquainted with the Bible so that we may know how to meet them. The faith of every individual will be tested.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 590, 591.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 210–212.

Sunday

July 16

1. VIGILANCE NEEDED

- a. What strategy does the enemy of souls use to entice many sincere souls who believe in Jesus' soon return? Matthew 24:11, 24.

“Satan’s angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now. Many apparently good things will need to be carefully considered with much prayer, for they are specious devices of the enemy to lead souls in a path which lies so close to the path of truth that it will be scarcely distinguishable from it.”—*Evangelism*, p. 590.

“The testimony of the Spirit of God is true. Change not your faith for any phase of doctrine, however pleasing it may appear, that will seduce the soul.

“The fallacies of Satan are now being multiplied, and those who swerve from the path of truth will lose their bearings. Having nothing to which to anchor, they will drift from one delusion to another, blown about by the winds of strange doctrines. Satan has come down with great power.”—*Ibid.*, p. 362.

2. DANGEROUS DELUSIONS

- a. Explain the clever trick used by God's adversary as a deceptive ploy in Moses' time—and repeated today. Exodus 7:10–13; 2 Timothy 3:5–9.
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"The magicians . . . showed signs and wonders; for they wrought not by their own skill alone, but by the power of their god, Satan, who assisted them in counterfeiting the work of Jehovah.

"The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents; but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, they were able to produce this appearance. It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents. The prince of evil, though possessing all the wisdom and might of an angel fallen, has not power to create, or to give life; this is the prerogative of God alone. But all that was in Satan's power to do, he did; he produced a counterfeit. To human sight the rods were changed to serpents. Such they were believed to be by Pharaoh and his court."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 264.

- b. What deception is the enemy of souls soon to employ? Revelation 13:13.
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"Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not what they pretend to do."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 553.

- c. With what warning did Christ prophesy of the occult? Matthew 24:25, 26.
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"Have not thousands gone forth into the desert, hoping to find Christ? And from thousands of gatherings where men profess to hold communion with departed spirits is not the call now heard, 'Behold, He is in the secret chambers'? This is the very claim that spiritism puts forth."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 631.

- d. As we see the prophecies against the enchanting wiles of spiritualism fulfilling throughout the world, what must we realize? Ephesians 6:11, 12.
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3. REALISTIC MIRACLES AND GHOSTS

- a. As the end approaches, what special warnings are given to us to avoid trusting in signs and wonders, and why? Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24, 25.
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“As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God.

“We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation, that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness. . . .

“Some will be tempted to receive these wonders as from God. The sick will be healed before us. Miracles will be performed in our sight. Are we prepared for the trial which awaits us when the lying wonders of Satan shall be more fully exhibited? Will not many souls be ensnared and taken? By departing from the plain precepts and commandments of God, and giving heed to fables, the minds of many are preparing to receive these lying wonders. We must all now seek to arm ourselves for the contest in which we must soon engage. Faith in God’s word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan’s power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ.”—*Maranatha*, p. 208.

- b. Why do we need to be aware of one of Satan’s favorite occult ploys? 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.
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“[Satan] has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear ‘to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils’ (1 Timothy 4:1).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 552.

3. AVOIDING A SMOOTH, EASY COUNTERFEIT

- a. **How does the preaching of Noah relate to us as we teach present truth—including the light entrusted on health? Luke 17:26, 27; 1 Peter 2:11.**
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“Noah preached to the people of his time that God would give them one hundred and twenty years in which to repent of their sins and find refuge in the ark; but they refused the gracious invitation. Abundant time was given them to turn from their sins, overcome their bad habits, and develop righteous characters; but inclination to sin, though weak at first with many, strengthened through repeated indulgence and hurried them on to irretrievable ruin.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 20, 1885.

- b. **Instead of giving us a smooth, easy path, why does God give us a character-building health message that requires self-denial? Matthew 7:13–15.**
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“Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test.”—*Maranatha*, p. 209.

“The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles; because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

“For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

“This is the provision the Lord has made whereby gospel medical missionary work is to be done for many souls. These institutions are to be established out of the cities, and in them educational work is to be intelligently carried forward.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 14.

5. SEEING SHOULD NOT BE BELIEVING!

- a. Describe the ultimate delusion Satan will perform. 2 Corinthians 11:14.

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13–15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: ‘Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.”—*Maranatha*, p. 276.

- b. In view of such peril, what must be our focus? 2 Corinthians 4:8–10, 18.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why are present-truth Bible doctrines so important at the end of time?
2. How can we explain the apparent miracle of Pharaoh’s magicians?
3. Name some of the archenemy’s ploys especially aimed at God’s remnant.
4. As a general rule, why are we advised not to expect instant healings today?
5. How are we to identify the impending counterfeit of Christ’s soon return?

Jesus Really Is Coming Again!

“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3).

“One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ’s second coming to complete the great work of redemption.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 13–18, 285, 286.

Sunday

July 23

1. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING!

a. According to the Bible, what will Jesus’ coming be like? Acts 1:11.

“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 . . . had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. And the heavenly messengers had assured them that 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.

b. To whom will Jesus’ appearing be visible? Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:30.

“Those who mocked and smote Him will be there. The priests and rulers will behold again the scene in the judgment hall. Every circumstance will appear before them, as if written in letters of fire. Then those who prayed, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children,’ will receive the answer to their prayer. Then the whole world will know and understand.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 739, 740.

2. AN AMAZING HOPE

- a. What is the purpose of Jesus' coming, and how should our confidence in this awesome, unsurpassed event be affecting us? John 14:1–3.
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“Those who really love the Saviour cannot but hail with joy a message founded upon the word of God, the He in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered is coming again, not to be insulted, despised, and rejected, as at His first advent, but in power and glory, to redeem His people. The proclamation of Christ's coming should now be, as when made by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, good tidings of great joy. There can be no more conclusive evidence that the churches have departed from God than the irritation and animosity excited by this Heaven-sent message.

“It is those who do not love the Saviour that desire Him to remain away, and such eagerly receive the testimony borne by unfaithful servants, ‘My Lord delayeth his coming’ (Matthew 24:48). While they refuse to search the Scriptures to learn if these things are so, they grasp every fable which will put off the coming of Christ into the distant future, or make it spiritual, fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, or taking place at death.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 216, 217.

- b. Describe the sweetness of this hope, and with what is it to be closely connected? Philippians 3:20, 21.
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“The truths of prophecy are bound up together, and as we study them, they form a beautiful cluster of practical Christian truth. All the discourses that we give are plainly to reveal that we are waiting, working, and praying for the coming of the Son of God. His coming is our hope. This hope is to be bound up with all our words and works, with all our associations and relationships.”—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

“Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

3. A GLORY BEYOND DESCRIPTION

- a. What sign in the heavens will indicate Jesus' coming? Mark 13:26.
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"Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over it."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 32.

- b. Explain the threefold glory at Christ's return—noticing where He will meet His redeemed ones. Will His feet touch the ground at His second coming? Luke 9:26 (last part); 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.
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"On [the cloud] sat the Son of man, on His head were crowns, His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders. His feet had the appearance of fire, in His right hand was a sharp sickle, in His left a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless? Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke, Those who have clean hands and a pure heart shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you. At this, our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sung again while the cloud drew still nearer the earth. Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven and cried, Awake! Awake! Awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise. Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, Hallelujah! as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. We all entered the cloud together."—*Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33.

- c. What is different about Christ's third coming after 1,000 years, in contrast to His second coming? Zechariah 14:4. (See also *Early Writings*, pp. 17, 18.)

4. WITH POWER AND AUTHORITY

- a. What will happen in nature at Jesus' second coming, and why? Revelation 6:14; Isaiah 24:1-6.
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"God would have His people clearly understand that they will be visited according to their obedience or transgression. Wickedness and disease have increased with every successive generation. The land has labored under the curse which man has brought upon it because of continued disobedience."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, p. 123.

"The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 641, 642.

- b. How does prophecy depict the divine judgments that are soon to fall upon the world at His coming? Isaiah 24:17-23.
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"The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: 'It is done' (Revelation 16:17).

"That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, 'such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great' (Verse 18). The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters."—*Ibid.*, pp. 636, 637.

5. THE FULFILLMENT OF LONG-HELD HOPES

- a. Describe the joy of the holy angels with Jesus at His return. Jude 14.

“With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend [Jesus] on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands’ (Revelation 5:11). No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

- b. What task are the holy angels to perform (based on the investigative judgment which will already be over), and what will the earth’s inhabitants ultimately realize? Matthew 13:41, 49; 25:32; Romans 7:12.

“The trumpet of the Archangel will soon startle the living and wake the dead. At that day the wicked will be separated from the just, as the shepherd divides the goats from the sheep.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 561.

“Christ would have all understand the events of His second appearing. The judgment scene will take place in the presence of all the worlds; for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and His law will stand forth as ‘holy, and just, and good’ (Romans 7:12). Then every case will be decided, and sentence will be passed upon all. Sin will not then appear attractive but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude. All will see the relation in which they stand to God and to one another.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 20, 1898.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain what groups of people will witness the second coming of Christ.
2. Why is Jesus returning, and what should this event make us consider?
3. Why should we know whether or not Christ’s feet will touch the ground?
4. How will the huge upheaval in creation relate to the moral law of God?
5. With this joyful yet solemn hour ahead, what should we deeply consider?

First Sabbath Offering for Missionary Schools and Education Projects

“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to

develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought. . . . Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions.”—*Education*, pp. 17, 18.

It is the purpose of the Education Department to support the establishment of such institutions. Schools for General Education and Missionary Schools are needed now more than ever for the education of our children. Over a century ago, the Lord’s messenger wrote, “Much more can be done to save and educate the children of those who at present cannot get away from the cities. This is a matter worthy of our best efforts. Church schools are to be established for the children in the cities, and in connection with these schools provision is to be made for the teaching of higher studies, where these are called for.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 306.

“Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents should unite in providing a place for a day school where their children and youth can be instructed. They should employ a Christian teacher, who, as a consecrated missionary, shall educate the children in such a way as to lead them to become missionaries. . . .

“If parents will realize the importance of these small educating centers, cooperating to do the work that the Lord desires to be done at this time, the plans of the enemy for our children will be frustrated.”—*Ibid.*, p. 307.

We appeal to you this Sabbath to give generously to support this work in all of our churches throughout the world.

Your brethren from the GC Education Department



With Great Power and Glory

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

“The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen [the people of God] look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 636.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 479–484; 641–645.

Sunday

July 30

1. INCREDIBLE WOE, WOE, WOE

- a. When Christ arrives, what reveals the fearful reaction to come upon those who have despised His offer of salvation? Revelation 6:15–17; Nahum 2:10.

“Upon the rejecters of God’s mercy falls the terror of eternal despair.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

“When sinners are compelled to look upon Him who clothed His divinity with humanity, and who still wears this garb, their confusion is indescribable. The scales fall from their eyes, and they see that which before they would not see. They realize what they might have been had they received Christ, and improved the opportunities granted them. They see the law which they have spurned, exalted even as God’s throne is exalted. They see God Himself giving reverence to His law.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1069.

- b. What will actually happen to them, and why? 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; 2:8.

“The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.”—*The Desires of Ages*, p. 108.

2. THE SPECIAL RESURRECTION

- a. From among all who, throughout history, went to their graves trusting in God, which category of believers will have already been raised just before Christ's arrival? Revelation 14:12, 13; Daniel 12:1, 2.
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"Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, shaking the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law."—*Early Writings*, p. 285.

- b. Who from among the wicked will be resurrected just prior to Christ's return? Matthew 26:62–64; Revelation 1:7.
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"Those who derided [Christ's] claim to be the Son of God are speechless now. There is the haughty Herod who jeered at His royal title and bade the mocking soldiers crown Him king. There are the very men who with impious hands placed upon His form the purple robe, upon His sacred brow the thorny crown, and in His unresisting hand the mimic scepter, and bowed before Him in blasphemous mockery. The men who smote and spit upon the Prince of life now turn from His piercing gaze and seek to flee from the overpowering glory of His presence. Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet, the soldier who pierced His side, behold these marks with terror and remorse. With awful distinctness do priests and rulers recall the events of Calvary."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 643.

- c. How is this special resurrection distinct from the resurrections that take place at the voice of Jesus? John 5:28, 29. Compare with Daniel 12:2 ("many" versus "all").
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3. UNSPEAKABLE AWE

- a. **What will be the initial response of all mortals—including God’s faithful few—as they first behold the arrival of the awesome Creator of the universe seated on His throne in majestic splendor? Jeremiah 30:6.**
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“The righteous cry with trembling: ‘Who shall be able to stand?’ The angels’ song is hushed, and there is a period of awful silence.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

- b. **What heart-warming assurance promptly comforts those genuinely longing for their Lord’s appearing? 2 Corinthians 12:9 (first part).**
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“Then the voice of Jesus is heard, saying: ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. And the angels strike a note higher and sing again as they draw still nearer to the earth.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **What will Christ’s followers say at the return of Him in whom their hopes have centered, and how should this motivate us now? Isaiah 25:9.**
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“To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.

“With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 421.

“Are we preparing to meet the Saviour in peace, or are we absorbed in worldly business and pleasure? Shall we not strive to be among the number who will welcome Christ?”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1901.

4. HONORABLE DISCHARGE FROM EARTH

- a. Describe the amazing miracle to occur at the resurrection of the just. 1 Corinthians 15:51–55.

“The Son of God . . . looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: ‘Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!’ Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

- b. How does this relate to the investigative judgment that had accounted them worthy of eternity, and what should this make us pause to consider? 1 Peter 4:17–19; Luke 20:35 (first part), 36.

“As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. . . .

“All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.”—*Ibid.*, p. 483.

- c. What happens to the righteous—both those who are alive when Jesus returns plus those who are resurrected at His voice? 1 Corinthians 15:49.

“At the voice of God [the living righteous] were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air.”—*Ibid.*, p. 645.

5. THE FIRST AND SECOND RESURRECTIONS

- a. Explain the timing of the general resurrection of the just, and describe the joy of it. Revelation 20:1–6 (compare again 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

“Until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 185.

- b. We studied how the wicked guilty of crucifying Christ are raised up at the special resurrection; but when do the rest of the wicked dead face their Maker before their final destruction, and why is this a sobering thought? 1 Corinthians 6:3 (first part); Revelation 20:4, 5, 12–15.

“At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty, He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. . . . What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death.”—*Ibid.*, p. 355.

“Day by day God is testing and proving His people. The inspired Word plainly declares that by our works we are deciding our eternal destiny.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 278.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is instantly slain when Christ comes in the clouds, and why?
2. For whom is the special resurrection, and what is its twofold purpose?
3. Am I focusing on the Isaiah 25:9-moment, or am I hoping He will delay?
4. Why must the investigative judgment occur before Jesus arrives?
5. Why must the thousand years occur before the wicked face their doom?

Waiting and Watching

“[Our Saviour Jesus Christ] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

“[Christ] showed what it means to watch for His coming. The time is to be spent, not in idle waiting, but in diligent working.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 325.

Suggested Reading: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 353–365.

Sunday

August 6

1. CALLED FOR SERVICE

- a. What parable did Jesus present in connection with His return? Matthew 25:13–15.

“The man traveling into a far country represents Christ, who, when speaking this parable, was soon to depart from this earth to heaven. The ‘bondservants’ (RV), or slaves, of the parable, represent the followers of Christ. . . .

“Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service—service to God and to their fellow men.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 325, 326.

- b. With what were the talents compared, and how are they significant? 1 Corinthians 12:7–11.
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“All gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual . . . are to be employed in Christ’s service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.”—*Ibid.*, p. 328.

2. A RIGHT USE OF ENTRUSTED GOODS

- a. In view of the seriousness of our times, what should we learn from Christ's parable about the use of the talents entrusted to us? Matthew 25:16–18.
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"The question that most concerns us is not, How much have I received? but, What am I doing with that which I have? The development of all our powers is the first duty we owe to God and to our fellow men. No one who is not growing daily in capability and usefulness is fulfilling the purpose of life. In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 329, 330.

- b. What can be achieved by a right use of our gifts? Matthew 25:19, 20, 22.
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"[The Lord] does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications we lack; but while we use that which we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty. By every wholehearted, earnest sacrifice for the Master's service our powers will increase. While we yield ourselves as instruments for the Holy Spirit's working, the grace of God works in us to deny old inclinations, to overcome powerful propensities, and to form new habits. As we cherish and obey the promptings of the Spirit, our hearts are enlarged to receive more and more of His power, and to do more and better work. Dormant energies are aroused, and palsied faculties receive new life. . . .

"Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself."—*Ibid.*, pp. 353, 354.

3. GRATEFUL OR GRUMBLING?

- a. **How was the unfaithful servant reproached for having misused his talent, and why is such an attitude a warning for us? Matthew 25:24–28.**
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“There are many who in their hearts charge God with being a hard master because He claims their possessions and their service. But we can bring to God nothing that is not already His. . . . All things are God’s, not only by creation, but by redemption. All the blessings of this life and of the life to come are delivered to us stamped with the cross of Calvary. Therefore the charge that God is a hard master, reaping where He has not sown, is false.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 362.

- b. **How does Inspiration depict our tendency to complain and make excuses for ourselves, and why should we heed the Master’s earnest desire for every one of us before His return? Proverbs 30:15, 16; Isaiah 29:24.**
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“Fretting, faultfinding, and making strong statements must be given up. What time have you set to gain the victory over your perverse will and the defects in your character? With the advancement you now make, your probation may close before you have made the determined efforts essential to give you the victory over self. You will, in the providence of God, be placed in positions where your peculiarities, if existing, will be tried and revealed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 341, 342.

“Many decide to serve themselves and Satan by not making determined efforts to overcome their defects of character. While many are petting sinful propensities, expecting to be overcomers sometime, they are deciding for perdition. . . . In the name of Jesus Christ you may be victorious even now ‘in this thy day’ (Luke 19:42). Do not plan and study for self. You cannot be wholly the Lord’s while encouraging any degree of selfishness. Such great love as the Redeemer has shown you should be received with great humility and continual rejoicing. In order to be happy, you must control your thoughts and words. It will require a masterly effort on your part; nevertheless it must be done if you are to be the acknowledged children of God. Be not weary in your efforts. Satan is battling for your souls, and he must be disappointed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 344.

4. UNMASK THE DECEPTION AND FLEE FROM IT!

- a. How does the Son of God's example refute the false accusations of the archenemy of our souls? Genesis 3:4, 5; Philippians 2:5–8.
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“Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 11.

“Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

“Could our eyes be opened, we should see forms of evil angels around us, trying to invent some new way to annoy and destroy us. And we should also see angels of God guarding us from their power; for God's watchful eye is ever over Israel for good, and He will protect and save His people, if they put their trust in Him. . . .

“Said the angel, ‘Remember, thou art on the enchanted ground.’ I saw that we must watch and have on the whole armor and take the shield of faith, and then we shall be able to stand, and the fiery darts of the wicked cannot harm us.”—*Early Writings*, p. 60.

- b. What reveals God's eager willingness to help us overcome our defects and slothfulness? Psalms 20:1, 2, 7–9; 94:17, 18.
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“Every impulse of the Holy Spirit leading men to goodness and to God is noted in the books of heaven.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 361.

“The Lord desires His people to reach the highest round of the ladder that they may glorify Him by possessing the ability He is willing to bestow. Through the grace of God every provision has been made for us to reveal that we act upon better plans than those upon which the world acts. . . .

“Those who have not a large endowment of gifts need not become discouraged. Let them use what they have, faithfully guarding every weak point in their characters, seeking by divine grace to make it strong.”—*Ibid.*, p. 358.

5. VICTORIOUS LABORERS WITH GOD

- a. As we prepare for our Lord's return in full surrender to His service, what is our main interest, and His? Titus 2:13, 14; Luke 17:10; Psalm 145:10–12.

“When the Lord takes account of His servants, the return from every talent will be scrutinized. The work done reveals the character of the worker.

“Those who have received the five and the two talents return to the Lord the entrusted gifts with their increase. In doing this they claim no merit for themselves. Their talents are those that have been delivered to them; they have gained other talents, but there could have been no gain without the deposit. They see that they have done only their duty. The capital was the Lord's; the improvement is His. Had not the Saviour bestowed upon them His love and grace, they would have been bankrupt for eternity.

“But when the Master receives the talents, He approves and rewards the workers as though the merit were all their own. His countenance is full of joy and satisfaction. He is filled with delight that He can bestow blessings upon them. For every service and every sacrifice He requites them, not because it is a debt He owes, but because His heart is overflowing with love and tenderness.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 360, 361.

“Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. ‘He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust’ (Psalm 103:14). All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.”—*Ibid.*, p. 362.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is often misunderstood about God's purpose in giving talents?
2. Although you may be weak and faulty, what is God's plan for helping you?
3. Compare the servant with one talent to typical human behavior of today.
4. How can we bypass the enemy's strategy to try to block our sanctification?
5. Explain how we can gain the victory to become real, active agents for God.

A Personal Relationship With Jesus

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“When we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

Suggested Readings: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 81–85;
Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 40–48.

Sunday

August 13

1. LIGHT SHINES AMID THE DARKNESS

- a. How does Scripture depict our hopeless state? Job 14:4; Romans 3:23; 8:7.

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

“Many are unhappy because they are unholy. Purity of heart, innocence of mind, only can be blessed of God. When sin is cherished, it can in the end produce nothing but unhappiness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 53.

- b. In His great love and mercy, what has God revealed to us in the last days, and how is it to affect our life in a practical way? Romans 3:24–26; 8:1–4.

“Our Lord and Saviour laid aside His dominion, His riches and glory, and sought after us, that He might save us from misery and make us like Himself. He humbled Himself and took our nature that we might be able to learn of Him and, imitating His life of benevolence and self-denial, follow Him step by step to heaven.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 170.

2. GOD'S LOVE FOR US

- a. Explain the completeness of the plan of salvation. 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:19–21.
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“Christ gave Himself, an atoning sacrifice, for the saving of a lost world. He was treated as we deserve, in order 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. ‘With His stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5).

“Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, by the one who once stood in loyalty by His side in the heavenly courts. Behold the Son of God in the wilderness of temptation, in the time of greatest weakness assailed by the fiercest temptation. See Him during the years of His ministry, attacked on every side by the forces of evil. See Him in His agony on the cross. All this He suffered for us.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 208, 209.

- b. Who can experience the blessings of God's love? Matthew 11:28; John 6:37.
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“Coming to Christ does not require severe mental effort and agony; it is simply accepting the terms of salvation that God has made plain in His Word. The blessing is free to all. . . .

“In the name that is above every name, the only name given among men whereby men can be saved, claim the promise of God, saying, ‘Lord, forgive my sin; I put my hands into Thy hand for help, and I must have it, or perish. I now believe.’ ”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 333, 334.

“A deep sense of our need and a great desire for the things for which we ask must characterize our prayers, else they will not be heard. But we are not to become weary and cease our petitions because the answer is not immediately received. ‘The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force’ (Matthew 11:12). The violence here meant is a holy earnestness, such as Jacob manifested. We need not try to work ourselves up into an intense feeling, but calmly, persistently, we are to press our petitions at the throne of grace.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 272.

3. A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

- a. **What new attitude and behavior become apparent as we trust in Jesus? 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:6; Philippians 2:12, 13.**
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“The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God’s commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 334.

“Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. . . . When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves. . . .

“But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin will be disappointed. We have no reason to fear while looking to Jesus, no reason to doubt but that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him; but we may constantly fear lest our old nature will again obtain the supremacy, that the enemy shall devise some snare whereby we shall again become his captives.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 336, 337.

- b. **What deep desire is to continually fill the heart of every believer, and how is this to affect us on a consistent basis? John 15:4, 5, 10; Romans 6:6, 10, 11.**
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“Union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. . . . This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. . . .

“Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

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

4. GROWTH IN GRACE

- a. When the heart is surrendered to Christ with prayer for His enlightenment, what change occurs in the character? Galatians 5:22, 23; Psalm 119:18.

“By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 338.

- b. Why is open-hearted study and meditation on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy an important key in this process? Psalm 119:24–27.

“It is not alone those who openly reject the *Testimonies*, or who cherish doubt concerning them, that are on dangerous ground. To disregard light is to reject it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 680.

“Says the psalmist, ‘Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path’ (Psalm 119:105). But this is not the case when it is left unopened and unread.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 4, 1881.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4). This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.

5. REFLECTING THE LIGHT

- a. What is the most pressing need of this dark world? Matthew 5:14–16.
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“It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour’s love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 419.

- b. What is to be the focus of our life, and what results will be achieved through this? Galatians 2:20; Isaiah 60:1–3.
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“ ‘Abiding in Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that His interests are identified with yours. Abide in Him, to be and to do only what He wills. These are the conditions of discipleship, and unless they are complied with, you can never find rest.’ ”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 110.

“Through the Holy Spirit, God’s word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 414.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the predicament of the human race, and what can be done about it.
2. Why is a casual connection with Christ insufficient?
3. What would you tell a person who is disappointed with the gospel?
4. What role do the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy have in our sanctification?
5. Explain how your influence can become a source of refreshment to others.

Getting Ready

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“Do we, by our lives and holy conversation, show to those around us that we are looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?”—*Early Writings*, p. 111.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 217–228, 743–746.

Sunday

August 20

1. AVOIDING A COMMON SNARE

- a. What dangerous lie is increasingly taught in the professedly religious world today, and how does Scripture refute it? James 2:14, 20–22, 24.

“From the pulpits of today the words are uttered: ‘Believe, only believe. Have faith in Christ; you have nothing to do with the old law, only trust in Christ.’ How different is this from the words of the apostle who declares that faith without works is dead.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 89.

“The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but what saith the word of God? . . . [James 2:14, 21, 22, 24 quoted.]

“The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted; it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

“Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. ‘Sin is the transgression of the law.’ And ‘whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him’ (1 John 3:4, 6).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 472.

2. TRULY ACCEPTING THE PLAN OF SALVATION

- a. What are the first steps toward real salvation? Acts 2:37, 38; Romans 5:1.
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“As we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 26, 27.

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

- b. For Christ’s followers, what important truth is of supreme importance? Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:13–16.
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“Holiness is agreement with God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 743.

“When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to ‘go unto perfection;’ to grow up ‘unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 470.

“Through the merits of Christ, through His righteousness, which by faith is imputed unto us, we are to attain to the perfection of Christian character. Our daily and hourly work is set forth in the words of the apostle: ‘Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith’ (Hebrews 12:2). . . .

“The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. . . .

“Brethren and sisters, it is by beholding that we become changed. By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 744.

3. AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL

- a. What is God's plan for us in our preparation to meet our Lord in peace? Matthew 5:48; Psalm 101:2.
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"While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshipers on earth should carefully review their life, and compare their character with the standard of righteousness. As they see their defects, they should seek the aid of the Spirit of God to enable them to have moral strength to resist the temptations of Satan, and to reach the perfection of the standard. They may be victors over the very temptations which seemed too strong for humanity to bear; for the divine power will be combined with their human effort."—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 296.

"Besetting sins must be battled with and overcome. Objectionable traits of character, whether hereditary or cultivated, should be taken up separately and compared with the great rule of righteousness; and in the light reflected from the word of God, they should be firmly resisted and overcome, through the strength of Christ."—*Christian Education*, p. 113.

- b. Why should we strive for perfection by walking in the light of God's revealed will? 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25; Philipians 3:12–14.
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"To walk in the light means to resolve, to exercise thought, to exert will power, in an earnest endeavor to represent Christ in sweetness of character. It means to put away all gloom. You are not to rest satisfied simply in saying, 'I am a child of God.' Are you beholding Jesus, and, by beholding, becoming changed into His likeness? To walk in the light means advancement and progress in spiritual attainments."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 200.

"Whatever the mistakes or failures of the past, we may, with the help of God, rise above them."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 516.

- c. What is promised to those who yearn for genuine moral righteousness? Ephesians 3:16; Matthew 5:6.
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4. SERIOUS STRENGTH FOR OUR URGENT NEED

- a. **How only can we be equipped to stand in the final conflict? Jeremiah 15:16.**

“None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

- b. **How can we benefit by increased dedication in our devotional habits to better know God’s will? 1 John 5:14; Psalm 119:129–131.**

“The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.

“Let each put the question to his own heart: ‘How have we fallen into this state of spiritual feebleness and dissension? Have we not brought upon ourselves the frown of God because our actions do not correspond with our faith?’ ”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 217.

“Beware how you neglect secret prayer and a study of God’s word. These are your weapons against him who is striving to hinder your progress heavenward. The first neglect of prayer and Bible study makes easier the second neglect.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 96.

- c. **Why is it crucial to render wholehearted, 100 percent obedience to God’s will as plainly revealed in written form by Inspiration? James 1:21–25.**

“Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings . . . that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 620.

“God works mightily for a faithful people who obey His word without questioning or doubt.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 164.

5. SUBMITTING TO PURIFICATION

- a. Explain the sanctification process. 1 John 3:1–3; Hebrews 5:12–14; 6:1.

“Obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ’s righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. . . .

“Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. . . . Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 532.

- b. Why is it crucial that we do not stubbornly resist this process? Ephesians 4:30.
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“The first resistance to the Spirit’s pleading prepares the way for the second resistance. Thus the heart is hardened, and the conscience seared.

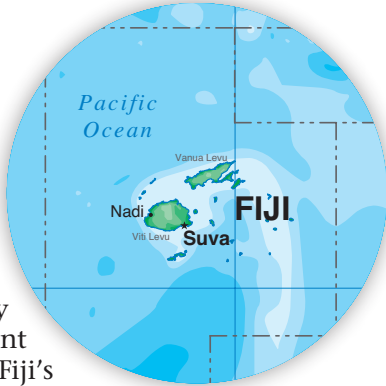
“On the other hand, every resistance of temptation makes resistance more easy. Every denial of self makes self-denial easier. Every victory gained prepares the way for a fresh victory. Each resistance of temptation, each self-denial, each triumph over sin, is a seed sown unto eternal life.”—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 96, 97.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What false idea leads many professed Christians into presumption?
2. How can I discern whether my level of repentance has been too shallow?
3. How can I be sure that God is really willing to help me overcome my faults?
4. How much time do I spend with the *Testimonies* compared to other books?
5. Explain the method by which God motivates us to sow seeds for eternal life.

First Sabbath Offering for Fiji Mission headquarters

The Republic of Fiji is a group of volcanic islands in the South Pacific, about 4,450 km southwest of Honolulu and 1,770 km north of New Zealand. Of the 332 islands forming the archipelago, about 106 are permanently inhabited. Fiji enjoys a tropical climate, sandy beaches, lush vegetation, abundant fruits, vegetables, and root crops. Fiji's estimated population is 903,207, made up of native Fijians (Itaukei)—predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture 56.8%, the Indo-Fijians 45%, and other races 7%. The official language is English. Fijian and Hindi are spoken by the majority. In times past, Fiji was known for cannibalism, widely practiced by prominent native chiefs as a symbol of superiority. The dawn of the Christian era in Fiji was marked by the arrival of Wesleyan missionaries who came in 1835. The swift spread of the gospel completely eradicated the evil practices of both cannibalism and witchcraft. Today, most of our population is Christian, with 45% Protestants, 27.9% Hindu, 10.4% other Christians, 9.1% Roman Catholics, 6.3% Islam, 0.3% Sikh, and 0.8% irreligious.



The Reformation message entered our shores in 1974 when missionaries visited and baptized four souls. In 1997 the work was reestablished, and 30 more souls were baptized. Growth has continued. Although poor in the things of this earth, believers here are challenged to spread the gospel and are reaching new interests in the highlands, cities, and remote islands.

We have acquired a quarter-acre freehold land in 2015 and built a small hall where worship services are currently held. Considering our growing membership, our most desperate need at this time is a house of worship, office space for our headquarters, and for the distribution of literature. We earnestly pray that the Lord may touch your heart and respond to the needs here in Fiji. Blessings will surely come as you give generously, so a headquarters may stand as a memorial to glorify God. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). We thank all of you in advance for your kind generosity.

Your brethren and sisters from the Fiji Mission

Laboring for the Master

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

“Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to cooperate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 634.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 189–199;
Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 404–410.

Sunday

August 27

1. COWORKERS WITH THE LORD OF LORDS

- a. On what basis is every Christian believer—whether male, female, married, single, rich, poor, and of any age or ethnic background whatsoever—officially authorized and commanded to witness for their Lord and Master Jesus Christ? John 15:16; Galatians 3:27, 28.

“ ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15), is Christ’s command to His followers. Not that all are called to be ministers or missionaries in the ordinary sense of the term; but all may be workers with Him in giving the ‘glad tidings’ to their fellow men. To all, great or small, learned or ignorant, old or young, the command is given.”—*Education*, p. 264.

“When I think of the cities in which so little work has been done, in which there are so many thousands to be warned of the soon coming of the Saviour, I feel an intensity of desire to see men and women going forth to the work in the power of the Spirit filled with Christ’s love for perishing souls.”—*Evangelism*, p. 69.

- b. What group is definitely included also in having a special part in the closing work of the gospel? 1 John 2:14 (second half).

2. DEDICATION TO THE MESSAGE FOR TODAY

- a. **What special significance does the “everlasting gospel” have in our time? Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Revelation 14:6, 7.**
-

“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. **Name one factor that is closely connected with the Advent message—and actually helps us to understand it better. Romans 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**
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“The health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel’s message as the hand is with the body.”—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 20, 21.

“The gospel and the medical missionary work are to advance together. The gospel is to be bound up with the principles of true health reform. . . . We are to present the principles of health reform before the people, doing all in our power to lead men and women to see the necessity of these principles and to practice them.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 442.

- c. **What impels believers to spread the wonderful message of salvation? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.**
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“Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father’s care. . . .

“No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 77, 78.

3. EMPTIED TO BE FILLED

- a. What admonition carries a distinctive force for us who are living in the last days? 1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2, 6–8.
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“Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works, ‘My Lord delayeth his coming.’ Let the message of Christ’s soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation; for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields.”—*Maranatha*, p. 106.

“Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 384.

- b. What should you do if you honestly don’t feel as enthusiastic about this message as you know you should? 1 John 4:20, 21; Revelation 2:2–5; 3:18, 19.
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“We need the message to the Laodicean church. You have left your first love, and there is hardness and coldness and want of sympathy—except for the favorite few. That will never answer in the world. We are to seek and save that which is lost.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 61.

“Return to your first experience, when your soul was filled with love for Christ. Gather to your heart the obedience of a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Obedience to the law of the Lord makes men pure, holy, undefiled. . . .

“O that there might be seen among our people a deep and thorough work of repentance and reformation! O that they would fall on the Rock and be broken!”—*The Review and Herald*, February 24, 1903.

“There is hope for all who will hear the truth and repent of their evil works.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 216.

4. GOD'S GLORY MANIFESTED

- a. **What is the call of the hour, and how shall we respond to it? Isaiah 56:1–8.**

“[The Lord] is now calling upon His church on the earth to awake from the lethargy that Satan has sought to bring upon them, and fulfill their heaven-appointed work of enlightening the world. . . .

“The world today is in crying need of a revelation of Christ Jesus in the person of His saints. God desires that His people shall stand before the world a holy people. Why?—because there is a world to be saved by the light of gospel truth; and as the message of truth that is to call men out of darkness into God’s marvelous light is given by the church, the lives of its members, sanctified by the Spirit of truth, are to bear witness to the verity of the messages proclaimed.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 31, 1910.

- b. **Describe Christ’s methods in working to save souls. Luke 14:23; John 4:27.**

“The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul.

“To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ’s method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faith regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 229.

- c. **What spirit is needed in laboring for God? Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 12:15.**

“Study Christ’s definition of a true missionary: ‘Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’ (Mark 8:34). Following Christ, as spoken of in these words, is not a pretense, a farce. Jesus expects His disciples to follow closely in His footsteps, enduring what He endured, suffering what He suffered, overcoming as He overcame. He is anxiously waiting to see His professed followers revealing the spirit of self-sacrifice.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 209.

5. A TREMENDOUS PRIVILEGE

- a. How can each one of us cooperate in soul-saving, and what should be our most fervent desire and prayer? Romans 10:13–17; Luke 11:13.
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“We need greater earnestness in the cause of Christ. The solemn message of truth should be given with an intensity that would impress unbelievers that God is working with our efforts, that the Most High is our living source of strength.”—*Evangelism*, p. 697.

“Some minds are led away from present truth and a love of the Holy Bible by reading other exciting books; others are filled with perplexity and care for what they shall eat, drink, and wear. Some are looking too far off for the coming of the Lord. Time has continued a few years longer than they expected; therefore they think it may continue a few years more, and in this way their minds are being led from present truth, out after the world. In these things I saw great danger; for if the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God. I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but a very little longer. What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day.

“My dear brethren and sisters, let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares. When you lie down and when you rise up, let them be your meditation. Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man. The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over.”—*Early Writings*, p. 58.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is no one excused from sharing the present truth with others?
2. What are we to understand by “everlasting gospel”?
3. Why is the Laodicean message needed when proselytizing is out of fashion?
4. What has been causing the world to doubt the truthfulness of our message?
5. What thoughts can I cut out of my mind to make more space for the truth?

The Wisdom of God's Timing

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

"It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional."—*Evangelism*, p. 695.

Suggested Readings: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 185–192.
Early Writings, pp. 56–58, 69–73, 111–114.

Sunday

September 3

1. GOD'S COMPASSION

- a. Explain God's goal for every human He has created. 1 Timothy 2:3–6.

"God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy."—*The Youth's Instructor*, March 28, 1905.

- b. Why couldn't the Lord permit the people of Israel to take direct possession of the promised land? Hebrews 3:7–11.

"God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached went not in 'because of unbelief' (Hebrews 3:19)."—*Evangelism*, p. 696.

2. REASONS FOR THE APPARENT DELAY

- a. As believers, what danger do we face today? Hebrews 3:12, 13.
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“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Evangelism*, p. 696.

- b. Why does it seem that the Lord is delaying His coming? 2 Peter 3:9.
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“The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason of so long delay.”—*Ibid.*, p. 694.

“In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

- c. Who is in a position to relieve much of the spiritual gloom that envelops our planet? 2 Peter 3:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 15:34.
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“The Lord in compassion is seeking to enlighten the understanding of those who are now groping in the darkness of error. He is delaying His judgments upon an impenitent world, in order that His light bearers may seek and save that which is lost.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 31, 1910.

- d. How can we hasten Jesus’ coming? 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 24:14.
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“By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

3. EXTRA POWER TO SPEED THINGS ALONG

- a. How will the sharing of the gospel reach its climax in the last days? Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.
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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.

- b. What is needed to be entrusted with the latter rain—the outpouring of God’s Spirit without measure? Joel 2:17, 18; Acts 3:19, 20.
-

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507.

“For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should men pray that God will baptize His missionaries with the Holy Spirit.

“The presence of the Spirit with God’s workers will give the presentation of the truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the unfriendliness of relatives, the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own imperfections and mistakes.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 22.

4. THE OMNISCIENT KNOWS BEST

- a. Even as we advance in the knowledge of God, what information does He still reserve the right to withhold from us, and why? Acts 1:6, 7.

“God has not revealed to us the time when this message will close, or when probation will have an end. . . . Let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the councils of the Almighty.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 191.

“There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ. . . .

“ ‘The Lord showed me that the message must go, and that it must not be hung on time; for time will never be a test again. I saw that some were getting a false excitement, arising from preaching time, that the third angel’s message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it, and that it will go with mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.’ ”—*Ibid.*, p. 188.

- b. Why should we be satisfied with God’s wisdom in this matter? Deuteronomy 29:29.

“The preaching of a definite time for the Judgment, in the giving of the first message, was ordered of God. The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. The repeated efforts to find new dates for the beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 457.

5. THE IMPENDING PROCLAMATION

- a. What declaration is soon to be pronounced from Heaven, and why is this of such solemn importance to every mortal? Revelation 22:11.

“Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. . . . [Revelation 22:11 quoted.]”—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent efforts they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1907.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should we learn from the delay in Israel’s entrance into Canaan?
2. Who is the chief culprit in delaying today’s entrance into heavenly Canaan?
3. How is the latter rain related to this event, and what enables it to come?
4. Explain the main purpose of the latter rain and the timing of it.
5. What do I need for God to be able to trust me with this refreshing?

Swelling to a Loud Cry

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring” (Isaiah 44:3).

“Why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 22.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 179–184; vol. 8, pp. 14–23.

Sunday

September 10

1. RESTORATION TAUGHT WITH POWER

- a. What prophecy carries special significance in the preparation to meet the Lord? Malachi 4:5.

“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1184.

- b. How did Jesus explain to His disciples the first application of this prophecy, and how does this relate to our work now? Matthew 17:11–13.

“Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.

2. PREPARERS OF THE LORD'S WAY

- a. What powerful message did John the Baptist proclaim, and why is it appropriate that we be doing likewise? Luke 1:16, 17; Matthew 3:2, 8.
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“[John the Baptist] saw his people deceived, self-satisfied, and asleep in their sins. He longed to rouse them to a holier life. The message that God had given him to bear was designed to startle them from the lethargy, and cause them to tremble because of their great wickedness. Before the seed of the gospel could find lodgement, the soil of the heart must be broken up. Before they would seek healing from Jesus, they must be awakened to their danger from the wounds of sin.

“God does not send messengers to flatter the sinner. He delivers no message of peace to lull the unsanctified into fatal security. He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces the soul with arrows of conviction.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 103, 104.

- b. Give examples of how the Elijah message is to restore family life—including how it was prefigured in John the Baptist's work. Malachi 2:13–17; 4:6.
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“John was acquainted with the fact that [Herod] was about to marry his brother's wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful.”—*Early Writings*, p. 154.

- c. What characterizes “the spirit and power of Elias,” and who is proclaiming this message today? 1 Kings 18:17, 18, 21; Revelation 12:17.
-

“Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or popularity. And by some it is considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God should never allow his own spirit to be mingled with the reproof which he is required to give; but he is under the most solemn obligation to present the Word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name. Those who by their carelessness or indifference permit God's name to be dishonored by His professed people, are numbered with the transgressor—registered in the record of heaven as partakers in their evil deeds.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1881.

3. THE FINAL WORK

- a. What summarizes the urgent call of the hour? Revelation 14:6–13; 18:1–4.
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“In the closing work of God in the earth, the standard of His law will be again exalted. False religion may prevail, iniquity may abound, the love of many may wax cold, the cross of Calvary may be lost sight of, and darkness, like the pall of death, may spread over the world; the whole force of the popular current may be turned against the truth; plot after plot may be formed to overthrow the people of God; but in the hour of greatest peril the God of Elijah will raise up human instrumentalities to bear a message that will not be silenced. In the populous cities of the land, and in the places where men have gone to the greatest lengths in speaking against the Most High, the voice of stern rebuke will be heard. Boldly will men of God’s appointment denounce the union of the church with the world. Earnestly will they call upon men and women to turn from the observance of a man-made institution to the observance of the true Sabbath.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 186, 187.

- b. What must always be evident in our speech and life? John 1:29; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 4:5–7.
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“The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

“The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

- c. How will God’s work ultimately be finished? Zechariah 4:6; Isaiah 28:21.
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“The Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.”—*Evangelism*, p. 118.

4. HOW TO RECEIVE THE REFRESHING

- a. **What must we continually realize about a key quality essential to experiencing the Holy Spirit in the fullness of latter-rain power? Isaiah 57:15.**
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“There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands.”—*Evangelism*, p. 118.

“Men with one talent may reach a class that those with two or five talents cannot approach. Great and small alike are chosen vessels to bear the water of life to thirsting souls. Let not those who preach the word lay their hands upon the humblest worker and say: ‘You must labor in this channel or not work at all.’ Hands off, brethren. Let everyone work in his own sphere, with his own armor on, doing whatever he can do in his humble way. Strengthen his hands in the work. This is no time for pharisaism to control. Let God work through whom He will. The message must go.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 462.

- b. **Why is the latter rain given, and why should we be inspired by the motivation of the early disciples? Acts 1:8; 4:33; Jeremiah 30:5–7.**
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“Notice that it was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. All differences had been put away. . . .

“The disciples did not ask for a blessing for themselves. They were weighted with the burden of souls. . . .

“Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 20, 21.

“As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 353.

5. TREMENDOUSLY GRATIFYING!

- a. What opportunity is before us right now? Titus 2:13; 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2.

“My brethren and sisters, study your plans; grasp every opportunity of speaking to your neighbors and associates or of reading something to them from books that contain present truth. Show that you regard as of first importance the salvation of the souls for whom Christ has made so great a sacrifice.

“In working for perishing souls, you have the companionship of angels. Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are waiting to cooperate with members of our churches in communicating the light that God has generously given, that a people may be prepared for the coming of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 129.

- b. Describe the amazing results to occur when the Holy Spirit is poured out without measure. Zechariah 8:23; Isaiah 44:3, 4; 61:11.

“The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What parallels exist between our work and that of Elijah and John the Baptist?
2. How does the restoration needed today relate to the Ten Commandments?
3. Summarize the character qualities of those who will receive the latter rain.
4. On what basis might I be in danger of missing this amazing privilege?
5. Why are the results of the latter rain so incredibly gratifying to see?

From Midnight Into Dawn

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him” (Psalm 50:3).

“Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a ‘Man of Sorrows,’ to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth. . . . No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 618–622, 638–652.

Sunday

September 17

1. WHILE THE LAST MOMENTS LINGER . . .

- a. Explain Christ’s plan for us in contrast to Satan’s. Luke 22:31; John 9:4.

“Satan . . . knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.

“Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

“Zeal for God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a determination to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? Is not the Spirit of God to come today, in answer to earnest, persevering prayer, and fill men with power for service?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 22.

“Every power lent us of heaven is to be used in doing the work assigned us by the Lord for those who are perishing in ignorance. The warning message is to be sounded in all parts of the world. There must be no delay. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth for this time.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 23, 1905.

2. THE INTENSITY ESCALATES . . .

- a. What must we realize about the threefold confederacy aiming to tear down God's law on a global level? Revelation 16:13, 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:3, 4.
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"As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite."—*Maranatha*, p. 172.

"Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience. . . .

"Papists, Protestants, and worldling will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium."—*Ibid.*, p. 190.

- b. What sentiment of the psalmist can surely be echoed today? Psalm 119:126.
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"The time in which we live is one of marked depravity. Religious restraint is thrown off, and men reject the law of God as unworthy of their attention. A more than common contempt is placed upon this holy law. . . .

"Men are now passing the boundary line, and the Lord is permitting the enemy to do his will. . . . The tread of the Lord will be heard upon the land and upon the water. For His own honor's sake, God is now about to repress iniquity. He will soon, very soon, vindicate the claims of His law."—*The Review and Herald*, November 23, 1905.

3. THE FINAL EXIT

- a. Name one warning Christ gave that has a distinct application in our day—as a final sign that the mission is accomplished. Matthew 24:15–19. What factors should we consider at this late hour? Revelation 3:11.
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“It is no time now for God’s people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize. Every talent lent of God should be used to His glory in giving the warning to the world. God has a work for His colaborers to do in the cities. Our missions must be sustained; new missions must be opened. To carry forward this work successfully will require no small outlay. Houses of worship are needed, where the people may be invited to hear the truths for this time. For this very purpose, God has entrusted a capital to His stewards. Let not your property be tied up in worldly enterprises, so that this work shall be hindered. Get your means where you can handle it for the benefit of the cause of God. Send your treasures before you into heaven.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 464, 465.

- b. Amid the impending woe, where does God want us to focus? Isaiah 26:3, 4.
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“Think of Jesus. He is in His holy place, not in a state of solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand of heavenly angels who wait to do His bidding. And He bids them go and work for the weakest saint who puts his trust in God. High and low, rich and poor, have the same help provided.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 205.

4. KEEPING OUR FOCUS

- a. Explain the real issue at stake in the final test—and how, according to the apostle Peter, we are to be daily preparing to meet it. Revelation 13:11, 15–17; Acts 5:29.

“The time will come when men will not only forbid Sunday work, but they will try to force men to labor on the Sabbath, and to subscribe to Sunday observance or forfeit their freedom and their lives.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 6, 1911.

- b. What gracious promises reveal the tender watchcare of our heavenly Father in that trying hour? Psalms 31:19, 20; 91:5–7; Isaiah 26:20, 21.

“[Isaiah 26:20 quoted.] What are the chambers in which [God’s people] are to hide? They are the protection of Christ and holy angels. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. They are in different companies, and in all parts of the earth.

“I saw the saints leaving the cities and villages, and associating together in companies, and living in the most solitary places. Angels provided them food and water, while the wicked were suffering from hunger and thirst.

“During the night a very impressive scene passed before me. There seemed to be great confusion and the conflict of armies. A messenger from the Lord stood before me, and said, ‘Call your household. I will lead you; follow me.’ He led me down a dark passage, through a forest, then through the clefts of mountains, and said, ‘Here you are safe.’ There were others who had been led to this retreat. The heavenly messenger said. ‘The time of trouble has come as a thief in the night, as the Lord warned you it would come.’

“In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels; but there will be no security for the transgressor of God’s law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts.

“In the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right.”—*Maranatha*, p. 270.

5. A GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE!

- a. With what sober thoughts should we be fortifying the mind right now? Mark 8:38; Revelation 22:7, 12.

“We are anxiously awaiting [the Lord’s] coming. We need to keep the armor on. We need to be all that the name Christian signifies. We need to live in habitual communion with God our Saviour, abiding in Him.

“Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. . . . Shall we then be timid and cowardly because of the trials we meet as we advance? Shall we not meet them without repining and complaints?”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 167.

- b. What happens when Jesus returns? Psalm 50:3–6; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18.

“Soon appeared the great white cloud. On it sat the Son of man. . . .

“No language can describe the glory of the scene. The living cloud of majesty and unsurpassed glory came still nearer, and we could clearly behold the lovely person of Jesus. He did not wear a crown of thorns but a crown of glory. . . .

“On either side of the cloudy chariot were wings, and beneath it were living wheels; and as the cloudy chariot rolled upward, the wheels cried, Holy, and the wings, as they moved, cried, Holy, and the retinue of holy angels around the cloud cried, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. And the saints in the cloud cried, Glory, Alleluia. And the chariot rolled upward to the holy city.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, pp. 206, 208.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Today, as everyone is so busy, what plot does the enemy of souls have?
2. Explain the threefold union of Revelation 16 and its global deceptive power.
3. The serious message of country living has been taught since the 1880s, but at what point does it become irreversibly necessary for the believers’ safety?
4. Is the test looming on the horizon simply about resting on Sunday? Explain.
5. What should be foremost in our mind as we prepare for Jesus’ return?

The Final Outcome

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 86.

Suggested Readings: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 658–678.
Education, pp. 301–309.

Sunday

September 24

1. THE DOOM OF A FALLEN PLANET

- a. What happens to planet Earth when its Maker returns? Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6; Jeremiah 4:23–26.

“At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants. . . .

“The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

- b. What happens to the one who corrupted the planet? Revelation 20:1, 2.

“[Jeremiah 4:23–26 quoted.] Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years.”—*Ibid.*, p. 659.

2. THE THOUSAND YEARS

- a. Explain the sense in which Satan is chained for 1,000 years. Revelation 20:3.
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“Limited to the earth, [Satan] will not have access to other worlds to tempt and annoy those who have never fallen. It is in this sense that he is bound: there are none remaining, upon whom he can exercise his power. He is wholly cut off from the work of deception and ruin which for so many centuries has been his sole delight. . . .

“Even the wicked are now placed beyond the power of Satan, and alone with his evil angels he remains to realize the effect of the curse which sin has brought. . . .

“For a thousand years, Satan will wander to and fro in the desolate earth to behold the results of his rebellion against the law of God. During this time his sufferings are intense.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 659, 660.

- b. What task is done in heaven by the saved from all generations who will ascend to meet Christ in the air? Revelation 20:4, 6; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.
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“In union with Christ [the saints] judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. . . .

“Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people.”—*Ibid.*, p. 661.

- c. To what spot on the earth does Christ and the new Jerusalem descend from heaven at the close of the thousand years? Zechariah 14:4, 9; Revelation 21:1, 2.
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“As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.”—*Ibid.*, p. 663.

- d. What is the attitude of the people raised at the resurrection that follows the thousand years? Revelation 20:5 (first part), 7, 8.
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3. DECEPTION INTO DESTRUCTION

- a. Explain the last deceptive ploy of Satan, and how its results are executed. Revelation 20:9–15; Malachi 4:1.
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“As the wicked dead are raised and [Satan] sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans. The wicked are Satan’s captives. In rejecting Christ they have accepted the rule of the rebel leader. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. He claims to be the prince who is the rightful owner of the world and whose inheritance has been unlawfully wrested from him. He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny. The presence of Christ having been removed, Satan works wonders to support his claims. He makes the weak strong and inspires all with his own spirit and energy. He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints and to take possession of the City of God. . . .

“With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 663, 664.

“Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire. . . .

“The wicked receive their recompense in the earth. . . . Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished ‘according to their deeds’ (Psalm 28:4). The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 672, 673.

4. PRESERVED FOR ETERNITY

- a. How does Christ protect the just from the unquenchable fire? Psalm 84:11.

“While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

- b. What glorious event crowns the cleansing of the earth? Revelation 21:1.

“The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.”—*Ibid.*, p. 674.

- c. For us today, dwelling still on a planet ridden with suffering and problems, where should we look for our eternal home? 2 Peter 3:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love.”—*Early Writings*, p. 289.

“A fear of making the saints’ inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon the new earth as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them. Those who accept the teachings of God’s Word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 430.

- d. What magnificent description does John give us of the new earth? Revelation 21:3, 4; 22:1–5.

“There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

5. EVERLASTING JOY

- a. What condition is to be restored on the new earth? Isaiah 35:5–10; 65:25. How is the heavenly life depicted?

“I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus. Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts—the lion, the lamb, the leopard, and the wolf, all together in perfect union.”—*Early Writings*, p. 18.

“The fierce will become gentle, and the timid trustful.”—*Education*, p. 304.

- b. Around whom will everything center for all eternity, and how will this be acknowledged? Zechariah 13:6; Revelation 7:15–17; 5:13.
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“No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin. One reminder alone remains: our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 489.

“The years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. . . .

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so important to prepare for the soon return of Christ?
2. Clarify the often misunderstood purpose of the millennium.
3. Explain the last ploy of Satan, and why people will be tricked by it.
4. What do we need to realize about life in the earth made new?
5. What is the theme of eternity, and why should we appreciate it now?

The Blessed Hope

"When the Saviour was about to be separated from his disciples, He comforted them in their sorrow with the assurance that He would come again: 'Let not your heart be troubled.' . . . 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' . . . 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself' (John 14:1-3). 'The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.' 'Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations. (Matthew 25:31, 32).

"The angels who lingered upon Olivet after Christ's ascension repeated to the disciples the promise of His return: 'This *same* Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall *so* come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven' (Acts 1:11). And the apostle Paul, speaking by the Spirit of Inspiration, testified: 'The Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God' (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Says the prophet of Patmos: 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.' (Revelation 1:7).

"About His coming cluster the glories of that 'restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:21). Then the long-continued rule of evil shall be broken; 'the kingdoms of this world' will become 'the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever' (Revelation 11:15). 'The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.' 'The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.' He shall be 'for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people' (Isaiah 40:5; 61:11; 28:5).

"It is then that the peaceful and long-desired kingdom of the Messiah shall be established under the whole heaven. . . .

"The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, 'the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' was the 'blessed hope.' When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection, to take place at the Saviour's advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. 'And so,' he said, 'shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words' (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 301, 302.

NOTE

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NOTE

Lined area for notes, consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines.

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 1
for a chapel in
Washington D.C., U.S.A.
(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 5
for Missionary Schools and
Education Projects
(See p. 30.)



SEPTEMBER 2
for Fiji Mission headquarters
(See p. 51.)

