

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



*Brighter
Beams of Light*

TREASURES OF TRUTH (II)

Vol. 99, No. 2

April–June 2023

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

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Foreword

As the sin problem escalates on planet earth, causing society to deteriorate just before the coming of Christ, how vital it is for God's people to be looking to Jesus—not to the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, eternal realities. Therefore, this quarter, Sabbath school students around the world will continue with Part 2 of the *Treasures of Truth* series, "Brighter Beams of Light."

Lawlessness and confusion are everywhere, so we really need God's help to know where to go in life. We need a moral compass. "One writer has likened the attempt to change the law of God to an ancient mischievous practice of turning in a wrong direction a signpost erected at an important junction where two roads met. The perplexity and hardship which this practice often caused was great.

"A signpost was erected by God for those journeying through this world. One arm of this signpost pointed out willing obedience to the Creator as the road to felicity and life, while the other arm indicated disobedience as the path to misery and death. The way to happiness was as clearly defined as was the way to the city of refuge under the Jewish dispensation. But in an evil hour for our race, the great enemy of all good turned the signpost around, and multitudes have mistaken the way."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 179.

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of humanity—and in studying Him and living His law through His strength He provides, we are transformed. "He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 649.

Every provision has been made to prepare us for eternity if we cooperate with His Spirit in giving us a new heart—a new mind. By weaning our affections from this world and fastening them upon Jesus in Heaven, we develop new purpose in life, with eternity in view.

"A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey His word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today, as did the same sin upon ancient Israel."—*The Signs of the Times*, February 12, 1880, Art. B.

"Satan has worked continually to eclipse the glories of the future world and to attract the whole attention to the things of this life. He has striven so to arrange matters that our thought, our anxiety, our labor might be so fully employed in temporal things that we should not see or realize the value of eternal realities. The world and its cares have too large a place, while Jesus and heavenly things have altogether too small a share in our thoughts and affections. We should conscientiously discharge all the duties of everyday life, but it is also essential that we should cultivate, above everything else, holy affection for our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 404, 405.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for a Chapel in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Situated east of Indonesia and North of Australia, Papua New Guinea [PNG] is often referred to as one of the world's last frontiers, the last paradise. It has also often been referred to as the land of the unexpected. PNG is a beautiful country—rich in natural resources, a place where missionaries, medics, and miners go, but



tourists rarely visit. As a developing nation with great cultural and linguistic diversity, PNG has over 800 distinct languages, the most languages spoken in any one country in the world!

The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was established in 1998 and we praise God that the good news has since spread into many new areas in the northern and highland provinces of the country. Churches and groups have sprung up in many areas where witchcraft and heathen practices existed in the past.

For some years, it was in our brethren's heart to reach out and establish the work in the southern part of the country. Port Moresby, the capital city of PNG, is in the south and is mainly accessed by air or sea due to the mountainous terrain and lack of good roads. In 2019 a minister was transferred from the north of PNG to the Port Moresby area and a new mission was started to follow up interests and establish the work around the capital.

According to a number of world reviews, Port Moresby is among the most unliveable cities in the world. Theft, holdups and violence are common in this city and our brethren have experienced this personally while carrying God's work forward there. For the work to successfully go forward, there is a great need of a property in a safe place to build a lighthouse for the Lord in this corner of His vineyard. We realize God's mercy is great and there are many souls to reach in the closing hours of this earth's history, even in great cities like Nineveh! We therefore ask you to join us in this work and give generously so this lighthouse can be established and the work go forward. "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isaiah 42:12). We pray God will richly bless you!

Your brothers and sisters from the Papua New Guinea South Mission

Communication With God

MEMORY TEXT: “This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:14, 15).

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 93–104.

Sunday

March 26

1. A MODEL PRAYER

- a. Why is it so important to stay in touch with our Saviour? John 15:4–7; Proverbs 18:24.

“Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

- b. Since the disciples saw Jesus often in earnest prayer, what did they ask Him to teach them and what model did He provide? Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:9–13.

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- c. Was this model prayer meant to be merely memorized and repeated over and over again? What other lessons can we learn from this instruction? Matthew 6:7.
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2. ADDRESS AND ADORATION

- a. **What do we comprehend by the words at the beginning of this model prayer “Our Father”? Romans 8:15–17; John 20:17.**
-

“Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His ‘little ones,’ dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

- b. **What other important role does God have besides the friendly term, “Our Father”? Psalm 5:1, 2.**
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- c. **According to the next section in this prayer, before asking God for help, what important point are we to express first? Psalms 140:13; 92:1.**
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“ ‘In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:18. This command is an assurance that even the things which appear to be against us will work for our good. God would not bid us be thankful for that which would do us harm.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 255.

- d. **In the example of Jehoshaphat, how is the importance of praise and thanksgiving revealed—even in the midst of battle? 2 Chronicles 20:1–30 (6–12, 21, 22).**
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“We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

“The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth’ God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with ‘thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.’ ”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 103, 104.

3. PETITION AND CLOSING

- a. **Even though we have our temporal needs such as our daily bread, what spiritual application is always to be our primary concern even over our temporal needs?** 1 Kings 17:12–14; John 6:48; 14:13, 14; 15:7.
-

“It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness. And this life we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded. Thus we become one with Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

“To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 100, 101.

- b. **Since the main purpose of prayer is spiritual in nature, what specific request can never be forgotten?** Luke 11:4; Matthew 26:41.
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“Through being overcome with sleep, the disciples heard little of what passed between Christ and the heavenly messengers. Failing to watch and pray, they had not received that which God desired to give them—a knowledge of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They lost the blessing that might have been theirs through sharing His self-sacrifice.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 425.

“God has always given men warning of coming judgments. Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving.”—*Ibid.*, p. 634.

“It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin. All the disciples, by sleeping in that critical hour, sustained a great loss. Christ knew the fiery ordeal through which they were to pass. He knew how Satan would work to paralyze their senses that they might be unready for the trial. Therefore it was that He gave them warning. Had those hours in the garden been spent in watching and prayer, Peter would not have been left to depend upon his own feeble strength. He would not have denied his Lord. Had the disciples watched with Christ in His agony, they would have been prepared to behold His suffering upon the cross. They would have understood in some degree the nature of His overpowering anguish.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 713, 714.

4. ANSWERS TO PRAYER

- a. What are some of the main reasons why prayer is not always answered as we hope? James 4:3; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9.
-

“If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95.

“Oh, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 165.

- b. What is necessary for prayer to be answered—and why? James 1:6, 7.
-

“When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 96.

5. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

- a. In all prayer, what important point are we to always recognize and be ready to yield to? 1 John 5:14, 15.
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“Our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal.

“For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God.”—*Education*, p. 258.

- b. How often are we to pray? Daniel 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
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“God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ’s life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 101.

- c. Are there special circumstances that demand the channel of communication always to be open and what should be our attitude when coming before our Maker? Nehemiah 2:4, 5; Hebrews 4:16.
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the model prayer that Christ taught the disciples?
2. How important is adoration and praise to our Creator?
3. Although temporal needs are important, what should take priority?
4. What would be the greatest hindrances to prayer?
5. How important is it to know God’s will before we pray for specific things?

Delay No Longer

MEMORY TEXT: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

“Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 120.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 537–541.

Sunday

April 2

1. ASKING FOR HELP

- a. Since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), do any deserve to be justified? Job 25:4–6.
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- b. How can we be saved if we do not deserve it? Psalm 55:16; Acts 2:21.
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- c. How is it possible that I, in my sinfulness, can call upon God’s holy name? Psalm 55:17; 2 Chronicles 6:36–39; Romans 8:26; 1 John 1:7, 9.
-

“From these scriptures it is evident that it is not God’s will that you should be distrustful and torture your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. ‘Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you’ (James 4:8). Present your case before Him, pleading the merits of the blood shed for you upon Calvary’s cross. Satan will accuse you of being a great sinner, and you must admit this, but you can say: ‘I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Saviour. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. . . . I have no merit or goodness whereby I may claim salvation, but I present before God the all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is my only plea. The name of Jesus gives me access to the Father. His ear, His heart, is open to my faintest pleading, and He supplies my deepest necessities.’ ”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 105, 106.

2. BEHIND THE SCENES OF REPENTANCE

a. For what are we to pray? Acts 3:19; Psalm 51:1.

b. As we have received forgiveness from sin, we have repented. But how do we arrive at the point of repentance? Acts 5:30, 31; John 16:7, 8.

“Like Nicodemus, we must be willing to enter into life in the same way as the chief of sinners. Than Christ, ‘there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ Acts 4:12. Through faith we receive the grace of God; but faith is not our Saviour. It earns nothing. It is the hand by which we lay hold upon Christ, and appropriate His merits, the remedy for sin. And we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

c. It is true that the Lord has left His people in this world to call sin by its right name (Isaiah 58:1), but what is necessary in order to bring conviction to the heart of one we are trying to reach? John 14:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8.

“The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God.’ Psalm 40:8.”—*Ibid.*, p. 176.

d. Since the work of the Holy Spirit is so important, what warning is given us regarding His reception? Matthew 12:31, 32; Ephesians 4:30.

“We often sorrow because our evil deeds bring unpleasant consequences to ourselves; but this is not repentance. Real sorrow for sin is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals the ingratitude of the heart that has slighted and grieved the Saviour, and brings us in contrition to the foot of the cross. By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh; and as we look upon Him whom we have pierced, we mourn for the sins that have brought anguish upon Him. Such mourning will lead to the renunciation of sin.”—*Ibid.*, p. 300.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GRIEVE HIM?

- a. What specific action causes the Holy Spirit to be grieved? Hebrews 10:26, 27; 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.
-

“What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: ‘If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!’ (Matthew 6:25). For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy’s ground, standing under his black banner.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634.

- b. How does one willfully commit a sin—and is it possible to prevent this? Proverbs 28:13; Hebrews 3:15.
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- c. What are the results of this condition? Proverbs 28:9; Matthew 12:45; 2 Peter 2:20–22.
-

“Sanctification is a daily work. Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are trampling upon one of His requirements. The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit, and separates the soul from God. Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 114.

4. THE POINT OF NO RETURN

- a. **Is the sin against the Holy Spirit something that happens instantaneously—or does it occur gradually? 2 Chronicles 36:16.**

“There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven’s invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.

“In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 324, 325.

- b. **Is it possible to reclaim someone after they have reached the last stages of this process? Jeremiah 8:20; Hosea 4:17; Amos 8:11, 12; Hebrews 6:4–6.**

“For more than a thousand years the Jewish nation had abused God’s mercy and invited His judgments. They had rejected His warnings and slain His prophets. . . .

“In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease.

“That day had come to Jerusalem. Jesus wept in anguish over the doomed city, but He could not deliver her. He had exhausted every resource. In rejecting the warnings of God’s Spirit, Israel had rejected the only means of help. There was no other power by which they could be delivered.

“The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God’s Holy Spirit may read their own condemnation.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 584–587.

5. HOPE

- a. How do we know if we have gone too far in grieving God? Isaiah 30:21.

“In this generation there are many who are treading on the same ground as were the unbelieving Jews. They have witnessed the manifestation of the power of God; the Holy Spirit has spoken to their hearts; but they cling to their unbelief and resistance. God sends them warnings and reproof, but they are not willing to confess their errors, and they reject His message and His messenger. The very means He uses for their recovery becomes to them a stone of stumbling.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 587.

- b. As we look at the plan of salvation, what do we need to realize—and for what should we plead with our Saviour? Psalm 51:11, 12; Hebrews 3:7, 8.

“The rebuke of the Lord is upon His people for their pride and unbelief. He will not restore unto them the joys of His salvation while they are departing from the instructions of His word and His Spirit. He will give grace to those who fear Him and walk in the truth, and He will withdraw His blessing from all that assimilate to the world. Mercy and truth are promised to the humble and penitent, and judgments are denounced against the rebellious.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 190.

“Transformation of character is to be the testimony to the world of the indwelling love of Christ. The Lord expects His people to show that the redeeming power of grace can work upon the faulty character and cause it to develop in symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.

“But in order for us to fulfill God’s purpose, there is a preparatory work to be done. The Lord bids us empty our hearts of the selfishness which is the root of alienation. He longs to pour upon us His Holy Spirit in rich measure, and He bids us clear the way by self-renunciation.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 43.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the specific way in which God invites the sinner to repentance?
2. Because of the important role of the Holy Spirit, what warning is given us?
3. How is it possible for us to grieve the Holy Spirit today?
4. What is involved in sinning against the Holy Ghost?
5. What should we be continually evaluating about our personal life?

Who Shall Be Able to Stand?

MEMORY TEXT: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

“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 doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 635–652.

Sunday

April 9

1. A LITERAL RETURN

- a. Name the most blessed promise in Scripture. John 14:1–3; 2 Timothy 4:8.

“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.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

- b. Why are the details in the prophecies of Christ’s return so important? Matthew 24:30, 31; Hebrews 9:28.

“The doctrine of the world’s conversion and the spiritual reign of Christ was not held by the apostolic church. It was not generally accepted by Christians until about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Like every other error, its results were evil. . . . It induced a feeling of confidence and security that was not well founded and led many to neglect the preparation necessary in order to meet their Lord.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 321, 322.

2. LITERAL AND VISIBLE

a. In what manner will Jesus come again? Acts 1:9–11.

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

“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. . . .

“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 wear a plain seamless coat, but a garment whiter than snow—of dazzling brightness. Jesus is coming! But not to reign as a temporal prince. He will raise the righteous dead, change the living saints to a glorious immortality, and, with the saints, take the kingdom under the whole heaven.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 351.

b. Does this mean that Jesus resurrected in His actual body? John 2:19–21.

“After the resurrection the priests and rulers circulated the report that Christ did not die upon the cross, that He merely fainted, and was afterward revived. Another report affirmed that it was not a real body of flesh and bone, but the likeness of a body, that was laid in the tomb. The action of the Roman soldiers disproves these falsehoods. They broke not His legs, because He was already dead. To satisfy the priests, they pierced His side. Had not life been already extinct, this wound would have caused instant death.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 772.

“After His resurrection He tarried on earth for a season, that His disciples might become familiar with Him in His risen and glorified body. Now He was ready for the leave-taking. He had authenticated the fact that He was a living Saviour. His disciples need no longer associate Him with the tomb. They could think of Him as glorified before the heavenly universe.”—*Ibid.*, p. 829.

3. HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING

- a. Describe the literal return of Jesus Christ from Heaven. Matthew 25:31.
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“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 rested upon His holy brow. Upon His vesture and thigh was a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. His countenance was as bright as the noonday sun, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet had the appearance of fine brass. His voice sounded like many musical instruments. The earth trembled before Him, the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 286, 287.

- b. How many of the living inhabitants of earth will not be able to recognize such a coming? Matthew 24:24–27; Revelation 1:7; 6:16, 17.
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“Terribly will that prayer be fulfilled in the great judgment day. When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven’s King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory—a crown within a crown. In place of that old purple kingly robe, He will be clothed in raiment of whitest white, ‘so as no fuller on earth can white them.’ Mark 9:3. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ Revelation 19:16. 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. They will realize who and what they, poor, feeble, finite beings, have been warring against. In awful agony and horror they will cry to the mountains and rocks, [Revelation 6:16, 17 quoted].”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 739, 740.

4. THE PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

- a. What is the main purpose of Jesus coming again? Matthew 16:27.
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“In His divine arrangement, through His unmerited favor, the Lord has ordained that good works shall be rewarded. We are accepted through Christ’s merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, which we perform, are the fruits of faith; and they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us. Our works in and of themselves have no merit. When we have done all that it is possible for us to do, we are to count ourselves as unprofitable servants. We deserve no thanks from God. We have only done what it was our duty to do, and our works could not have been performed in the strength of our own sinful natures.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1122.

- b. What about those who have died in the hope of seeing Jesus return? 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.
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“As Paul’s epistle was opened and read, great joy and consolation was brought to the church by the words revealing the true state of the dead. Paul showed that those living when Christ should come would not go to meet their Lord in advance of those who had fallen asleep in Jesus. The voice of the Archangel and the trump of God would reach the sleeping ones, and the dead in Christ should rise first, before the touch of immortality should be given to the living.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 258.

- c. What happens to the unrepentant? Mark 8:38; Revelation 6:14–17.
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“In the lives of all who reject truth there are moments when conscience awakens, when memory presents the torturing recollection of a life of hypocrisy and the soul is harassed with vain regrets. But what are these compared with the remorse of that day when ‘fear cometh as desolation,’ when ‘destruction cometh as a whirlwind’! Proverbs 1:27. Those who would have destroyed Christ and His faithful people now witness the glory which rests upon them.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

5. READINESS

- a. In order to be prepared to witness these final events in a state of readiness, what type of character is necessary? 1 John 2:28; 3:1–9.
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“Righteousness has its root in godliness. No human being is righteous any longer than he has faith in God and maintains a vital connection with Him. As a flower of the field has its root in the soil; as it must receive air, dew, showers, and sunshine, so must we receive from God that which ministers to the life of the soul. It is only through becoming partakers of His nature that we receive power to obey His commandments. No man, high or low, experienced or inexperienced, can steadily maintain before his fellowmen a pure, forceful life unless his life is hid with Christ in God. The greater the activity among men, the closer should be the communion of the heart with God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 194.

- b. What are all who are waiting for Christ’s return to be doing? Mark 13:35–37; James 5:7, 8; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6.
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“Because time is short, we should work with diligence and double energy. . . .

“ ‘Watch and pray,’ is an injunction often repeated in the Scriptures. In the lives of those who obey this injunction there will be an undercurrent of happiness that will bless all with whom they are brought in contact. Those who are sour and cross in disposition will become sweet and gentle; those who are proud will become meek and lowly.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 293.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What has been the continuous hope of all believers since the time our first parents were expelled from the Garden of Eden?
2. How do we know that Christ’s coming is literal?
3. Of those living on earth, who will actually be able to see His return?
4. Why is Jesus coming again?
5. How are you getting ready to see Jesus?

When the Sun Sets

MEMORY TEXT: “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” (2 Timothy 2:11).

“Our mortal bodies may die and be laid away in the grave. Yet the blessed hope lives on until the resurrection, when the voice of Jesus calls forth the sleeping dust. We shall then enjoy the fullness of the blessed, glorious hope.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 352.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 551–562.

Sunday

April 16

1. THE DESIRE FOR IMMORTALITY

- a. Why is there death in this world—and what hope has the Lord placed in our hearts? Romans 5:12; 6:23; Ecclesiastes 3:11 (margin).

“Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. . . . And only through Christ can immortality be obtained.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 533.

“In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct. It was Satan’s plan that Adam and Eve should by disobedience incur God’s displeasure; and then, if they failed to obtain forgiveness, he hoped that they would eat of the tree of life, and thus perpetuate an existence of sin and misery. But after man’s fall, holy angels were immediately commissioned to guard the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light having the appearance of a glittering sword. None of the family of Adam were permitted to pass that barrier to partake of the life-giving fruit; hence there is not an immortal sinner.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 60.

2. THE SOUL

- a. Since the soul is composed of the matter made from clay plus the breath of God that was given at creation (Genesis 2:7), what must we realize about what happens at the moment of death? Ecclesiastes 12:7; James 4:14.

“Say not presumptuously, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.’ God may have different plans for you. Life is but a vapor.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1902.

- b. What is the difference between people and animals when death overtakes them? Psalm 49:16, 17; Ecclesiastes 2:15, 16; 3:19, 20.

“The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was ‘the son of God.’

“He was placed, as God’s representative, over the lower orders of being. They cannot understand or acknowledge the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

“Oh, wondrous love of Christ, stooping to heal the guilty and the afflicted! Divinity sorrowing over and soothing the ills of suffering humanity! Oh, marvelous power thus displayed to the children of men! Who can doubt the message of salvation? Who can slight the mercies of a compassionate Redeemer?

“It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic. And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart. He who at the creation ‘spoke, and it was,’ who ‘commanded, and it stood fast,’ (Psalm 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 269, 270.

“In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman,’ God said, ‘and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.’ Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. Before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ.”—*Education*, p. 27.

3. THE STATE OF THE DEAD

- a. Explain what dead people are aware of—and why we need to understand this point clearly. Ecclesiastes 9:3–6; Psalms 115:17; 146:4.
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“Spiritualism is the masterpiece of deception. It is Satan’s most successful and fascinating delusion—one calculated to take hold of the sympathies of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave. Evil angels come in the form of those loved ones, and relate incidents connected with their lives, and perform acts which they performed while living. In this way they lead persons to believe that their dead friends are angels, hovering over them, and communicating with them. These evil angels, who assume to be the deceased friends, are regarded with a certain idolatry, and with many their word has greater weight than the Word of God.”—*This Day With God*, p. 247.

“Spiritualism is about to take the world captive. There are many who think that Spiritualism is upheld through trickery and imposture, but this is far from the truth. Superhuman power is working in a variety of ways, and few have any idea as to what will be the manifestations of Spiritualism in the future. The foundation for the success of Spiritualism has been laid in the assertions that have been made from the pulpits of our land. The ministers have proclaimed as Bible doctrines falsehoods that have originated with the arch deceiver.

“The doctrine of consciousness after death, of the spirits of the dead being in communion with the living, has no foundation in the Scriptures, and yet these theories are affirmed as truth. Through this false doctrine the way has been opened for the spirits of devils to deceive the people in representing themselves as the dead. Satanic agencies personate the dead and thus bring souls into captivity. Satan has a religion, he has a synagogue and devout worshipers.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 602, 603.

- b. Since the dead know not anything, can we pray to past saints to mediate between us and God? 1 Timothy 2:5.
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“The deification of the dead has held a prominent place in nearly every system of heathenism, as has also the supposed communion with the dead. The gods were believed to communicate their will to men, and also, when consulted, to give them counsel. Of this character were the famous oracles of Greece and Rome.”—*Evangelism*, p. 603.

4. HOPE IN THE GRAVE

a. **Contrast the level of hope between two different kinds of people as they descend into the grave. Proverbs 11:7; 14:32; Romans 8:11.**

b. **Explain the difference between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked. John 5:21–29.**

“A distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. . . . They who have been ‘accounted worthy’ of the resurrection of life are ‘blessed and holy.’ ‘On such the second death hath no power.’ Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression—‘the wages of sin.’ They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, ‘according to their works,’ but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: ‘Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.’ And another declares: ‘They shall be as though they had not been.’ Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 544, 545.

c. **How does the Bible refer to that time period when the righteous are dead? Psalm 13:3; Mark 5:39; John 11:11–14.**

“Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 527.

“To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. ‘If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death,’ ‘he shall never taste of death.’ To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and ‘when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.’ John 8:51, 52; Colossians 3:4. . . .

“At His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.”—*Ibid.*, p. 787.

5. THE MANNER OF HIS RESURRECTION

- a. Like Adam, what hope do we need to keep before us? 1 Corinthians 15:12–23.
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“After his expulsion from Eden, Adam’s life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man’s purity, was a fresh reminder of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding, and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. With patient humility he bore, for nearly a thousand years, the penalty of transgression. Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Saviour, and he died in the hope of a resurrection.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 647.

- b. Describe how the resurrection of God’s faithful people will take place. 1 Corinthians 15:42–55.
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“The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call and came forth clothed with glorious immortality, crying, ‘Victory, victory, over death and the grave! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated were united, never more to part.”—*Early Writings*, p. 287.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why are people driven to live and do not want to die?
2. How is the original composition of the soul divided at death?
3. To what does the false idea of the conscious state of the dead lead?
4. What has been the hope of all believers since death first entered the world?
5. How does the body finally unite with the breath of life forever?

The Thousand Years of Desolation (I)

MEMORY TEXT: “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:5, 6).

“The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.”— *The Great Controversy*, p. 654.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 653–661.

Sunday

April 23

1. BEGINNING THE THOUSAND YEARS

- a. What event takes place at the beginning of the thousand years (millennium)? Revelation 20:5.

- b. Who is raised at this first resurrection, and when does that happen? Revelation 20:6 (first half); 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23. What should the reality of the resurrection cause each of us to consider prayerfully?

“Christ appears in His glory, and calls forth the righteous dead. The living saints are changed, and, with the resurrected dead, are borne away from the earth by angels to meet their Lord in the air. The earth is left like a desolate wilderness.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 83.

“People may claim that they have great faith in Jesus and that there is nothing you can do but that Christ will do for you. Now, when Christ shall call forth the dead, it depends wholly upon your course of action whether you have a resurrection to life eternal or a resurrection to damnation.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 55.

2. THE RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

- a. What distinctions characterize the righteous as they resurrect at Christ's coming at the start of the millennium? Revelation 20:4-6.
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"Christ . . . looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

"The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and 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 hour is coming,' Christ said, 'in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.' That voice is to resound through all the habitations of the dead; and every saint who sleeps in Jesus will awake and leave his prison-house. Then the virtue of character we received from Christ's righteousness will ally us to true greatness of the highest order."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 359.

"It is only the blessed and holy who will be ready for the first resurrection; for when Christ comes, He will not change the character. . . . The word of God declares that we must be found blameless, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Now we are to learn obedience, submission to the divine will, that God may work in us to will and to do of His good-pleasure, and that we may work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. But our own efforts are of no avail to atone for sin or to renew the heart. Only the blood of Christ can atone for us; His grace alone can create in us a clean heart, and enable us to obey God's law. In Him is our only hope."—*The Signs of the Times*, February 9, 1891.

- b. Review the manner in which Christ returns for those who have loved Him. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16.
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"Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 271.

3. THE HEAVENLY HOME

- a. **What will happen to the living righteous, together with the resurrected saints? 1 Thessalonians 4:17.**
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“[Christ] was charged with blasphemy, and was condemned to a cruel death, but He burst the fetters of the tomb, and rose from the dead triumphant, and over the rent sepulcher of Joseph He declared, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). All power in heaven and in earth was vested in Him, and the righteous will also come forth from the tomb free in Jesus. They shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead. . . .

“What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! What a wonderful scene will open when Christ shall come to be admired of them that believe! All who were partakers with Christ in His humiliation and sufferings will be partakers with Him in His glory. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead every believing saint who falls asleep in Jesus will come forth from his prison house in triumph. . . .

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

- b. **How will they be gathered together and for what purpose? Matthew 24:29–31; John 14:3; 13:36.**
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“Long have we waited for our Saviour’s return. But nonetheless sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads, and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 254.

“Thank God! It is these mansions that I am looking to. It is not the earthly mansions here, for they are to be shaken down by the mighty earthquake ere long; but it is those heavenly mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for the faithful. We have no home here. We are only pilgrims and strangers here, passing to a better country, even an heavenly.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 354.

4. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WICKED

- a. **What happens to the wicked at Christ's second coming—and why?** 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8; 2:7, 8.
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“The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered. They lament that the result is what it is; but they do not repent of their wickedness.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 654.

“Christ does not here bring to view a temporal millennium, a thousand years in which all are to prepare for eternity. He tells us that as it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes again.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

- b. **Describe this vengeance. Revelation 19:11–16; Isaiah 24:17–22; Jeremiah 25:30–33.**
-

“Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. ‘The Lord hath a controversy with the nations;’ ‘He will give them that are wicked to the sword.’ . . .

“The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 656.

- c. **Describe what happens to all these dead—and the condition of the earth at that time. Revelation 19:17–21; Jeremiah 4:23–29; Isaiah 24:1–4.**
-

“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, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

5. EMPTINESS

- a. **What have the inhabitants of this earth been doing to incur such wrath from a holy God? Isaiah 24:5, 6.**
-

“For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. ‘The Lord hath a controversy with the nations;’ ‘He will give them that are wicked to the sword.’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 656.

- b. **Is this the complete end? Jeremiah 4:27. How long will they remain in this condition? Revelation 20:5.**
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“The wicked had been destroyed, and their dead bodies were lying upon its surface. The wrath of God in the seven last plagues had been visited upon the inhabitants of the earth, causing them to gnaw their tongues from pain and to curse God. The false shepherds had been the signal objects of Jehovah’s wrath. Their eyes had consumed away in their holes, and their tongues in their mouths, while they stood upon their feet. After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood, and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 289, 290.

“The revelator foretells the banishment of Satan and the condition of chaos and desolation to which the earth is to be reduced, and he declares that this condition will exist for a thousand years.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 658.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What event marks the start of the millennium and how does it occur?**
2. **What was the Thessalonians’ fear and how do Paul’s words bring comfort?**
3. **How do the promises of Christ bring us comfort? Which ones specifically?**
4. **Why are the wicked destroyed with the brightness of Christ’s coming?**
5. **How thorough is the final destruction of the wicked?**

First Sabbath Offering for World Missions

Do you want Jesus to come soon? He tells us how that can happen: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

We are to take the gospel to the entire world, yet “how little has been done in comparison with the great work before us! Angels of God are moving upon the minds of the people, and preparing them to receive the warning. Missionaries are needed in fields that have yet been scarcely entered. New fields are constantly opening.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 408, 409.

Where are some of these new fields? New missions recently opened include Central Africa, Sudan, Lesoto, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Benin—plus Côte d’Ivoire, which already has baptized members. Currently, the General Conference is helping with the salaries of pastors and Bible workers in 85 missions worldwide. How much does this cost? In 2021, US\$647,000 was sent for this purpose. How much did we receive in offerings for it? US\$132,826. (That is the honest picture and you can see it is not sustainable!)

Dear brothers and sisters, this is reality. The missions need everyone’s support—and much more of it. Do you want to see the message go to new places? It can happen if we increase our giving to the world missions fund.

“As new fields are opened, the calls for means are constantly increasing. If ever we needed to exercise economy, it is now. . . . A cent seems like a trifle, but a hundred cents make a dollar, and rightly spent may be the means of saving a soul from death. If all the means which has been wasted by our own people in self-gratification had been devoted to the cause of God, there would be no empty treasuries, and missions could be established in all parts of the world.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 290, 291.

Please, dear brothers and sisters, when the First Sabbath Offering is gathered for world missions, remember souls in darkness and give generously, that new areas may receive the present truth. “Our church members should feel a deep interest in home and foreign missions. Great blessings will come to them as they make self-sacrificing efforts to plant the standard of truth in new territory.”—*Christian Service*, p. 184.

May the Lord abundantly bless the gifts and the givers!

Your brethren from the General Conference



The Thousand Years of Desolation (II)

MEMORY TEXT: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4).

“Said the angel, ‘It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that causes the destruction or death of the wicked. At the voice of God the saints will be mighty and terrible as an army with banners, but they will not then execute the judgment written. The execution of the judgment will be at the close of the one thousand years.’ ”—*Early Writings*, p. 52.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 289–295.

Sunday

April 30

1. SATAN’S CONDITION

- a. What happens to Satan during the millennium? Revelation 20:1–3. Explain the “chains”—and how and when they are removed. Revelation 20:5, 7, 8.

“The earth looked like a desolate wilderness. Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns. Ragged rocks, thrown out by the sea, or torn out of the earth itself, were scattered all over its surface. Large trees had been uprooted and were strewn over the land. Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth and see the effects of his rebellion against God’s law. For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen.”—*Early Writings*, p. 290.

“At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. . . . As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

2. JUDGING THE NATIONS AND ANGELS

- a. **What will the saints be doing during the thousand years? Revelation 20:4; 3:21; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.**
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“After the saints are changed to immortality and caught up together with Jesus, after they receive their harps, their robes, and their crowns, and enter the city, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened—the book of life and the book of death. The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible, and according to that men are judged. The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. ‘Behold ye,’ said the angel, ‘the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.’ This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus through the one thousand years in the Holy City before it descends to the earth.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 52, 53.

- b. **Once this work is completed, what happens to the heavenly capital, the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:2, 10; Galatians 4:26.**
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“At the close of the one thousand years, Jesus, with the angels and all the saints, leaves the Holy City, and while He is descending to the earth with them, the wicked dead are raised, and then the very men that ‘pierced Him,’ being raised, will see Him afar off in all His glory, the angels and saints with Him, and will wail because of Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 52.

“Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives, whence, after His resurrection, He ascended, and where angels repeated the promise of His return. Says the prophet: ‘The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.’ ‘And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, . . . and there shall be a very great valley.’ ‘And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.’ Zechariah 14:5, 4, 9. 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.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 662, 663.

3. THE EXECUTIVE JUDGMENT

- a. **Although Satan plans to capture the capital, how does that result in another judgment? Revelation 20:9 (first part), 11, 12.**
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“Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he 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 fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city and regain his throne and his kingdom.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 663.

- b. **How is the judgment executed? Revelation 20:9 (last part), 10; Isaiah 34:8–10.**
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“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 day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10. The earth’s surface seems one molten mass—a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 672, 673.

- c. **How do we know this fire is not for eternity? Jeremiah 17:27; Jude 1:7.**
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4. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED

- a. How is the final cleansing compared to the flood in the time of Noah? 2 Peter 3:10–13.
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“While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield. Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 673.

“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.

- b. How thorough is this destruction? Malachi 4:1–3; Psalm 37:10.
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“The saints will rest in the Holy City and reign as kings and priests one thousand years; then Jesus will descend with the saints upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount will part asunder and become a mighty plain for the Paradise of God to rest upon. The rest of the earth will not be cleansed until the end of the one thousand years, when the wicked dead are raised, and gather up around the city. The feet of the wicked will never desecrate the earth made new. Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them—burn them up root and branch. Satan is the root, and his children are the branches. The same fire that will devour the wicked will purify the earth.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 51, 52.

“One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.’ Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s glory, there ‘the hiding of His power.’ ‘Mighty to save,’ through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God’s mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

5. THE EARTH PURIFIED

- a. **What happens to the universe as we know it? Revelation 21:1, 5. In what will the universe then be united? Revelation 5:13.**
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“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. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. . . .

“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.

- b. **In view of this reality, what should we ask ourselves? Hebrews 3:7, 8.**
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“It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ . . .

“What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What imprisons Satan and how is he released?**
2. **In what kind of work are the saints involved for a thousand years and what are the results?**
3. **Although Satan tries to conquer the city of God, how does that bring about the final judgment?**
4. **How is the entire universe purified?**
5. **What is the final condition of the universe of God?**

The Saints' Inheritance

MEMORY TEXT: “As it is written, 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).

“When God gave Christ to our world, He gave in this one gift all the treasures of heaven. He held back nothing. He can do no more than He has done to bring men to repentance. He has no means held in reserve for their salvation.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 17, 1901.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 355–374.

Sunday

May 7

1. THE ORIGINAL ESTATE

- a. What did God prepare for the crowning work of His creation—and why? Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18; 43:7.

“Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 24.

- b. Describe what came as a result of rebellion (Genesis 3:9–14) against God’s original purpose? Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23.

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- c. Why did man continue living after his sin—and what is involved in the plan of redemption? Luke 19:10; Revelation 13:8 (last part); Micah 4:8.

“[Christ] was the Redeemer before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 210.

2. THE THIRD HEAVEN

- a. How many heavens exist? 2 Corinthians 12:2 (last part). Describe the first one. Genesis 1:6–8; 6:7.
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- b. What is in the second heaven? Genesis 15:5; Psalm 8:3; Deuteronomy 4:19.
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- c. Where is the place that God is taking His people—and who dwells there? 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4; Revelation 2:7; 22:1, 2; 1 Kings 8:30.
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“A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father’s house. Those who accept the teachings of God’s word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, ‘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. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called ‘a country’. Hebrews 11:14–16. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. 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*, pp. 674, 675.

- d. What work is Jesus doing in that place? Hebrews 8:1; 9:27; 1 Timothy 2:5.

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

“The intercession of Christ in our behalf is that of presenting His divine merits in the offering of Himself to the Father as our substitute and surety; for He ascended up on high to make an atonement for our transgressions.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 105.

3. THE NEW EARTH

- a. Did Jesus promise us a real place—and where will we go if we are found faithful? John 14:1–3; Matthew 5:12.
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- b. What brings the greatest joy in life—and what was the hope of our faithful forefathers? Luke 10:20; Hebrews 11:13–16.
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“There is perfect order and harmony in the Holy City. All the angels that are commissioned to visit the earth hold a golden card, which they present to the angels at the gates of the city as they pass in and out. Heaven is a good place.”—*Early Writings*, p. 39.

- c. How long will we spend in the new earth? Matthew 5:5; Romans 4:13.
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“The word of God had not failed; neither did it meet its final accomplishment in the occupation of Canaan by the Jewish people. ‘To Abraham and his seed were the promises made.’ Galatians 3:16. Abraham himself was to share the inheritance. The fulfillment of God’s promise may seem to be long delayed—for ‘one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day’ (2 Peter 3:8); it may appear to tarry; but at the appointed time ‘it will surely come, it will not tarry.’ Habakkuk 2:3. The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan, but the whole earth. So says the apostle, ‘The promise, that he should be the *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.’ Romans 4:13. And the Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ. All that are Christ’s are ‘Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise’—heirs to ‘an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away’—the earth freed from the curse of sin. Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4. For ‘the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;’ and ‘the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.’ Daniel 7:27; Psalm 37:11.

“God gave to Abraham a view of this immortal inheritance, and with this hope he was content. ‘By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.’ Hebrews 11:9, 10.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 169, 170.

4. A HAPPY PLACE

- a. Why did Jesus come to save us—not *in* our sins, but *from* our sins? Matthew 1:21; Revelation 21:27; 22:14.
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“Jesus came to this world to save His people from their sins. He will not save us in our sins, for He is not the minister of sin. We must respond to the divine drawing of Christ, and repent of our sins, and unite ourselves to Christ as the branch is united to the vine. Jesus says, ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ Jesus is drawing all men, and who will respond to this drawing? Many will be greatly influenced by the life and example of those who profess to have responded to this divine love that is drawing the hearts of men. Many will watch you who profess His name, to see whether it makes you better men and better women. They will watch to see if you are Christlike, kind and courteous in your family. The Lord has said, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’” —*The Signs of the Times*, February 15, 1892.

“It is no real evidence that you are a Christian because your emotion is stirred, your spirit stirred by truth. The question is, Are you growing up into Christ, your living head? Is the grace of Christ manifested in your life? God gives His grace to men, that they may desire more of His grace. God’s grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient, for spiritual life will be seen developing from within. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. We each need a personal Saviour or we shall perish in our sins. Let the question be asked of our souls, Are we growing up unto Christ, our living head? Am I gaining advanced knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent? We do not see the plants grow in the field, and yet we are assured that they do grow, and may we not know of our own spiritual strength and growth?” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 163.

- b. What kind of experience can we hope for in that new place? Isaiah 33:24; 35:1–10; Revelation 21:4; 22:3.
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“All tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the redeemed stand around the throne of God.” —*My Life Today*, p. 348.

5. PREPARATION

- a. **How can we in our human language describe the third heaven? 1 Corinthians 2:9.**
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“Even in this life we may catch glimpses of [God’s] presence and may taste the joy of communion with Heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God’s image, may attain.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 602.

“It takes all of eternity to unfold the glories and bring out the precious treasures of the Word of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1107.

- b. **Why has God given us a chance to hear these wonderful things about heaven? John 3:16, 17; Matthew 6:19–21.**
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“Christ delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased and through whom he has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes His children His agents in the accomplishment of this work, and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward.

“But what is this compared with the joy that will be theirs in the great day of final revealing? ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face;’ now we know in part, but then we shall know even as also we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 308, 309.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain why man was able to continue life after he fell into sin.
2. Will we really spend eternity in a place called “Heaven”? Please explain.
3. Explain the eternal inheritance of the redeemed and the hope of Abraham in such a place.
4. Describe the new heaven and new earth.
5. How is it possible to spend eternity in such a place?

God's Day of Love

MEMORY TEXT: “And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20:20).

“God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath to remind him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.

Suggested Reading: *Child Guidance*, pp. 527–537.

Sunday

May 14

1. ETERNAL LIFE

- a. What must we realize about the only ones who will have the privilege of going to that better land? Revelation 22:12–14; James 2:10.
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“While [many] refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in willful violation of one of His commands.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 634.

- b. What should we be doing with this law and where should it be kept? 2 Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 8:10.
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“We are to compare our characters with the infallible standard of God's law. In order to do this, we must search the Scriptures, measuring our attainments by the word of God.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 14, 1893.

2. THE PROPHESED RESTORATION

- a. What prophecy shows that God's people will have a special regard for His moral law of Ten Commandments? Jeremiah 6:16; Isaiah 58:12.
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“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.

- b. Name the specific point that needs to be considered in this restoration and explain the result. Isaiah 58:13, 14.
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“When the Sabbath commences, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord's. We should not do ourselves, nor suffer our children to do, any manner of our own work for a livelihood, or anything which could have been done on the six working days. Friday is the day of preparation. Time can then be devoted to making the necessary preparation for the Sabbath and to thinking and conversing about it. Nothing which will in the sight of Heaven be regarded as a violation of the holy Sabbath should be left unsaid or undone, to be said or done upon the Sabbath. God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes. The fourth commandment is virtually transgressed by conversing upon worldly things or by engaging in light and trifling conversation.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 702, 703.

“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

3. SABBATH REFORMATION

- a. How did God seek to correct the attitude of His people towards the Sabbath—and what would happen if they continued to reject it? Jeremiah 17:24–27.
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“On one occasion, by command of the Lord, the prophet took his position at one of the principal entrances to the city and there urged the importance of keeping holy the Sabbath day. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were in danger of losing sight of the sanctity of the Sabbath, and they were solemnly warned against following their secular pursuits on that day. . . .

“Thus the prophet stood firmly for the sound principles of right living so clearly outlined in the book of the law. But the conditions prevailing in the land of Judah were such that only by the most decided measures could a change for the better be brought about.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 411, 412.

- b. How do the same actions create similar consequences? 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6. Has God changed? Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8.
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“Wherever the cause exists, the same results will follow. He who deliberately stifles his convictions of duty because it interferes with his inclinations will finally lose the power to distinguish between truth and error. The understanding becomes darkened, the conscience callous, the heart hardened, and the soul is separated from God. Where the message of divine truth is spurned or slighted, there the church will be enshrouded in darkness; faith and love grow cold, and estrangement and dissension enter. Church members center their interests and energies in worldly pursuits, and sinners become hardened in their impenitence.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 378, 379.

“Today Satan is using the same devising to introduce the same evils, and his efforts are followed by the same results that in the days of Israel laid so many in their graves.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 4, 1909.

“The same danger exists today among that people who profess to be the repository of God’s law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments should preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved of evil, and blame God’s servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 12, 1880, Art. B.

4. DIFFICULTIES

- a. **How do we know that the Sabbath existed prior to Mount Sinai? Exodus 20:8; 16:4, 5. How did the Hebrews show spite to that same law? Exodus 16:27–30.**
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“Every week during their long sojourn in the wilderness the Israelites witnessed a threefold miracle, designed to impress their minds with the sacredness of the Sabbath: a double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time it became unfit for use.

“In the circumstances connected with the giving of the manna, we have conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was not instituted, as many claim, when the law was given at Sinai. Before the Israelites came to Sinai they understood the Sabbath to be obligatory upon them. In being obliged to gather every Friday a double portion of manna in preparation for the Sabbath, when none would fall, the sacred nature of the day of rest was continually impressed upon them. And when some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, the Lord asked, ‘How long *refuse ye* to keep My commandments and My laws?’ ”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 296, 297.

- b. **Was this an isolated problem in the wilderness with the Sabbath issue? Explain. Ezekiel 20:10–13.**
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“During the entire forty years in the wilderness, the people were every week reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath, by the miracle of the manna. Yet even this did not lead them to obedience. Though they did not venture upon so open and bold transgression as had received such signal punishment, yet there was great laxness in the observance of the fourth commandment. God declares through His prophet, ‘My Sabbaths they greatly polluted.’ Ezekiel 20:13–24. And this is enumerated among the reasons for the exclusion of the first generation from the Promised Land. Yet their children did not learn the lesson. Such was their neglect of the Sabbath during the forty years’ wandering, that though God did not prevent them from entering Canaan, He declared that they should be scattered among the heathen after the settlement in the Land of Promise.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 409, 410.

5. AN IMPORTANT MEANING

- a. **How does the Sabbath commandment show that it is not a new commandment? Exodus 20:8–11.**

“The Sabbath is not introduced as a new institution but as having been founded at creation. It is to be remembered and observed as the memorial of the Creator’s work. Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it distinguishes the true God from all false gods. All who keep the seventh day signify by this act that they are worshippers of Jehovah. Thus the Sabbath is the sign of man’s allegiance to God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

- b. **Where can we find the original command and what significance does this Sabbath institution have upon the true people of God? Genesis 2:1–3; Ezekiel 20:20.**

“Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and He then blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest for man.”—*Ibid.*, p. 111.

“Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, ‘God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,’—set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s power and His love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 281.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What is the relationship between eternal life and the Ten Commandments?**
2. **What are we to learn from the prophesied reformation on the Sabbath issue?**
3. **In our time, what are the consequences of having the same lax approach as in the days of Jeremiah?**
4. **How prevalent was the disregard of the Sabbath in the wilderness and what were the consequences?**
5. **What significance does the Sabbath day have to you personally?**

The New Testament Sabbath

MEMORY TEXT: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9).

“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44–51.

Sunday

May 21

1. OUR EXAMPLE

- a. How will we live if we truly love Jesus and follow His example? John 14:15; 15:10. What did He do on the Sabbath? Luke 4:16, 31.

“What is the evidence of conversion?—‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14:15). ‘If you love Me, let not your love be merely like the supposed feeling of attachment between people. Genuine love lies in the keeping of My commandments.’ The love that will yield willing obedience is not a fickle thing, but a strong, fixed principle, revealed in word and action.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 291.

“Jesus made an infinite sacrifice. Nothing less than the life of God’s beloved Son would suffice to pay the heavy debt that we had incurred by breaking the law of God. He took on Him our nature, and became sin for us, that we might have ‘remission of sins that are past,’ and through His divine strength and grace, might fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. Whoever takes the position that it makes no difference whether or not we keep the commandments of God, is not acquainted with Christ. Jesus says, ‘I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love;’ and those who follow Jesus will do as He has done.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 6, 1888.

- b. What should we do with His example? 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6.

2. CRUCIFIXION

- a. **How do we know that Jesus was crucified on the preparation day—and which day is that? Luke 23:52–56; Mark 15:42.**
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“That was a never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath to the sorrowing disciples, and also to the priests, rulers, scribes, and people. At the setting of the sun on the evening of the preparation day the trumpets sounded, signifying that the Sabbath had begun. The Passover was observed as it had been for centuries, while He to whom it pointed had been slain by wicked hands, and lay in Joseph’s tomb.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 774.

“At last Jesus was at rest. The long day of shame and torture was ended. As the last rays of the setting sun ushered in the Sabbath, the Son of God lay in quietude in Joseph’s tomb. His work completed, His hands folded in peace, He rested through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day. . . .

“Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven. Glorious to the eyes of heavenly beings was the promise of the future. A restored creation, a redeemed race, that having conquered sin could never fall,—this, the result to flow from Christ’s completed work, God and angels saw. With this scene the day upon which Jesus rested is forever linked. For ‘His work is perfect;’ and ‘whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever.’ Deuteronomy 32:4; Ecclesiastes 3:14. When there shall be a ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph’s tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as ‘from one Sabbath to another’ (Isaiah 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 769, 770.

- b. **Why didn’t the believers finish preparing the body of Christ on this first Sabbath after the crucifixion? Luke 23:56; Mark 15:42–47.**
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“The disciples rested on the Sabbath, sorrowing for the death of their Lord, while Jesus, the King of glory, lay in the tomb.”—*Early Writings*, p. 181.

- c. **When did they go with the plan to complete their task? Mark 16:1, 2.**
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3. THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- a. **What prophecy of Jesus showed that the church would respect the Sabbath 40 years after His resurrection? Matthew 24:15–20; 5:17.**
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“He who made the Sabbath did not abolish it, nailing it to His cross. The Sabbath was not rendered null and void by His death. Forty years after His crucifixion it was still to be held sacred. For forty years the disciples were to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 630.

“Christ made the Sabbath, and He never abolished it. The Sabbath was not rendered null and void by the crucifixion, as many claim. Christ’s death on the cross is an unanswerable argument in favor of the changeless character of every precept of God’s holy law. . . .

“As the head of the human family, He lived every precept, every jot, every tittle, of the law. He lived in humanity the life that He requires His followers to live, and therefore there is no excuse for any one to fail of reaching the standard of perfection.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 20, 1898.

- b. **What was the regular custom of the apostles on the seventh-day Bible Sabbath? Acts 18:1–4.**
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“When [Paul] had finished, and the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles still lingered, and entreated that the same words might be spoken unto them the next Sabbath day. The apostles created a great interest in the place, among both Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged the believers and converts to stand fast in their faith, and to continue in the grace of God. The interest to hear the words of the apostles was so great that the whole city came together on the next Sabbath day.”—*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pp. 48, 49.

- c. **What can we learn from Paul’s practice when there was no synagogue in a place where he visited? Acts 16:12, 13.**
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“We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out-of-doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 533, 534.

4. THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

- a. **When Christ first appeared after His resurrection, why had the disciples assembled? How does His second visit further confirm that He was not establishing a different day of worship? John 20:19, 26.**

“Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and when holy beings of both Heaven and earth were astir on the morning of the first day of the week, He rose from the grave to renew His work of teaching His disciples. But this fact does not consecrate the first day of the week, and make it a Sabbath.”—*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 204.

- b. **How does setting aside one’s offerings at home show that the first day was not instituted to be a special day of worship? 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. Does breaking bread show that a specific day or night is designated as a special day of weekly worship? Acts 2:42, 46.**
- c. **Why was the meeting in Troas held until past midnight? Acts 20:8–12. When is midnight of the first day of the week in modern times? Genesis 1:5; Leviticus 23:32.**

“The fact that their beloved teacher was about to depart, had called together a larger company than usual. They assembled in an upper room on the third story, the coolest and pleasantest place for such a gathering on that warm spring evening. The nights were then dark, but many lights were burning in the chamber. Paul’s mind was impressed with a sense of the perils that awaited him, and the uncertainty of again meeting with his brethren; he had matters of great interest and importance to present before them; and in the earnestness of his love and solicitude for them, he preached until midnight.”—*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pp. 196, 197.

- d. **Which day is actually the Lord’s day—and how important is it for us to realize this? Revelation 1:10; Mark 2:28; Isaiah 58:13.**

“If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls ‘My holy day,’ you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 235.

5. A MEMORIAL

- a. Of what is the Sabbath a memorial? Exodus 31:13; Genesis 2:1–3.

“The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God’—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. . . . It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, ‘Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.

- b. How is it a memorial of our personal redemption? Deuteronomy 5:15. How does this heart change take place? Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Psalm 51:10.

“It is the service of love that God values. When this is lacking, the mere round of ceremony is an offense to Him. So with the Sabbath. It was designed to bring men into communion with God; but when the mind was absorbed with wearisome rites, the object of the Sabbath was thwarted. Its mere outward observance was a mockery.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 286.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What example did Christ give regarding Sabbath observance?
2. How do the events surrounding the crucifixion clearly show that the Sabbath remained intact?
3. What kind of custom regarding the Sabbath did the apostles continue?
4. Explain why the first day of the week has no designation as an official day of worship.
5. What is the most important aspect of Sabbathkeeping?

First Sabbath Offering for Headquarters and a Chapel in Hosanna, Ethiopia

Ethiopia, a country known for its ancient civilization, is bordered by South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia. Among the population of nearly 120 million, the people of Ethiopia profess a number of faiths—mostly Abrahamic—with Ethiopian Orthodox, P’ent’ay (Evangelical Protestant), and Roman Catholic believers comprising 67.3% of the people, followed by Islam at 31.3%. There is also a small Jewish community, plus some members of the Bahá’í faith.



The SDARM message came to Ethiopia around 20 years ago when some brethren and sisters, touched by the Holy Spirit, started to read and pray concerning the present truth. Soon afterwards, the SDARM brethren visited us and we were organized as a mission.

Hosanna (also known as Hosaena) is a large city 139 miles (225 km.) from Addis Ababa, the nation’s capital. Hosanna is where we plan to build the headquarters for the Ethiopian Northern Union Mission.

This Union mission was established in 2020, when the Ethiopian Union Mission became three separate Union missions in the south—an area with around 40 million souls. We have limited resources, but our work is expanding. Currently the Ethiopian Northern Union Mission has more than 26 local churches. It covers the vast region from the city of Hosanna up to the Kenyan border.

We have church members in Hosanna—and for more than 20 years, they have not had a house of worship. But now we praise the Lord because we trust and believe that our church members around the world are going to change this history and help us build a chapel and headquarters here to serve as the center for our Union.

From this location, our aim is to promote the everlasting gospel not only in Hosanna but also the neighboring cities up to the border of Kenya. This monument to the Lord is to be a shining light for this entire area—and we need your help. Thus, we heartily appeal to all our brethren, sisters, and youth worldwide to donate generously to this project, “being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:11). For your generous help we would like to express our deepest thanks and warm regards.

Your brethren from Ethiopian Northern Union Mission, Hosanna

Empires Struggle for Supremacy

MEMORY TEXT: “And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another” (Daniel 7:3).

“Sacred history was one of the studies in the schools of the prophets. In the record of His dealings with the nations were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. So today we are to consider the dealings of God with the nations of the earth. We are to see in history the fulfillment of prophecy, to study the workings of Providence in the great reformatory movements, and to understand the progress of events in the marshaling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 307.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 522–538.

Sunday

May 28

1. WIND AS A SYMBOL

- a. What does the wind usually represent in prophecy? Jeremiah 25:32, 33; 4:13.

“Winds are a symbol of strife.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

“[In the book of Revelation,] John sees the elements of nature—earthquake, tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God’s church. The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. The mighty angel is seen ascending from the east (or sunrising). This mightiest of angels has in his hand the seal of the living God, or of Him who alone can give life, who can inscribe upon the foreheads the mark or inscription, to whom shall be granted immortality, eternal life. It is the voice of this highest angel that had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed, and until he should give the summons to let them loose.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 444, 445.

2. WATER, BEASTS, AND WINGS

- a. We often find different prophetic illustrations around some sort of water or sea, especially in connection with the wind. What does that represent? Revelation 17:15.

“Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 440.

- b. What does God use to illustrate earthly kingdoms or empires? Daniel 7:17, 23.

“To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah’s kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1171.

- c. Oftentimes a prophet saw a beast flying with wings—totally contrary to the natural existence of the animal. How do these wings symbolize speed and tenacity, as illustrated by the eagle? Habakkuk 1:6–10.

“In her endeavors to reach her home, the eagle is often beaten down by the tempest to the narrow defiles of the mountains. The clouds, in black, angry masses sweep between her and the sunny heights where she secures her nest. For a while she seems bewildered, and dashes this way and that, beating her strong wings as if to sweep back the dense clouds. . . . At last she dashes upward into the blackness, and gives a shrill scream of triumph as she emerges, a moment later, in the calm sunshine above. The darkness and tempest are all below her, and the light of heaven is shining about her. She reaches her loved home in the lofty crag, and is satisfied. It was through darkness that she reached the light.”—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 102, 103.

“There is great need of men who can use the press to the best advantage, that the truth may be given wings to speed it to every nation, and tongue, and people.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 25.

3. THE LION

- a. Since beasts represent kingdoms, what nation is symbolized by the lion of Daniel 7:4, and how did that nation fulfill its role in history? Jeremiah 4:6, 7; 50:17, 43, 44.
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“[God] revealed His determination to bring chastisement upon the nation that had turned from Him to serve the gods of the heathen. Within the lifetime of some who were even then making inquiry regarding the future, He would miraculously shape the affairs of the ruling nations of earth and bring the Babylonians into the ascendancy. These Chaldeans, ‘terrible and dreadful,’ were to fall suddenly upon the land of Judah as a divinely appointed scourge. Verse 7. The princes of Judah and the fairest of the people were to be carried captive to Babylon; the Judean cities and villages and the cultivated fields were to be laid waste; nothing was to be spared.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 385, 386.

- b. How does the Lord describe the mighty empire of Babylon at its peak under Nebuchadnezzar—and why? Jeremiah 27:4–8.
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“Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor, and acknowledged even by Inspiration as ‘a king of kings’ (Ezekiel 26:7). Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. . . .

“An idolater by birth and training, and at the head of an idolatrous people, he had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and God was able to use him as an instrument for the punishment of the rebellious and for the fulfillment of the divine purpose. ‘The terrible of the nations’ (Ezekiel 28:7), it was given Nebuchadnezzar, after years of patient and wearing labor, to conquer Tyre; Egypt also fell a prey to his victorious armies; and as he added nation after nation to the Babylonian realm, he added more and more to his fame as the greatest ruler of the age.

“It is not surprising that the successful monarch, so ambitious and so proud-spirited, should be tempted to turn aside from the path of humility, which alone leads to true greatness. In the intervals between his wars of conquest he gave much thought to the strengthening and beautifying of his capital, until at length the city of Babylon became the chief glory of his kingdom, ‘the golden city,’ ‘the praise of the whole earth.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 514, 515.

4. THE BEAR

- a. **As the bear followed the lion, what nation came on the scene after the first? Explain its role in the history of nations. Isaiah 14:3, 4; Daniel 7:5; 5:30, 31.**

“Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 501, 502.

“In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf.”—*Ibid.*, p. 552.

- b. **Where was Medo-Persia’s overthrow of Babylon prophesied, and to what extent did it fulfill the vastness of its world-empire status? Jeremiah 25:12; Isaiah 44:26–28; 45:1–6, 13; Esther 1:1.**

“Upon [Darius’] death, within about two years of the fall of Babylon, Cyrus succeeded to the throne, and the beginning of his reign marked the completion of the seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from their Judean home to Babylon.

“The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.

“As the king saw the words foretelling, more than a hundred years before his birth, the manner in which Babylon should be taken; as he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe, . . . his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 556, 557.

5. THE LEOPARD

- a. Since the leopard followed the bear, what nation followed Medo-Persia as the next great empire? Daniel 7:6; 8:5–7, 20, 21.

“The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God’s law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 502.

- b. What do horns represent, and how are they similar to the four heads in this animal? Daniel 8:8, 22. How did their proud philosophy influence the world—and how does the gospel stand in contrast to such philosophy? 1 Corinthians 1:19–25; Colossians 2:8.

“Is it safe to trust our youth to the guidance of those blind leaders who study the sacred oracles with far less interest than they manifest in the classical authors of ancient Greece and Rome?”—*The Review and Herald*, October 30, 1900.

“The Greeks believed that there was need of elevating the human race, but they regarded the study of philosophy and science as the only means of attaining to true elevation and honor.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 244.

“Paul declared that neither Jewish learning nor Grecian eloquence could reach the mark of the high calling that is in Christ Jesus. The highest eloquence, the greatest physical strength, can not give man power to convict and convert souls. It is a heart-reception of the pure principles of the gospel that makes a man an honor to God.”—*The Central Advance*, April 8, 1903.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we discern God’s purposes in the workings of nations today?
2. How are the characteristics of earthly nations depicted in prophecy?
3. What caused the nation of Babylon to change the way it operated?
4. How does prophecy reveal God’s concern over the affairs of nations?
5. In what ways does the Greek system still influence society today?

The Broken Link

MEMORY TEXT: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

“We are engaged in an important and an essential work, and we must carry on an aggressive warfare. We are to stand for true Protestant principles; for the policies of the papacy will edge their way into every possible place to proscribe liberty of conscience.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 9, 1909.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 49–60, 433–450.

Sunday

June 4

1. THE DREADFUL BEAST WITH IRON TEETH

- a. What description is given of the next prophetic beast, the mighty Roman empire—and how was its cruelty shown in the treatment of the world’s Redeemer? Daniel 7:7; Matthew 27:27–35.

“The decree of imperial Rome for the enrollment of the peoples of her vast dominion has extended to the dwellers among the hills of Galilee. . . . There is no room for [Joseph and Mary] at the crowded inn. In a rude building where the beasts are sheltered, they at last find refuge, and here the Redeemer of the world is born.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 44.

“The multitude were clamorous for the blood of Jesus. They cruelly scourged Him, and put upon Him an old purple kingly robe, and bound His sacred head with a crown of thorns. . . .

“Jesus stood meek and humble before the infuriated multitude, while they offered Him the vilest abuse. They spit in His face—that face from which they will one day desire to hide, which will give light to the city of God and shine brighter than the sun.”—*Early Writings*, p. 170.

- b. What odd distinction eventually occurred in that empire? Daniel 7:19–24.
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2. HE THINKS TO CHANGE GOD'S LAW

- a. How do we know that the law of God cannot be changed? Psalm 111:7, 8; Matthew 5:17–19; Luke 16:17; Revelation 22:14.

“The law of God was written with His own finger on tables of stone, thus showing that it could never be changed or abrogated. It is to be preserved through the eternal ages, immutable as the principles of His government.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 248.

“Death is the wages of sin, and the law cannot be changed in the least to make a way of escape for its transgressor. The anguish of Christ on Calvary’s cross speaks louder than any argument that can be presented, to prove the immutability of the law.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 19, 1892.

“Satan has deceived the Christian world with the story that when Christ died He abolished the law. It was the cross of Calvary that exalted the law of God, and made it honorable. . . . If God could have changed one iota of His law, Jesus need not have come to our world to suffer and die.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 24, 1887.

- b. What power was to develop in the Roman Empire? What does it *think* to do, and which commandments are specifically affected? Daniel 7:23–25; Exodus 20:4–6, 8–11.

“Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 52.

“Papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: ‘He shall *think* to change the times and the law.’ The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 446.

“The great apostate had succeeded in exalting himself ‘above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:4. He had dared to change the only precept of the divine law that unmistakably points all mankind to the true and living God. In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.

3. THE BLASPHEMOUS BEAST

- a. How does the horn power in Daniel 7 “speak great words against the most High,” blasphemously attributing to men the authority and prerogative to forgive sins—and more? Daniel 7:25 (first part); 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

“It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled ‘Lord God the Pope’. . . and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 50.

“Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 55.

“God has never given a hint in His word that He has appointed any man to be the head of the church. The doctrine of papal supremacy is directly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures.”—*Ibid.*, p. 51.

“Another step in papal assumption was taken, when, in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII proclaimed the perfection of the Roman Church. Among the propositions which he put forth was one declaring that the church had never erred, nor would it ever err, according to the Scriptures. But the Scripture proofs did not accompany the assertion.”—*Ibid.*, p. 57.

- b. How do we know that this manifestation of the antichrist is not just a future event but had already begun in the days of the apostles and from established Christianity? 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7; 1 John 2:18, 19; 4:1–3; Acts 20:28–30.

“The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power. . . . [2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7 quoted.]”—*Ibid.*, p. 49.

“The false sabbath has been upheld through superhuman agency in order that God might be dishonored. It is a sign of Satan’s supremacy in the earth.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 12, 1894.

4. A BLOODTHIRSTY CHURCH

- a. **What causes the prophet's beholding such actions of so-called Christians to marvel? Daniel 7:25 (last part); Matthew 24:21, 22; Revelation 13:7; 17:6.**

"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. 'Babylon the great' was 'drunken with the blood of the saints.' The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 59, 60.

"The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent."—*Ibid.*, p. 571.

- b. **What should Christians facing such atrocities from other so-called believers remember that will give them hope? 2 Timothy 3:12; Revelation 2:10; Luke 21:28.**

"Grievous wolves were to enter in, not sparing the flock. But none of these things were to bring discouragement to those whose hopes were centered in Christ. With words of encouragement and good cheer Peter directed the minds of the believers from present trials and future scenes of suffering 'to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 528.

"God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. . . . Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 266, 267.

"In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They bore witness to the power of One mightier than Satan. Wicked men may torture and kill the body, but they cannot touch the life that is hid with Christ in God. They can incarcerate men and women in prison walls, but they cannot bind the spirit.

"Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 576.

5. THE ENDING OF ITS POWER

- a. Since we know that a day in prophecy represents a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), how long was this power to have such persecuting authority? Daniel 7:25 last part (cf. Daniel 4:23, 25, 32); Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5.

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

“The periods here mentioned—‘forty and two months,’ and ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days’—are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. . . . At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 266.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How is the cruelest empire described in prophecy?
2. What part of God’s law is this beast’s special attack—and why?
3. Where does the antichrist come from and what is his chief aim?
4. How does this religious-political power treat God’s faithful people?
5. According to prophecy, when was its oppressive power somewhat diminished?

Enter Into God's Rest

MEMORY TEXT: “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12).

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 350.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 281–289.

Sunday

June 11

1. THE SIGN OF THE NEW COVENANT

- a. How long did God intend for His covenant to last and to which covenant is this referring? Exodus 31:16; Hebrews 8:10.

- b. From what did God rest during creation week and what does rest have to do with the new covenant? Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 35:2; 20:11.

- c. How does rest from physical work illustrate rest in a spiritual sense? Hebrews 4:4, 10; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Ezekiel 20:12.

- d. When a person is born again (John 3:5, 6), what kind of works cease in their life? Galatians 5:19–21; Exodus 31:15.

“To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 350.

2. DIVINE POWER

- a. **Why did the Hebrew nation fail to enter into God's spiritual rest—and what warning then comes to us? Hebrews 4:1, 2; 3:12, 19; 4:4–6.**
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“The cause of Israel's weakness lay in their departure from God by disobedience to His commandments. The reason of the weakness and backsliding of modern Israel is their neglect to obey the divine law. God requires from all mankind obedience to His commandments. The whole world will be judged by the moral law according to their opportunity of becoming acquainted with it, whether by reason, or tradition, or the written word.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1881.

- b. **How did Israel come to this point in their unbelief? Did it occur suddenly—and how did it actually begin? Hebrews 3:8–11, 15–18.**
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“When men yield their hearts to unbelief, they place themselves under the control of Satan, and none can tell to what lengths he will lead them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 389.

- c. **Is it possible to keep the Sabbath holy if we have not experienced spiritual victory in our lives? Explain. 1 John 5:4.**
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“Every failure on the part of the children of God is due to their lack of faith.”—*Ibid.*, p. 657.

“So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. . . .

“No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,’ the Lord said also to them, ‘Ye shall be holy men unto Me.’ Exodus 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

3. JUSTIFICATION

- a. Does justification begin with obedience? How is this manifested in Sabbathkeeping? Romans 3:28; Deuteronomy 5:15.
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“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 111.

“We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

“Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 52.

- b. How does the creation week illustrate the divine power to bring forgiveness and transformation of character? Exodus 31:16, 17; Psalm 51:10.

“The Sabbath is a sign of Christ’s power to make us holy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 288.

- c. Can we say that the same process of creation takes place in conversion? 2 Corinthians 5:17.
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“As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 163.

“When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

4. SANCTIFICATION

- a. How does the Sabbath illustrate sanctification? Leviticus 20:7, 8; Exodus 31:13.
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- b. As God's priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), what must we do weekly just prior to sunset on the sixth day of the week? Nehemiah 13:22, 19.
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- c. What is symbolized by when the shewbread was prepared—and how does this help in sanctification? 1 Chronicles 9:32; John 6:48, 53, 54, 56, 63; Hebrews 4:12.
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"Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God means studying God's word."—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1683.

"As the blood is in the body, so the life of Christ must be in those that present the Word, circulating through them as a vitalizing power. The man is not to be exalted. It is the Holy Spirit that changes the sinners heart, and pardons his transgression and sin, giving him peace, and joy, and light in the Lord. No power but the truth as it is in Jesus can sanctify the heart."—*Letters and Manuscript*, vol. 12 (1897), Ms 138, 1897.

"The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God's word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 393.

- d. What important activity is necessary on the Sabbath, especially as we approach the end of time? Leviticus 23:3; Hebrews 10:24–26.
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"When our brethren voluntarily absent themselves from religious meetings, when God is not thought of and revered, when He is not chosen as their counselor and their strong tower of defense, how soon secular thoughts and wicked unbelief come in, and vain confidence and philosophy take the place of humble, trusting faith."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 426, 427.

"Never entertain the thought that you can be Christians and yet withdraw within yourselves. Each one is a part of the great web of humanity, and the nature and quality of your experience will be largely determined by the experiences of those with whom you associate."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 190.

5. THE SABBATH BLESSING

- a. What do we receive when we thoroughly enjoy the Sabbath in our lives? Isaiah 56:2; 58:14; Psalm 144:15.
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“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

- b. For whom was the Sabbath designed and what does it become when we accept it fully in both a literal manner as well as a spiritual manner? Mark 2:27, 28; Ezekiel 20:20; Hebrews 4:9.
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“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 350.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How important is the new covenant and the new birth to the true keeping of the Sabbath?
2. In order to keep the Sabbath holy, what type of experience do we need?
3. How is justification illustrated in the way God delivered Israel from Egypt?
4. How can a person maintain a sanctified holy experience?
5. What special blessing do we receive when we truly keep the Sabbath as God intended?

The Pleasures of the Sabbath Day

MEMORY TEXT: “They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Isaiah 58:12).

“Ministers should give careful instruction as to the proper observance of the Sabbath. We must be guarded, lest the lax practices that prevail among Sundaykeepers shall be followed by those who profess to observe God’s holy rest day. The line of demarcation is to be made clear and distinct between those who bear the mark of God’s kingdom and those who bear the sign of the kingdom of rebellion.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 353.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 349–368.

Sunday

June 18

1. SIX DAYS

- a. What are the six days of the week designed for—and how important is this in the Christian’s life? Exodus 20:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.
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- b. Explain a biblical day—and what we are to keep in mind on those six days. Genesis 1:5; Leviticus 23:32; Exodus 20:8.
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“All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 353.

“When the Sabbath is thus remembered, the temporal will not be allowed to encroach upon the spiritual. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service.”—*Ibid.*, p. 354.

2. KEYS TO PROPER SABBATHKEEPING

- a. **What is the name of the day before the Sabbath and what is to be done on that day? Mark 15:42; Exodus 16:22, 23.**

“All who are really anxious to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment, will not cook any food upon the Sabbath. They will, in the fear of that God who gave His law from Sinai, deny themselves, and eat food prepared upon the sixth day, even if it is not so palatable. God forbade the children of Israel’s baking and boiling upon the Sabbath.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 225.

“Cooking on the Sabbath should be avoided; but it is not therefore necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather the food prepared the day before should be heated.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 307.

“Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 355.

- b. **What if some things are not finished on that day—and how important is spiritual preparation, too? Luke 23:54–24:1; Matthew 5:23, 24.**

“Many carelessly put off blacking their boots, and shaving, until after the beginning of the Sabbath. This should not be. If any neglect to do such work on a working day, they should have respect enough for God’s holy time to let their beards remain unshaven, their boots rough and brown, until the Sabbath is past. This might help their memory, and make them more careful to do their own work on the six working days.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 25, 1882.

“On this day all differences between brethren, whether in the family or in the church, should be put away. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be expelled from the soul. In a humble spirit ‘confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.’ James 5:16.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 356.

- c. **How important is cleanliness in getting ready for the Sabbath and in places of worship? Exodus 19:10, 11; 30:18–20.**

“All should have a special Sabbath suit, to be worn when attending service in God’s house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The children of God should be pure within and without.”—*Ibid.*, p. 355.

3. SECULAR LABOR

a. What reveals the serious nature of God's commands that guard the Sabbath? Exodus 31:14; Nehemiah 13:15–18.

b. What about carrying burdens and unnecessary travel? Jeremiah 17:21, 22.

“If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or cars on this day. In these matters we should set a right example before our children and youth. In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them to hear, it may be necessary for us to travel on the Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. When starting on a journey we should make every possible effort to plan so as to avoid reaching our destination on the Sabbath.

“When compelled to travel on the Sabbath we should try to avoid the company of those who would draw our attention to worldly things. We should keep our minds stayed upon God and commune with Him. Whenever there is opportunity we should speak to others in regard to the truth. We should always be ready to relieve suffering and to help those in need. In such cases God desires that the knowledge and wisdom He has given us should be put to use. But we should not talk about matters of business or engage in any common, worldly conversation. At all times and in all places God requires us to prove our loyalty to Him by honoring the Sabbath.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 359, 360.

c. What about our words and thoughts? Isaiah 58:13.

“God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes. The fourth commandment is virtually transgressed by conversing upon worldly things or by engaging in light and trifling conversation. Talking upon anything or everything which may come into the mind is speaking our own words. Every deviation from right brings us into bondage and condemnation.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 703.

4. OUR MERCIFUL CREATOR

- a. **How important is worship on the Sabbath day? What is associated with worship? Leviticus 23:3; Acts 15:21; Luke 4:16.**
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- b. **In what should we be involved, especially now—and why? Hebrews 10:24, 25.**
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“Those who do not feel the necessity of seeking the assembly of the saints, with the precious assurance that the Lord will meet with them, show how lightly they value the help that God has provided for them.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 934.

- c. **Is providing relief to those who are suffering considered secular work, or is it consistent with worship? Matthew 12:10–13.**
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“There will always be duties which have to be performed on the Sabbath for the relief of suffering humanity. This is right, and in accordance with the law of Him who says, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.’ But there is danger of falling into carelessness on this point, and of doing that which it is not positively essential to do on the Sabbath.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 50.

- d. **Why did Jesus choose to heal on the Sabbath? John 5:5–9.**
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“[Jesus] had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that had made it a curse instead of a blessing.

“For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda. He could have healed the sick man as well on any other day of the week; or He might simply have cured him, without bidding him bear away his bed. But this would not have given Him the opportunity He desired. A wise purpose underlay every act of Christ’s life on earth. Everything He did was important in itself and in its teaching. Among the afflicted ones at the pool He selected the worst case upon whom to exercise His healing power, and bade the man carry his bed through the city in order to publish the great work that had been wrought upon him. This would raise the question of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the way for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord’s day, and to declare their traditions void.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 206.

5. LESSONS FROM NATURE

- a. Explain another vital aspect of Sabbathkeeping. Exodus 20:11; Romans 1:20; Acts 16:13.

“The Sabbath school and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours. Much of this time parents should spend with their children. In many families the younger children are left to themselves to find entertainment as best they can. Left alone, the children soon become restless and begin to play or engage in some kind of mischief. Thus the Sabbath has to them no sacred significance.

“In pleasant weather let parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Amid the beautiful things of nature tell them the reason for the institution of the Sabbath. Describe to them God’s great work of creation. Tell them that when the earth came from His hand, it was holy and beautiful. Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God. Every sound was music in harmony with the voice of God. Show that it was sin which marred God’s perfect work; that thorns and thistles, sorrow and pain and death, are all the result of disobedience to God. Bid them see how the earth, though marred with the curse of sin, still reveals God’s goodness. . . .

“Tell them of the way of salvation. . . . Let the sweet story of Bethlehem be repeated. Present before the children Jesus, as a child obedient to His parents, as a youth faithful and industrious, helping to support the family. Thus you can teach them that the Saviour knows the trials, perplexities, and temptations, the hopes and joys, of the young, and that He can give them sympathy and help.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 358, 359.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

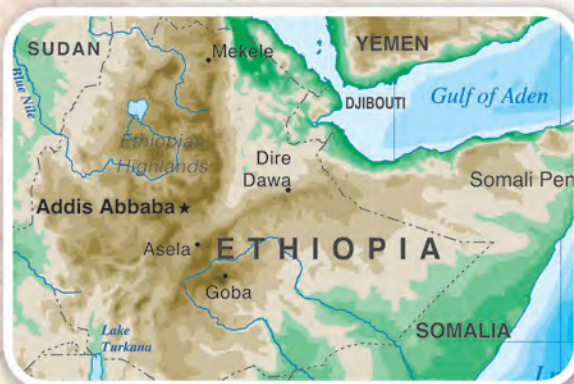
1. How might overwork during the week be pushing me into Sabbath-breaking?
2. Why must we stop all work by sunset Friday, even if unfinished?
3. How can I improve my traveling habits with regard to the Sabbath?
4. Explain the balance in Sabbathkeeping and helping the sick.
5. What can we as parents do to help our children appreciate the Sabbath?

First Sabbath Offerings



APRIL 1
for a Chapel in Port Moresby,
Papua New Guinea
(see p. 4.)

MAY 6
for World Missions
(see p. 30.)



JUNE 3
for Headquarters and
a Chapel in Hosanna,
Ethiopia
(see p. 51.)