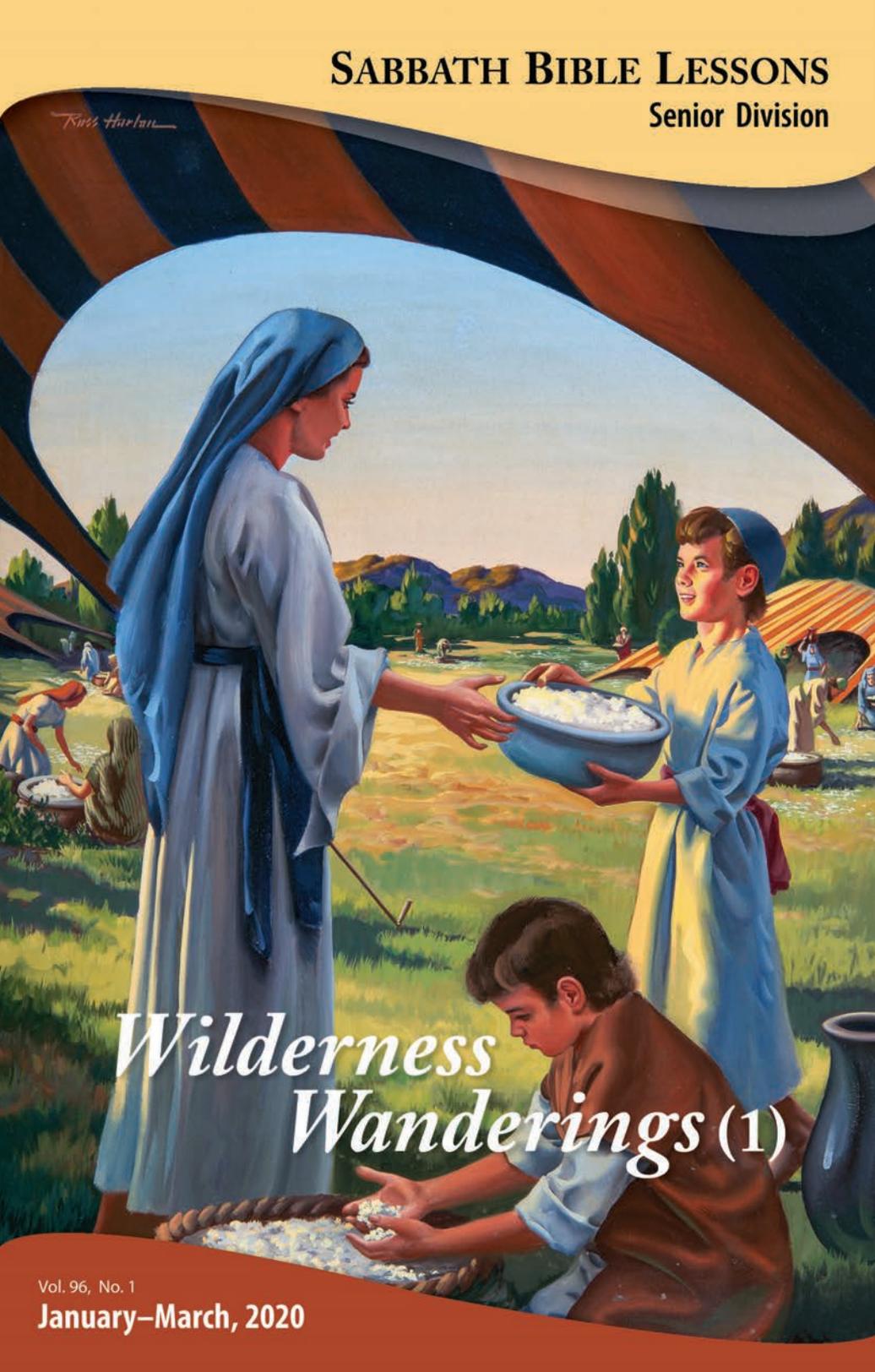


SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

Kees Huibers



*Wilderness
Wanderings (1)*

Vol. 96, No. 1

January–March, 2020

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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

“The history of the wilderness life of Israel was chronicled for the benefit of the Israel of God to the close of time.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“The murmurings of ancient Israel and their rebellious discontent, as well as the mighty miracles wrought in their favor and the punishment of their idolatry and ingratitude, are recorded for our benefit. The example of ancient Israel is given as a warning to the people of God, that they may avoid unbelief and escape His wrath. If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 11.

As we begin the first part of a two-part series on the “Wilderness Wanderings,” the main focus will be on: the birth of Moses and his preparation to lead the exodus movement; the plagues of Egypt; the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage; the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai; and the receiving of the law. We will come across examples both of unbelief and its devastating consequence and faithfulness and its blessed rewards. We will see the terrible results of rejecting God’s warnings as well as the blessings upon those who choose to believe God’s Word and act upon it.

Many of the Israelites carried the influence of Egypt with them. Though they physically left Egypt, they brought many of the customs and thought-patterns of Egypt with them. We, too, have been called out of spiritual Egypt, the world. We, too, may have covenanted to follow God, but still act and think like the world. As we study these lessons, may we have willing hearts to follow God fully.

“The task of Moses would have been much less difficult had not many of the Israelites become so corrupted that they were unwilling to leave Egypt.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 260. However, “during all the years of servitude in Egypt there had been among the Israelites some who adhered to the worship of Jehovah.”—*Ibid.*, p. 259. The parents of Moses were among these faithful few. His mother, a God-fearing woman, knew how to bring up her son. “The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother.”—*Ibid.*, p. 244.

May God help us to learn from the mistakes of the Israelites. May we also learn from their successes and be among the faithful few today who follow God at any cost.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the Amazon (ARAM) Field headquarters, Brazil

Amazonas and Roraima are two states in the north of Brazil that are characterized by an abundance of interesting features. Roraima spans approximately 230,000 km² and has the smallest population density in the country, with 2.25 inhabitants per km². Its capital, Boa Vista, is the only Brazilian capital that is completely in the Northern Hemisphere. The economy of the state greatly depends on commercial goods and the service industry. Tourism is growing rapidly in the area, especially to the extraordinary Mount Roraima.



Amazonas is a large state, with 1,600,000 km². It also boasts a population of nearly 4 million inhabitants, 80% of which live in urban areas. Its capital, Manaus, is the most populated city in northern Brazil, with approximately 1.8 million inhabitants. Running through the state is the Amazon River, which is internationally known as the world's largest in water volume.

The Gospel reached this region in the 1970s when a group of colporteurs arrived in Manaus. The work begun in that area developed into the Roraima and Amazon as Field (ARAM), which has 200 members. Most of these brethren depend on family farming, with little financial resources. Their easiest means of transport are canoes, boats, or ships—a risky, time-consuming, and expensive method. A trip to the middle of the country must be done by air. All this contributes to a feeling of isolation.

The ARAM Field was created recently, and the headquarters were established in the Manaus Church—a temple built over four decades ago. Because of this, the building is in need of urgent renovations. New bathrooms, rooms for children and young people's classes, a kitchen, a dining hall, and a new pastor's house are essential additions needed. Offices have had to be adapted within the current infrastructure.

This undertaking is an immediate need and our resources are small, so we appeal to our brethren with this request. If, today, you are generous and donate liberally, the Lord will reward you abundantly.

Your Brethren of the ARAM Field in the North Brazilian Union

God's Chosen Leader

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:24, 25).

“The strength of Moses was his connection with the Source of all power, the Lord God of hosts. He rises grandly above every earthly inducement, and trusts himself wholly to God. He considered that he was the Lord’s.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1098.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 241–251.

Sunday

December 29

1. SATAN TRIES TO DEFEAT GOD’S PURPOSE

- a. **As the children of Israel, dwelling in the land of Egypt, were fast becoming a numerous race, what did Pharaoh propose to do, fearing they would one day turn against him? Exodus 1:15–17, 22.**

“The king and his counselors had hoped to subdue the Israelites with hard labor, and thus decrease their numbers and crush out their independent spirit. Failing to accomplish their purpose, they proceeded to more cruel measures. Orders were issued to the women whose employment gave them opportunity for executing the command, to destroy the Hebrew male children at their birth. Satan was the mover in this matter. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he hoped to defeat the divine purpose. But the women feared God, and dared not execute the cruel mandate. The Lord approved their course, and prospered them. The king, angry at the failure of his design, made the command more urgent and extensive.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 242.

2. PREPARING A LEADER

- a. What was Moses' heritage? Exodus 2:1; 6:20.
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"[Exodus 1:22 quoted.] While this decree was in full force a son was born to Amram and Jochebed, devout Israelites of the tribe of Levi. The babe was 'a goodly child;' and the parents, believing that the time of Israel's release was drawing near, and that God would raise up a deliverer for His people, determined that their little one should not be sacrificed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 242, 243.

- b. What did Moses' mother do to save his life? Exodus 2:2–4.
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- c. How did God overrule the plans of Satan to destroy God's planned deliverer? Exodus 2:5–10. What can we learn from the way Moses' mother fulfilled her sacred trust in training her son for God?
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"God had heard the mother's prayers; her faith had been rewarded. It was with deep gratitude that she entered upon her now safe and happy task. She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work, and she knew that he must soon be given up to his royal mother, to be surrounded with influences that would tend to lead him away from God. All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children. She endeavored to imbue his mind with the fear of God and the love of truth and justice, and earnestly prayed that he might be preserved from every corrupting influence. She showed him the folly and sin of idolatry, and early taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who alone could hear him and help him in every emergency. . . .

"The lessons learned at his mother's side could not be forgotten. They were a shield from the pride, the infidelity, and the vice that flourished amid the splendor of the court."—*Ibid.*, pp. 243, 244.

"Every child born into the home is a sacred trust. God says to the parents, 'Take this child, and bring it up for Me, that it may be an honor to My name, and a channel through which My blessings shall flow to the world.'"—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 145.

3. AN EGYPTIAN EDUCATION

- a. **Following his early education in the home, what did the second phase of Moses' education involve? Acts 7:22. Why do you think God placed him in Pharaoh's palace?**
-

“From the humble home in Goshen the son of Jochebed passed to the palace of the Pharaohs, to the Egyptian princess, by her to be welcomed as a loved and cherished son. In the schools of Egypt, Moses received the highest civil and military training. Of great personal attractions, noble in form and stature, of cultivated mind and princely bearing, and renowned as a military leader, he became the nation's pride. The king of Egypt was also a member of the priesthood; and Moses, though refusing to participate in the heathen worship, was initiated into all the mysteries of the Egyptian religion.”—*Education*, p. 62.

- b. **Because of the faithful early training from his parents, what choice was Moses led to make later in his life? Hebrews 11:24–26.**
-

“Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, ‘choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.’

“Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch's throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch's crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 246.

4. FROM A PRINCE TO A SHEPHERD

- a. When Moses tried to work out God's plan for Israel in his own way, what were the results? Exodus 2:11–15; Acts 7:23–29.
-

“Moses had supposed that his education in the wisdom of Egypt fully qualified him to lead Israel from bondage. Was he not learned in all those things necessary for a general of armies? Had he not had the advantages of the best schools in the land? Yes, he felt that he was able to deliver his people. He set about his work by trying to gain their favor by redressing their wrongs. He killed an Egyptian who was imposing upon one of the Israelites. In this he manifested the spirit of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and proved himself unfit to represent the God of mercy, love, and tenderness.

“Moses made a miserable failure of his first attempt; and, like many another, he immediately lost confidence in God and turned his back on his appointed work. He fled from the wrath of Pharaoh. He concluded that because of his great sin in taking the life of the Egyptian, God would not permit him to have any part in the work of delivering his people from their cruel bondage. But the Lord allowed these things that He might teach Moses the gentleness, goodness, and long-suffering that it is necessary for every laborer for the Master to possess in order to be a successful worker in His cause.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teacher, and Students*, p. 407.

“It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone. Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught—not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 247.

- b. How did Moses find a home in the land of Midian, and who became his family? Exodus 2:16–22; 18:2–4.
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- c. What was Moses' occupation in the land of Midian? Exodus 3:1.
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5. TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL OF HARDSHIP

- a. What was later said of Moses, which showed the great change brought about by the years of training in the wilderness? Numbers 12:3. What lessons had he learned in the wilderness?
-

“The education received by Moses, as the king’s grandson, was very thorough. Nothing was neglected that was calculated to make him a wise man, as the Egyptians understood wisdom. This education was a help to him in many respects; but the most valuable part of his fitting for his life work was that received while employed as a shepherd. As he led his flocks through the wilds of the mountains and into the green pastures of the valleys, the God of nature taught him the highest and grandest wisdom. In the school of nature, with Christ himself for teacher, he contemplated and learned lessons of humility, meekness, faith, and trust, and of a humble manner of living, all of which bound his soul closer to God. In the solitude of the mountains he learned that which all his instruction in the king’s palace was unable to impart to him,—simple, unwavering faith, and constant trust in the Lord.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 342.

“In the school of self-denial and hardship he was to learn patience, to temper his passions. Before he could govern wisely, he must be trained to obey. His own heart must be fully in harmony with God before he could teach the knowledge of His will to Israel. By his own experience he must be prepared to exercise a fatherly care over all who needed his help.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 247.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Satan know that a deliverer was to be raised up from among the Israelites, and what did he do to try to prevent this?
2. How did Moses’ mother train the child whom she was sure had some great destiny? For what purpose should children be trained today?
3. What led Moses to choose poverty over worldly gain?
4. Why did Moses have to be re-educated in a desert place?
5. What did Moses learn in his years as a shepherd? What things can we learn from the trials we experience in our own lives?

A Message of Deliverance

“And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs” (Exodus 4:17).

“The time for Israel’s deliverance had come. But God’s purpose was to be accomplished in a manner to pour contempt on human pride. The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod the symbol of His power.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 251.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 251–256.

Sunday

January 5

1. COMMUNICATION FROM GOD

a. While Moses was tending Jethro’s flocks, what was happening in Egypt? Exodus 2:23–25.

b. What experience did Moses have at the burning bush? Exodus 3:1–5.

c. What important lesson can we learn from this experience? Psalm 89:7.

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house as they would not presume to do in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252.

2. GOD CALLS MOSES

- a. What was the Lord about to do in behalf of His people? Exodus 3:7-9.

- b. How did Moses fit into God's plan to accomplish this? Exodus 3:10; Acts 7:34, 35.

- c. How did Moses respond to God's call and what did the Lord want him to realize? Exodus 3:11-15.

“Amazed and terrified at the command, Moses drew back, saying, ‘Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?’ The reply was, ‘Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.’

“Moses thought of the difficulties to be encountered, of the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of his people, many of whom were almost destitute of a knowledge of God. ‘Behold,’ he said, ‘when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?’ The answer was—

“‘I AM THAT I AM.’ ‘Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 252, 253.

“Moses did not expect that this was the manner in which the Lord would use him to deliver Israel from Egypt. He thought that it would be by warfare. And when the Lord made known to him that he must stand before Pharaoh, and in His name demand him to let Israel go he shrank from the task.

“The Pharaoh before whom he was to appear, was not the one who had decreed that he should be put to death. That king was dead, and another had taken the reins of government. Nearly all the Egyptian kings were called by the name of Pharaoh. Moses would have preferred to stand at the head of the children of Israel as their general, and make war with the Egyptians. But this was not God's plan. He would be magnified before his people, and teach not only them, but the Egyptians, that there is a living God, who has power to save, and to destroy.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 189, 190.

3. GOD ASSURES MOSES

- a. What message was Moses to give the elders of Israel? Exodus 3:16–20.
-
- b. How was God going to fulfil His promise that His people would not leave Egypt empty-handed? Exodus 3:21, 22.
-

“The Egyptians had been enriched by the labor unjustly exacted from the Israelites, and as the latter were to start on the journey to their new home, it was right for them to claim the reward of their years of toil. They were to ask for articles of value, such as could be easily transported, and God would give them favor in the sight of the Egyptians. The mighty miracles wrought for their deliverance would strike terror to the oppressors, so that the requests of the bondmen would be granted.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 253.

- c. As Moses was reluctant to accept God’s calling, what further evidence did the Lord give him of His providence? Exodus 4:1–9. How should we respond to God’s calling today?
-

“Moses saw before him difficulties that seemed insurmountable. What proof could he give his people that God had indeed sent him? ‘Behold,’ he said, ‘they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.’ Evidence that appealed to his own senses was now given. He was told to cast his rod upon the ground. As he did so, ‘it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.’ He was commanded to seize it, and in his hand it became a rod. He was bidden to put his hand into his bosom. He obeyed, and ‘when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.’ Being told to put it again into his bosom, he found on withdrawing it that it had become like the other. By these signs the Lord assured Moses that His own people, as well as Pharaoh, should be convinced that One mightier than the king of Egypt was manifest among them.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 253, 254.

“Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields, doing God’s work with firm and willing heart, for Christ’s sake counting his losses gain?”—*Ibid.*, p. 127.

4. GOD CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE MOSES

- a. What shows that Moses was still unwilling to obey God's call? Exodus 4:10–13.
-

“But the servant of God was still overwhelmed by the thought of the strange and wonderful work before him. In his distress and fear he now pleaded as an excuse a lack of ready speech. . . . He had been so long away from the Egyptians that he had not so clear knowledge and ready use of their language as when he was among them. . . .

“These excuses at first proceeded from humility and diffidence; but after the Lord had promised to remove all difficulties, and to give him final success, then any further shrinking back and complaining of his unfitness showed distrust of God. It implied a fear that God was unable to qualify him for the great work to which He had called him, or that He had made a mistake in the selection of the man.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 254.

- b. What help did God provide for Moses, as He patiently tried to encourage His servant? Exodus 4:14–17. How does God encourage His people today?
-

“Let [the members of God's church] realize that the work in which they are engaged is one upon which the Lord has placed His signet. . . . He bids us go forth to speak the words He gives us, feeling His holy touch upon our lips.”—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 275.

- c. With what further assurance did God provide Moses? Exodus 4:18–23.
-

“A man will gain power and efficiency as he accepts the responsibilities that God places upon him, and with his whole soul seeks to qualify himself to bear them aright. However humble his position or limited his ability, that man will attain true greatness who, trusting to divine strength, seeks to perform his work with fidelity. Had Moses relied upon his own strength and wisdom, and eagerly accepted the great charge, he would have evinced his entire unfitness for such a work. The fact that a man feels his weakness is at least some evidence that he realizes the magnitude of the work appointed him, and that he will make God his counselor and his strength.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 255.

5. MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

- a. As Moses accepted God's call and went to Egypt, what happened along the way? Exodus 4:24–26. What solemn parallel can be drawn from this event?

"[Moses] had failed to comply with the condition by which his child could be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with Israel; and such a neglect on the part of their chosen leader could not but lessen the force of the divine precepts upon the people. . . . In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God.

"In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels; but there will be no security for the transgressor of God's law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256.

- b. When Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt and gathered together the elders, how did the people react to the message of deliverance? Exodus 4:29–31.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the account of Moses at the burning bush teach us regarding the manner in which we should approach God in prayer and in the sanctuary?
2. How did Moses expect God to deliver Israel from Egypt? Why didn't God deliver Israel in this manner?
3. Why are we sometimes reluctant to accept God's call to labor for Him?
4. What is a sign of true greatness in those who serve God?
5. In the time of trouble before us, what do those who disregard just one of the divine precepts forfeit?

Stubbornness, a Fruit of Pride

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

“Pharaoh sowed obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. He himself put this seed into the soil. There was no more need for God by some new power to interfere with its growth, than there is for Him to interfere with the growth of a grain of corn.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1100.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 257–265.

Sunday

January 12

1. PHARAOH RESISTS GOD

a. When Moses and Aaron came before the king of Egypt, what request did they present to him, and how did he respond? Exodus 5:1–3.

b. What warnings should we take from Pharaoh’s pride and rebellion? Galatians 6:7; Proverbs 11:2.

“Those who exalt their own ideas above the plainly specified will of God, are saying as did Pharaoh, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?’ Every rejection of light hardens the heart and darkens the understanding; and thus men find it more and more difficult to distinguish between right and wrong, and they become bolder in resisting the will of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1100.

“Let all be warned by the messages sent from heaven that when any man shall exalt his own ways and his own judgment as supreme, he will come under Satan’s jurisdiction and will be led blindfold by him until his spirit and his methods will conform to the archdeceiver, little by little, until his whole mind is under the influence of the spell. The serpent keeps its eye fixed upon a man, to charm him, until he has no power to get from the snare.”—*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 175.

2. PHARAOH ADDS GREATER BURDENS

- a. What accusation did the king bring against Moses and Aaron? Exodus 5:4, 5. To what “rest” was he referring?
-

“In their bondage the Israelites had to some extent lost the knowledge of God’s law, and they had departed from its precepts. The Sabbath had been generally disregarded, and the exactions of their taskmasters made its observance apparently impossible. But Moses had shown his people that obedience to God was the first condition of deliverance; and the efforts made to restore the observance of the Sabbath had come to the notice of their oppressors.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 258.

- b. What was the purpose of God in bringing Israel out of Egypt? Psalm 105:43–45. What implications does this have for us?
-

“As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God’s people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors. . . . 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 recreates the soul in His own likeness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 349, 350.

“And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 12.

- c. What was the result of the interview with Pharaoh? Exodus 5:6–14.
-

“The king, thoroughly roused, suspected the Israelites of a design to revolt from his service. Disaffection was the result of idleness; he would see that no time was left them for dangerous scheming. And he at once adopted measures to tighten their bonds and crush out their independent spirit.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 258.

3. GOD TESTS THE FAITH OF ISRAEL

- a. **With what reproach did the officers of the children of Israel come to Moses and Aaron? Exodus 5:19–21.**
-
- b. **Why didn't the Lord deliver Israel straight away? Acts 14:22.**
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“The Hebrews had expected to obtain their freedom without any special trial of their faith or any real suffering or hardship. But they were not yet prepared for deliverance. They had little faith in God, and were unwilling patiently to endure their afflictions until He should see fit to work for them. Many were content to remain in bondage rather than meet the difficulties attending removal to a strange land; and the habits of some had become so much like those of the Egyptians that they preferred to dwell in Egypt. Therefore the Lord did not deliver them by the first manifestation of His power before Pharaoh. He overruled events more fully to develop the tyrannical spirit of the Egyptian king and also to reveal Himself to His people. Beholding His justice, His power, and His love, they would choose to leave Egypt and give themselves to His service. The task of Moses would have been much less difficult had not many of the Israelites become so corrupted that they were unwilling to leave Egypt.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 260.

“The children of Israel were addicted to licentiousness, idolatry, gluttony, and gross vices. This is ever the result of slavery. But the Lord looked upon His people, and after their deliverance He educated them. They were not left uncared for.”—*The Southern Work*, p. 43.

- c. **As Moses complained to the Lord when new trials came upon Israel, what did the Lord promise to do for His people? Exodus 5:22, 23; 6:1–8.**
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“In mercy to us, [God] does not always place us in the easiest places; for if He did, in our self-sufficiency we would forget that the Lord is our helper in time of necessity. But He longs to manifest Himself to us in our emergencies, and reveal the abundant supplies that are at our disposal, independent of our surroundings; and disappointment and trial are permitted to come upon us that we may realize our own helplessness, and learn to call upon the Lord for aid, as a child, when hungry and thirsty, calls upon its earthly father.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 353.

4. THE PEOPLE ARE DISHEARTENED

- a. When Moses spoke to the children of Israel the second time, how did they receive the message of the Lord? Exodus 6:9. What promises should have been a source of hope for all the Israelites? Genesis 15:13, 14; 50:24.
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“The elders of Israel endeavored to sustain the sinking faith of their brethren by repeating the promises made to their fathers, and the prophetic words of Joseph before his death, foretelling their deliverance from Egypt. Some would listen and believe. Others, looking at the circumstances that surrounded them, refused to hope. The Egyptians, being informed of what was reported among their bondmen, derided their expectations and scornfully denied the power of their God. They pointed to their situation as a nation of slaves, and tauntingly said, ‘If your God is just and merciful, and possesses power above that of the Egyptian gods, why does He not make you a free people?’ They called attention to their own condition. They worshiped deities termed by the Israelites false gods, yet they were a rich and powerful nation. They declared that their gods had blessed them with prosperity, and had given them the Israelites as servants, and they gloried in their power to oppress and destroy the worshipers of Jehovah. Pharaoh himself boasted that the God of the Hebrews could not deliver them from his hand.

“Words like these destroyed the hopes of many of the Israelites. The case appeared to them very much as the Egyptians had represented. It was true that they were slaves, and must endure whatever their cruel taskmasters might choose to inflict. Their children had been hunted and slain, and their own lives were a burden. Yet they were worshiping the God of heaven. If Jehovah were indeed above all gods, surely He would not thus leave them in bondage to idolaters. But those who were true to God understood that it was because of Israel’s departure from Him—because of their disposition to marry with heathen nations, thus being led into idolatry—that the Lord had permitted them to become bondmen; and they confidently assured their brethren that He would soon break the yoke of the oppressor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 259, 260.

- b. With what argument did Moses try to excuse himself when the Lord told him to speak to Pharaoh again? Exodus 6:10–12.
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5. GOD SENDS SIGNS AND WONDERS

- a. As the Lord encouraged Moses to return to Pharaoh, what did He say He would multiply in Egypt, and what would be the reaction of the Egyptians? Exodus 7:1–5.
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“Before the infliction of each plague, Moses was to describe its nature and effects, that the king might save himself from it if he chose. Every punishment rejected would be followed by one more severe, until his proud heart would be humbled, and he would acknowledge the Maker of heaven and earth as the true and living God. . . . God would glorify His own name, that other nations might hear of His power and tremble at His mighty acts, and that His people might be led to turn from their idolatry and render Him pure worship.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 263.

- b. How were God’s and Satan’s powers contrasted before Pharaoh? Exodus 7:8–12. What was Satan’s purpose in trying to counterfeit the work of God?
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“By counterfeiting the work of God through Moses, [Satan] hoped not only to prevent the deliverance of Israel, but to exert an influence through future ages to destroy faith in the miracles of Christ. Satan is constantly seeking to counterfeit the work of Christ and to establish his own power and claims. He leads men to account for the miracles of Christ by making them appear to be the result of human skill and power. In many minds he thus destroys faith in Christ as the Son of God, and leads them to reject the gracious offers of mercy through the plan of redemption.”—*Ibid.*, p. 265.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we sometimes show the same pride as Pharaoh?
2. In what way is the Sabbath a distinguishing sign for God’s people today?
3. Why were so many of the Israelites unwilling to leave Egypt? Why are so many of us unwilling to let go of worldly customs and ideas today?
4. Why had God allowed the Israelites to become slaves?
5. Why did Satan try to counterfeit the miracles of God?

The Plagues of Egypt

“Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?” (1 Samuel 6:6).

“God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 84.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 265–272.

Sunday

January 19

1. A PROTEST AGAINST SENSELESS WORSHIP

a. What was the first plague, and why was it sent? Exodus 7:14–21.

“During the plagues on Egypt Pharaoh was punctual in his superstitious devotion to the river, and visited it every morning, and as he stood upon its banks he offered praise and thanksgiving to the water, recounting the great good it accomplished, and telling the water of its great power; that without it they could not exist; for their lands were watered by it, and it supplied meat for their tables.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 54, 55.

b. What was the second plague, and how did God choose to remove the effects of this plague? Exodus 8:2–14.

“The frog was regarded as sacred by the Egyptians, and they would not destroy it; but the slimy pests had now become intolerable. . . .

“The Lord could have caused them to return to dust in a moment; but He did not do this lest after their removal the king and his people should pronounce it the result of sorcery or enchantment, like the work of the magicians. The frogs died, and were then gathered together in heaps.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 265, 266.

2. GOD CARES FOR HIS OWN

- a. **How did the Lord make a distinction in those affected by the fourth plague? Exodus 8:20–24.**
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“Flies filled the houses and swarmed upon the ground, so that ‘the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies.’ These flies were large and venomous, and their bite was extremely painful to man and beast. As had been foretold, this visitation did not extend to the land of Goshen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 266.

- b. **What further distinction was made by God in the fifth and ninth plagues? Exodus 9:1–6; 10:22, 23.**
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“A more terrible stroke followed—murrain upon all the Egyptian cattle that were in the field. Both the sacred animals and the beasts of burden—kine and oxen and sheep, horses and camels and asses—were destroyed. It had been distinctly stated that the Hebrews were to be exempt; and Pharaoh, on sending messengers to the home of the Israelites, proved the truth of this declaration of Moses. ‘Of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.’ Still the king was obstinate.”—*Ibid.*, p. 267.

“Suddenly a darkness settled upon the land, so thick and black that it seemed a ‘darkness which may be felt.’ Not only were the people deprived of light, but the atmosphere was very oppressive, so that breathing was difficult. ‘They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.’ The sun and moon were objects of worship to the Egyptians; in this mysterious darkness the people and their gods alike were smitten by the power that had undertaken the cause of the bondmen.”—*Ibid.*, p. 272.

- c. **What care did the Lord promise to have for His people? Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 103:8. How was this care later to extend to the Egyptians during the ninth plague?**
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“Yet fearful as it was, this judgment [during the ninth plague] is an evidence of God’s compassion and His unwillingness to destroy. He would give the people time for reflection and repentance before bringing upon them the last and most terrible of the plagues.”—*Ibid.*

3. THE MAGICIANS ADMIT DEFEAT

- a. What was the reaction of the magicians to the third plague? Exodus 8:18, 19.
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“At the command of God, Aaron stretched out his hand, and the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh called upon the magicians to do the same, but they could not. The work of God was thus shown to be superior to that of Satan. The magicians themselves acknowledged, ‘This is the finger of God.’ But the king was still unmoved.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 266.

- b. How did God instruct Moses to introduce the plague of boils? Exodus 9:8–10. What was significant about the ashes coming from the furnace?
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“Moses was next directed to take ashes of the furnace, and ‘sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.’ This act was deeply significant. Four hundred years before, God had shown to Abraham the future oppression of His people, under the figure of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. He had declared that He would visit judgments upon their oppressors, and would bring forth the captives with great substance. In Egypt, Israel had long languished in the furnace of affliction. This act of Moses was an assurance to them that God was mindful of His covenant, and that the time for their deliverance had come.”—*Ibid.*, p. 267.

- c. What effect did the boils have upon the magicians? Exodus 9:11.
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“As the ashes were sprinkled toward heaven, the fine particles spread over all the land of Egypt, and wherever they settled, produced boils ‘breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.’ The priests and magicians had hitherto encouraged Pharaoh in his stubbornness, but now a judgment had come that reached even them. Smitten with a loathsome and painful disease, their vaunted power only making them contemptible, they were no longer able to contend against the God of Israel. The whole nation was made to see the folly of trusting in the magicians, when they were not able to protect even their own persons.”—*Ibid.*

4. THE EGYPTIANS ARE FEARFUL

- a. **How did God warn the Egyptians in mercy concerning the seventh plague, and what were the results? Exodus 9:18–21.**
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“Rain or hail was unusual in Egypt, and such a storm as was foretold had never been witnessed. The report spread rapidly, and all who believed the word of the Lord gathered in their cattle, while those who despised the warning left them in the field. Thus in the midst of judgment the mercy of God was displayed, the people were tested, and it was shown how many had been led to fear God by the manifestation of His power.

“Ruin and desolation marked the path of the destroying angel. The land of Goshen alone was spared. It was demonstrated to the Egyptians that the earth is under the control of the living God, that the elements obey His voice, and that the only safety is in obedience to Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 269.

- b. **After God warned the Egyptians of the eighth plague of locusts, what showed that Pharaoh’s servants were afraid of God? Exodus 10:7.**
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“The counselors of Pharaoh stood aghast. The nation had sustained great loss in the death of their cattle. Many of the people had been killed by the hail. The forests were broken down and the crops destroyed. They were fast losing all that had been gained by the labor of the Hebrews. The whole land was threatened with starvation. Princes and courtiers pressed about the king and angrily demanded, ‘How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?’”—*Ibid.*, p. 271.

- c. **After all that had happened thus far, how did Pharaoh show that he was still not willing to let all of Israel go? Exodus 10:8–11.**
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“Pharaoh had endeavored to destroy the Israelites by hard labor, but he now pretended to have a deep interest in their welfare and a tender care for their little ones. His real object was to keep the women and children as surety for the return of the men.”—*Ibid.*

5. REBELLION IS A CHOICE

- a. What was the effect upon Pharaoh of each successive judgment of God? Exodus 9:7, 35; 10:3.
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“God speaks to men through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin. He gives to each an opportunity to correct his errors before they become fixed in the character; but if one refuses to be corrected, divine power does not interpose to counteract the tendency of his own action. He finds it more easy to repeat the same course. He is hardening the heart against the influence of the Holy Spirit. A further rejection of light places him where a far stronger influence will be ineffectual to make an abiding impression.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 268.

- b. As Pharaoh chose to be in rebellion to God, to what is this sin likened, and what is always the result of such a choice? 1 Samuel 15:23 (first part); Proverbs 28:14.
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“He who manifests an infidel hardihood, a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. It is thus that multitudes come to listen with stoical indifference to the truths that once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect and resistance to the truth, and such is the harvest which they reap.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 268, 269.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How were the gods of Egypt shown to be inferior to the God of heaven during the first and second plagues?
2. During the plagues, how did God show His care of both His people and the Egyptians?
3. How did the lice and the boils defeat the magicians?
4. How did the Egyptians show that they believed God’s Word concerning the coming plague of hail? How do we show belief in God’s Word?
5. What two attitudes lead to unbelief?

First Sabbath Offering for the Tanzanian Mission

Tanzania is an East African country known for its vast wilderness areas. They include the plains of Serengeti National Park, a safari mecca (populated by elephants, lions, leopards, buffalos, and rhinos), and Kilimanjaro National Park, home to Africa's highest mountain. Offshore lie the tropical islands of Zanzibar and Mafia, with a marine park home to whale sharks and coral reefs.



While statistics on religion are not available for Tanzania, religious leaders and sociologists estimate that Muslim and Christian communities are approximately equal in size, each accounting for 30 to 40 percent of the population, with the remainder consisting of practitioners of other world faiths, practitioners of indigenous religions, and people of no religion. The population as of 2016 was 55.57 million. The official languages of Tanzania are Swahili and English, though there are a total of 126 local languages.

Tanzania is divided into thirty regions (mkoa), twenty-five on the mainland and five in Zanzibar.

The message of revival and reformation reached Tanzania through our brethren from Kenya. We were also helped and continue to be so by our German brethren. The General Conference is printing *Sabbath Bible Lessons* in the Swahili language through the Rwanda Union, near Tanzania. Swahili is spoken throughout all East African countries.

The work has now progressed to the point where we need to establish a headquarters. We believe Dar es Salaam will be the best place for this. Dar es Salaam, or simply Dar, formerly known as Mzizima, is the former capital as well as the most populous city in Tanzania and a regionally important economic center. Located on the Swahili coast, the city is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Dar is a multicultural city, home to African Tanzanians, Arabic and South Asian communities, British and German expatriates, Catholics, Lutherans, and Muslims. This is an ideal place for our headquarters as it will facilitate our missionary work for the whole country.

We appeal to all of our Sabbath School members around the world to give generously to this project. Thank you in advance for your help. May God greatly repay your kindness toward His work in Africa.

Your brothers and sisters in the Tanzanian Mission

The Passover

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).

“The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. By the power of Christ they must be changed into His likeness, and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 278.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 273–280.

Sunday

January 26

1. A MERCIFUL WARNING

- a. How was Moses regarded by the Egyptians? Exodus 11:3 (last part).

- b. What judgment was foretold before the tenth plague, and what would Pharaoh and his servants do? Exodus 11:1, 4–8; 12:12.

- c. What can we learn about God’s character from the many warnings He sent to the Egyptians before sending the tenth plague? 2 Peter 3:9.

“The judgment of which Egypt had first been warned, was to be the last visited. God is long-suffering and plenteous in mercy. He has a tender care for the beings formed in His image. If the loss of their harvests and their flocks and herds had brought Egypt to repentance, the children would not have been smitten; but the nation had stubbornly resisted the divine command, and now the final blow was about to fall.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 273.

“The Lord wills not that any soul should perish. His mercies are without number.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 150.

2. THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED

a. Who was permitted to eat the Passover lamb? Exodus 12:43, 48, 49.

b. What were the Israelites instructed to do with the blood, and what was the purpose of that instruction? Exodus 12:7, 13, 23.

“Before obtaining freedom, the bondmen must show their faith in the great deliverance about to be accomplished. The token of blood must be placed upon their houses, and they must separate themselves and their families from the Egyptians, and gather within their own dwellings. Had the Israelites disregarded in any particular the directions given them, had they neglected to separate their children from the Egyptians, had they slain the lamb, but failed to strike the doorpost with blood, or had any gone out of their houses, they would not have been secure. They might have honestly believed that they had done all that was necessary, but their sincerity would not have saved them. All who failed to heed the Lord’s directions would lose their first-born by the hand of the destroyer.

“By obedience the people were to give evidence of their faith. So all who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. While it is Christ only that can redeem us from the penalty of transgression, we are to turn from sin to obedience. Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 278, 279.

c. Who was to perform the work of slaying the Passover lamb and applying the blood to the doorpost? Exodus 12:21, 22. What significance does this have for us today?

“The father was to act as the priest of the household, and if the father was dead, the eldest son living was to perform this solemn act of sprinkling the doorpost with blood. This is a symbol of the work to be done in every family. Parents are to gather their children into the home and to present Christ before them as their Passover. The father is to dedicate every inmate of his home to God and to do a work that is represented by the feast of the Passover. It is perilous to leave this solemn duty in the hands of others.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 324.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASSOVER

- a. How were the Israelites to eat the lamb and the other provisions of the Passover feast? Exodus 12:8–11. What change took place after they had settled down in their own land?
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“At the time of their deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel ate the Passover supper standing, with their loins girded, and with their staves in their hands, ready for their journey. The manner in which they celebrated this ordinance harmonized with their condition; for they were about to be thrust out of the land of Egypt, and were to begin a painful and difficult journey through the wilderness. But in Christ’s time the condition of things had changed. They were not now about to be thrust out of a strange country, but were dwellers in their own land. In harmony with the rest that had been given them, the people then partook of the Passover supper in a reclining position.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 653.

- b. How was the marvelous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt kept fresh in the minds of their children? Exodus 12:26, 27.
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“The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all.”—*Ibid.*, p. 652.

- c. What is the relationship between the Passover service and the Lord’s Supper? What work is kept fresh in our minds by the communion service? Matthew 26:17–19, 26–29; 1 Corinthians 11:26.
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“As [Christ] ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages. . . . The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 652, 653.

4. THE SYMBOL AND THE SUBSTANCE

- a. Of whom was the Passover lamb a type? John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7.
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“God desired to teach Israel that from His own love comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 113.

“The sacrificial lamb represents ‘the Lamb of God,’ in whom is our only hope of salvation. Says the apostle, ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7. It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ’s blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277.

- b. Who is symbolized by the bread and what reality should this remind us of? John 6:47, 48, 51.
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“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.

“And how much more are Christ’s words true of our spiritual nature. He declares, ‘Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life.’ 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. [John 6:54, 56, 57 quoted.] To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 660, 661.

5. THE TENTH PLAGUE – DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

- a. Describe the last plague. Exodus 12:29, 30.
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- b. How were the Israelites driven out of the land of Egypt? Why? Exodus 12:31–33.
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“Throughout the vast realm of Egypt the pride of every household had been laid low. The shrieks and wails of the mourners filled the air. King and courtiers, with blanched faces and trembling limbs, stood aghast at the overmastering horror. Pharaoh remembered how he had once exclaimed, ‘Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go.’ Now, his heaven-daring pride humbled in the dust, he ‘called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said. . . . And be gone; and bless me also.’ The royal counselors also and the people entreated the Israelites to depart ‘out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 280.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did God show mercy in His warnings before each plague and especially before the tenth plague?
2. How does the Passover service illustrate how faith and works are to be combined? How does this relate to my own personal experience?
3. What deliverance does the Lord’s Supper commemorate? Why do we need to observe it regularly?
4. How do we appropriate to our souls the saving blood of Christ?
5. How do we, as Pharaoh, sometimes wait until God has humbled us before we obey His voice?

Leaving Egypt

“And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:41).

“Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 281–283.

Sunday

February 2

1. PREPARING TO LEAVE

a. What did the Israelites demand for their hard labor and suffering in Egypt, and why did the Egyptians honor their request? Exodus 12:33, 35, 36.

b. Describe the company that left Egypt. Exodus 12:37–39.

“There was quite a large number of the Egyptians who were led to acknowledge, by the manifestations of the signs and wonders shown in Egypt, that the God of the Hebrews was the only true God. . . . They pledged themselves to henceforth choose the God of Israel as their God. They decided to leave Egypt, and go with the children of Israel to worship their God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1101.

“And they went out, ‘about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them.’ In this multitude were not only those who were actuated by faith in the God of Israel, but also a far greater number who desired only to escape from the plagues, or who followed in the wake of the moving multitudes merely from excitement and curiosity. This class were ever a hindrance and a snare to Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 281.

2. REMEMBERING THE SOJOURNING

- a. How long did Abraham and his descendants dwell among strangers, and in what generation did their sojourn in Egypt end? Exodus 12:40, 41; Genesis 15:13–16.
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- b. How are we also sojourners on this earth? Hebrews 11:13–16.
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“By their works [the disciples] constantly testified that this world was not their home; their citizenship was above; they were seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Their conversation and affections were on heavenly things. They were in the world, but not of the world; in spirit and practice they were separate from its maxims and customs. Their daily example testified that they were living for the glory of God. Their great interest, like that of their Master, was for the salvation of souls.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 325.

- c. In commemoration of the Passover, what requirement did God make concerning the firstborn of man and beast? Exodus 13:2, 11–15; Numbers 3:13. What lesson did this law teach?
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“Furthermore, the first-born of both man and beast were to be the Lord’s, to be bought back only by a ransom, in acknowledgment that when the first-born in Egypt perished, that of Israel, though graciously preserved, had been justly exposed to the same doom but for the atoning sacrifice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 274.

“After the tabernacle service was established, the Lord chose the tribe of Levi in the place of the first-born of all Israel to minister in the sanctuary. But the first-born were still to be regarded as the Lord’s, and were to be bought back by a ransom.

“Thus the law for the presentation of the first-born was made particularly significant. While it was a memorial of the Lord’s wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel, it prefigured a greater deliverance, to be wrought out by the only-begotten Son of God. As the blood sprinkled on the doorposts had saved the first-born of Israel, so the blood of Christ has power to save the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 51.

3. FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING

- a. **What desire of Joseph did the Israelites fulfill when they departed from Egypt? Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19.**
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“In their departure from Egypt the Israelites bore with them a precious legacy, in the bones of Joseph, which had so long awaited the fulfillment of God’s promise, and which, during the dark years of bondage, had been a reminder of Israel’s deliverance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 282.

- b. **Why did they take a long roundabout course instead of being led straight into the promised land? Exodus 13:17, 18.**
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“Instead of pursuing the direct route to Canaan, which lay through the country of the Philistines, the Lord directed their course southward, toward the shores of the Red Sea. . . . Had they attempted to pass through Philistia, their progress would have been opposed; for the Philistines, regarding them as slaves escaping from their masters, would not have hesitated to make war upon them. The Israelites were poorly prepared for an encounter with that powerful and warlike people. They had little knowledge of God and little faith in Him, and they would have become terrified and disheartened. They were unarmed and unaccustomed to war, their spirits were depressed by long bondage, and they were encumbered with women and children, flocks and herds. In leading them by the way of the Red Sea, the Lord revealed Himself as a God of compassion as well as of judgment.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **When God sometimes seems to lead us in a way that we do not understand, as He did with the children of Israel, what should we remember? John 13:7.**
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“Often our trials are such that they seem almost unbearable, and without help from God they are indeed unbearable. Unless we rely upon Him we shall sink under the burden of responsibilities that bring only sadness and grief. But if we make Christ our dependence, we shall not sink under trial. When all seems dark and unexplainable we are to trust in His love; we must repeat the words that Christ has spoken to our souls, ‘What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’”—*My Life Today*, p. 184.

4. VISIBLE TOKENS OF GOD'S GUIDANCE

- a. From what place did the children of Israel start their journey? Where did they make their first and second stops? Exodus 12:37; 13:20.
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- b. What did God send to guide His people in their journeying by day and by night? Exodus 13:21, 22; Psalm 105:39.
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"The standard of their invisible Leader was ever with them. By day the cloud directed their journeyings or spread as a canopy above the host. It served as a protection from the burning heat, and by its coolness and moisture afforded grateful refreshment in the parched, thirsty desert. By night it became a pillar of fire, illuminating their encampment and constantly assuring them of the divine presence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 282.

- c. How does Isaiah represent God's care for His people in the final conflict as they near their heavenly home? Isaiah 4:5, 6.
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"In one of the most beautiful and comforting passages of Isaiah's prophecy, reference is made to the pillar of cloud and of fire to represent God's care for His people in the great final struggle with the powers of evil: 'The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for above all the glory shall be a covering. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.' Isaiah 4:5, 6, margin."—*Ibid.*, p. 283.

"In the time of trial before us God's pledge of security will be placed upon those who have kept the word of His patience. . . . The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of cloud which speaks wrath and terror to the transgressor of God's law is light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Every faithful one will surely be gathered. 'He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' Matthew 24:31."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 404.

5. PHARAOH PURSUES ISRAEL

- a. What instruction and warning did the Lord send to the Israelites in view of their imminent danger? Exodus 14:1–4.
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- b. With what great force did Pharaoh pursue the fugitives, and where did he overtake them? Exodus 14:5–9.
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“The king was resolved to intimidate the Israelites by a grand display of his power. The Egyptians feared lest their forced submission to the God of Israel should subject them to the derision of other nations; but if they should now go forth with a great show of power and bring back the fugitives, they would redeem their glory, as well as recover the services of their bondmen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 283.

- c. In our personal struggle for freedom from Satan’s dominion, what promise should inspire us with an assurance of deliverance? Isaiah 49:24, 25.
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“The spirits of darkness will battle for the soul once under their dominion, but angels of God will contend for that soul with prevailing power. The Lord says, ‘Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.’ Isaiah 49:24, 25.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 258.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we be like the mixed multitude in our motives for serving God?
2. How can we show that we are only sojourners on this earth?
3. At the beginning of their journey, why did the Israelites have to take the longer way? What should we learn from their experience?
4. How will the pillar of cloud and of fire again serve God’s people in the coming conflict?
5. What were the Egyptians seeking to regain when they decided to pursue the Israelites?

Crossing the Red Sea

“He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness” (Psalm 106:9).

“The mighty hand of Christ rolled back the waters of the Red Sea, so that they stood up like a wall. Thus He made a dry passage through the sea, and Israel passed over dryshod.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1101.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 284–290.

Sunday

February 9

1. COMFORTING THE FEARFUL

- a. How did the Israelites express their fears when they saw the sea before them and the host of Pharaoh behind? Exodus 14:10–12.

“The Hebrews were encamped beside the sea, whose waters presented a seemingly impassable barrier before them, while on the south a rugged mountain obstructed their further progress. Suddenly they beheld in the distance the flashing armor and moving chariots betokening the advance guard of a great army. . . . Terror filled the hearts of Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 283, 284.

- b. With what words did Moses try to quiet their fears? Exodus 14:13, 14.

“Moses was greatly troubled that his people should manifest so little faith in God, notwithstanding they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestation of His power in their behalf. How could they charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their situation, when he had followed the express command of God? True, there was no possibility of deliverance unless God Himself should interpose for their release; but having been brought into this position in obedience to the divine direction, Moses felt no fear of the consequences.”—*Ibid.*, p. 284.

2. GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE

- a. **What instruction did God give to Moses in view of the imminent danger? Exodus 14:15–18. How did Christ give His disciples a similar charge, when they would find themselves walled in by difficulties? John 16:33.**
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“Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged; and the disciples were to show a faith of the same enduring nature. They were to work as He had worked, depending on Him for strength. Though their way would be obstructed by apparent impossibilities, yet by His grace they were to go forward, despairing of nothing and hoping for everything.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 23.

- b. **How did the Angel of God make a way of escape for the children of Israel through the sea? Exodus 14:19–22.**
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“But now, as the Egyptian host approached them, expecting to make them an easy prey, the cloudy column rose majestically into the heavens, passed over the Israelites, and descended between them and the armies of Egypt. A wall of darkness interposed between the pursued and their pursuers. The Egyptians could no longer discern the camp of the Hebrews, and were forced to halt. But as the darkness of night deepened, the wall of cloud became a great light to the Hebrews, flooding the entire encampment with the radiance of day.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 284, 287.

- c. **What lesson should we learn from that experience? Romans 8:31.**
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“In every crisis His people may confidently declare, ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’ Romans 8:31. However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, ‘Our God shall fight for us;’ for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 645.

3. TROUBLE FOR THE EGYPTIANS

- a. How did the Lord hinder the host of the Egyptians? Exodus 14:23–25 (first part); Psalm 77:15–18.
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“The Egyptians dared to venture in the path God had prepared for His people, and angels of God went through their host and removed their chariot-wheels. They were plagued. Their progress was very slow, and they began to be troubled. They remembered the judgments the God of the Hebrews had brought upon them in Egypt, to compel them to let Israel go, and they thought that God might deliver them all into the hands of the Israelites. They decided that God was fighting for the Israelites, and they were terribly afraid.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 235.

- b. When the Egyptians found themselves struggling to pursue the Israelites, what did they say to one another? Exodus 14:25 (last part).
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- c. What happened as soon as the Israelites were safely over the sea and Moses again stretched out his rod? Exodus 14:26–30. How will God work a similar deliverance for His people on the borders of the heavenly Canaan?
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“The Egyptians were seized with confusion and dismay. Amid the wrath of the elements, in which they heard the voice of an angry God, they endeavored to retrace their steps and flee to the shore they had quitted. But Moses stretched out his rod, and the piled-up waters, hissing, roaring, and eager for their prey, rushed together and swallowed the Egyptian army in their black depths.

“As morning broke it revealed to the multitudes of Israel all that remained of their mighty foes—the mail-clad bodies cast upon the shore. From the most terrible peril, one night had brought complete deliverance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 287, 288.

“The heavenly intelligences, angels that excel in strength, are waiting, obedient to His command, to unite with human agencies; and the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When His people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 373.

4. A GREAT DELIVERANCE

- a. How did the Psalmist describe the passage through the Red Sea by the people of Israel? Psalm 77:19, 20; 106:8–11.
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- b. What was necessary on the part of the Israelites in order for God to open the Red Sea for them? Hebrews 11:29.
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“God in His providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses before the sea, that He might manifest His power in their deliverance and signally humble the pride of their oppressors. He might have saved them in any other way, but He chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in Him. The people were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, God would never have opened the path for them. It was ‘by faith’ that ‘they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.’ Hebrews 11:29. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they believed the word of God as spoken by Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel divided the sea to make a path for their feet.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290.

- c. How did the Israelites react to the wonderful deliverance that the Lord had prepared for them? Exodus 14:31; Psalm 106:12. What lesson does this experience teach us?
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“The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, ‘Go forward.’ We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, ‘Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;’ but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things.”—*Ibid*.

5. SINGING THE SONG OF VICTORY

- a. How did the people express their happiness? What are some of the key thoughts from the Song of Moses? Exodus 15:1–21.
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“This song and the great deliverance which it commemorates, made an impression never to be effaced from the memory of the Hebrew people. From age to age it was echoed by the prophets and singers of Israel, testifying that Jehovah is the strength and deliverance of those who trust in Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 289.

- b. When, where, and by whom will a similar song be sung again? Revelation 15:2–4.
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“That song does not belong to the Jewish people alone. It points forward to the destruction of all the foes of righteousness and the final victory of the Israel of God.”—*Ibid.*

“And they sing ‘a new song’ before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was Moses unafraid at the Red Sea? How can I be like him?
2. How did God make a way of escape for the Israelites? How has He at times made a way of escape for you?
3. When will God step in to help His people who are just on the borders of the heavenly Canaan?
4. Why did God choose to bring the Israelites into this difficult situation? Why do we sometimes find ourselves in hard places?
5. Why can the Song of Moses and the Lamb only be sung by a special company?

Lessons at Marah and Elim

“And [Moses] cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them” (Exodus 15:25).

“Seek the Lord for wisdom in every emergency. In every trial plead with Jesus to show you a way out of your troubles, then your eyes will be opened to behold the remedy and to apply to your case the healing promises that have been recorded in His Word.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 273.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 291–294.

Sunday

February 16

1. IN THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR

a. How many days did the Israelites travel in the wilderness without finding water? Exodus 15:22.

b. What was the name of the place where they found water, and what was the water like? Exodus 15:23. What does “Marah” mean? (Same verse, margin.) (Compare with Ruth 1:20.)

“For three days, as they journeyed, they could find no water. The supply which they had taken with them was exhausted. There was nothing to quench their burning thirst as they dragged wearily over the sun-burnt plains. Moses, who was familiar with this region, knew what the others did not, that at Marah, the nearest station where springs were to be found, the water was unfit for use. With intense anxiety he watched the guiding cloud. With a sinking heart he heard the glad shout. ‘Water! water!’ echoed along the line. Men, women, and children in joyous haste crowded to the fountain, when, lo, a cry of anguish burst forth from the host—the water was bitter.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 291.

2. FORGETTING THE BLESSINGS

- a. **What did the people do when they began to suffer from thirst? Exodus 15:24; Psalm 106:13.**
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“In their horror and despair they reproached Moses for having led them in such a way, not remembering that the divine presence in that mysterious cloud had been leading him as well as them. In his grief at their distress Moses did what they had forgotten to do; he cried earnestly to God for help.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 291.

- b. **What does Christ say to those who are forgetful of past blessings in their anxiety for their future needs? Luke 12:29, 30.**
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“Christians should not allow themselves to be troubled with anxious care as to the necessities of life. If men love and obey God, and do their part, God will provide for all their wants. Although your living may have to be obtained by the sweat of your brow, you are not to distrust God; for in the great plan of His providence, He will supply your need from day to day.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 227.

- c. **What shows that God will never forget us? Isaiah 44:21; 49:15, 16.**
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“The love of Jesus is something expressed, more tender than even the love of a mother for her child. The most tender love we know is that of a mother for her child, but the love of Jesus exceeds this. She may change in her affection. Mothers may become unkind, but Jesus never, never will become unmindful or unkind, or cruel to His children.

“Then never, never will we show distrust and want of faith. So strong is His love that it controls all the affections of His nature, and [He] employs all His vast resources to do His people good. His love is durable, without variableness or shadow of turning. Never let us dishonor God by trying so hard to keep ourselves, fixing our eyes upon ourselves, and keeping ourselves constantly in view.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 180.

“Oh, how easy for us to forget God, while He never forgets us; He visits us with His mercies every hour.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 314.

3. THE BITTER MADE SWEET

- a. How did the waters at Marah become sweet? Exodus 15:25. What practical lessons can we learn from this?
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“For every trial, God has provided help. When Israel in the desert came to the bitter waters of Marah, Moses cried unto the Lord. The Lord did not provide some new remedy; He called attention to that which was at hand. A shrub which He had created was to be cast into the fountain to make the water pure and sweet. When this was done, the people drank of the water and were refreshed. In every trial, if we seek Him, Christ will give us help. Our eyes will be opened to discern the healing promises recorded in His word. The Holy Spirit will teach us how to appropriate every blessing that will be an antidote to grief. For every bitter draft that is placed to our lips, we shall find a branch of healing.

“We are not to let the future, with its hard problems, its unsatisfying prospects, make our hearts faint, our knees tremble, our hands hang down. ‘Let him take hold of My strength,’ says the Mighty One, ‘that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.’ Isaiah 27:5. Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 248, 249.

- b. Where and on what other occasion did a similar problem exist, and how was it solved? 2 Kings 2:19–22.
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“The healing of the waters of Jericho was accomplished, not by any wisdom of man, but by the miraculous interposition of God. . . .

“In casting salt into the bitter spring, Elisha taught the same spiritual lesson imparted centuries later by the Saviour to His disciples when He declared, ‘Ye are the salt of the earth.’ Matthew 5:13. The salt mingling with the polluted spring purified its waters and brought life and blessing where before had been blighting and death. When God compares His children to salt, He would teach them that His purpose in making them the subjects of His grace is that they may become agents in saving others.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 231.

4. PROMISES TO THE OBEDIENT

- a. **What did the Lord promise to do for His people, and what were the conditions? Exodus 15:26. Are there similar conditions today?**
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“There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.

“And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

- b. **What assurance is given to those who are sick? Psalm 103:2–5; James 5:15, 16.**
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“The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. He needed health of soul before he could appreciate health of body. Before the physical malady could be healed, Christ must bring relief to the mind, and cleanse the soul from sin. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can impart would restore vigor to the mind and health to the body.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 77.

- c. **Why should we be particular in how we care for our bodies? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31.**
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“The sacred temple of the body must be kept pure and uncontaminated, that God’s Holy Spirit may dwell therein. We need to guard faithfully the Lord’s property, for any abuse of our powers shortens the time that our lives could be used for the glory of God. . . . By properly using our powers to their fullest extent in the most useful employment, by keeping every organ in health, by so preserving every organ that mind, sinew, and muscle shall work harmoniously, we may do the most precious service for God.”—*My Life Today*, p. 134.

5. THE WELLS AT ELIM

- a. After the Israelites had left Marah, where did they next camp? Describe the oasis that they found there. Exodus 15:27.
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- b. Just as God provided food and water for the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, how does He promise to provide for the needs of His people just before their entrance into the heavenly Canaan? Isaiah 33:16; Psalm 37:19.
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“The Lord has shown me repeatedly that it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.”—*Early Writings*, p. 56.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was the place where the children of Israel found water called Marah?
2. How did they react to God’s providence in bringing them to this place? How are we sometimes the same? What should we do instead?
3. God has promised that we will never find ourselves in a situation where He has not provided for our needs. Under what conditions is this true?
4. Why is it so important to keep God’s health laws today?
5. What has God promised to provide for His people just before their entrance into the heavenly Canaan?

Bread from Heaven

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan” (Exodus 16:35).

“For forty years they [the Israelites] were daily reminded by this miraculous provision, of God’s unfailing care and tender love. In the words of the psalmist, God gave them ‘of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food’ (Psalm 78:24, 25)—that is, food provided for them by the angels.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 297.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 294–297.

Sunday

February 23

1. MURMURING AND COMPLAINING AGAIN

- a. Why did the Israelites again murmur when they came to the wilderness of Sin? Exodus 16:1–3.

“They had not as yet suffered from hunger; their present wants were supplied, but they feared for the future. They could not understand how these vast multitudes were to subsist in their travels through the wilderness, and in imagination they saw their children famishing. The Lord permitted difficulties to surround them, and their supply of food to be cut short, that their hearts might turn to Him who had hitherto been their Deliverer. If in their want they would call upon Him, He would still grant them manifest tokens of His love and care. He had promised that if they would obey His commandments, no disease should come upon them, and it was sinful unbelief on their part to anticipate that they or their children might die of hunger. . . .

“They saw and felt only their present inconveniences and trials; and instead of saying, ‘God has done great things for us; whereas we were slaves, He is making of us a great nation,’ they talked of the hardness of the way, and wondered when their weary pilgrimage would end.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 292, 293.

2. REBUKING THE MURMURERS

- a. What did the Lord provide, and how did He test the people in the supply of their daily provisions? Exodus 16:4, 5.
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- b. What was the response of Moses and Aaron to the unreasonable murmurings of the people? Exodus 16:6–10.
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“Moses assured the congregation that their wants were to be supplied: ‘The Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full.’ And he added, ‘What are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.’ He further bade Aaron say to them, ‘Come near before the Lord: for He hath heard your murmurings.’ While Aaron was speaking, ‘they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.’ A splendor such as they had never witnessed symbolized the divine Presence. Through manifestations addressed to their senses, they were to obtain a knowledge of God. They must be taught that the Most High, and not merely the man Moses, was their leader, that they might fear His name and obey His voice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 294, 295.

- c. What promises do we have regarding our provision of food today? Philippians 4:19; Psalm 37:25. How can we be like the murmuring children of Israel in this regard?
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“Though their present needs are supplied, many are unwilling to trust God for the future, and they are in constant anxiety lest poverty shall come upon them, and their children shall be left to suffer. Some are always anticipating evil or magnifying the difficulties that really exist, so that their eyes are blinded to the many blessings which demand their gratitude. The obstacles they encounter, instead of leading them to seek help from God, the only Source of strength, separate them from Him, because they awaken unrest and repining. . . .

“No place should be given to that distrust of God which leads us to make a preparation against future want the chief pursuit of life, as though our happiness consisted in these earthly things. It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 293, 294.

3. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE

- a. What kind of food did the Lord supply to the Israelites in the evening and in the morning on one occasion and later for one month? Exodus 16:11–15. Why was God so particular in the type of food He supplied for them?

“If the Israelites had been given the diet to which they had been accustomed while in Egypt, they would have exhibited the unmanageable spirit that the world is exhibiting today. In the diet of men and women in this age there are included many things that the Lord would not have permitted the children of Israel to eat. The human family as it is today is an illustration of what the children of Israel would have been if God had allowed them to eat the food and follow the habits and customs of the Egyptians.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1102.

“In Egypt their taste had become perverted. God designed to restore their appetite to a pure, healthy state, in order that they might enjoy the simple fruits that were given to Adam and Eve in Eden. He was about to establish them in a second Eden, a goodly land, where they might enjoy the fruits and grains that He would provide for them. He purposed to remove the feverish diet upon which they had subsisted in Egypt; for He wished them to be in perfect health and soundness when they entered the goodly land to which He was leading them, so that the surrounding heathen nations might be constrained to glorify the God of Israel, the God who had done so wonderful a work for His people. Unless the people who acknowledged Him as the God of heaven were in perfect soundness of health, His name could not be glorified.”—*Ibid.*

- b. Describe the manna and how it was to be prepared. Exodus 16:31; Numbers 11:7, 8.

“In the morning there lay upon the surface of the ground ‘a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost.’ ‘It was like coriander seed, white.’ The people called it ‘manna.’ Moses said, ‘This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.’ The people gathered the manna, and found that there was an abundant supply for all. They ‘ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it.’ Numbers 11:8. ‘And the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 295.

4. GATHERING THE MANNA

- a. **What directions did the people receive for gathering manna? Exodus 16:16–26. How did the manna illustrate the necessity of Sabbath observance before the giving of the law at Sinai?**
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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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.

- b. **How long did the daily supply of manna last? Exodus 16:35. Why did God remove it?**
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“ ‘On the fourteenth day of the month at even,’ the Passover was celebrated on the plains of Jericho. ‘And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan.’ The long years of their desert wanderings were ended. The feet of Israel were at last treading the Promised Land.”—*Ibid.*, p. 486.

- c. **Why was a pot of manna kept in the ark of the covenant? Exodus 16:32, 33; Hebrews 9:4.**
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5. EATING MANNA TODAY

- a. What is the manna that we are to gather and eat today? Jeremiah 15:16; John 6:63 (second part). How often do we need to do this?
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“[God’s] words are the manna from heaven for the soul to feed upon and receive spiritual strength. The Bible is the great standard of right and wrong, clearly defining sin and holiness. Its living principles, running through our lives like threads of gold, are our only safeguard in trial and temptation.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 422.

“Each must come to Christ with his own soul hunger, each must have his own convictions, feel his own soul’s need, and learn of Christ for himself.

“Filled with the Bread of Life, we cannot hunger for earthly attractions, worldly excitements, and earthly grandeur. Our religious experience will be of the same order as the food upon which we feed.

“The food we eat at one meal does not satisfy us forever. We must daily partake of food. So we must daily eat the Word of God that the life of the soul may be renewed. In those who feed constantly upon the Word, Christ is formed, the hope of glory. A neglect to read and study the Bible brings spiritual starvation.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 209.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of things did the children of Israel complain about? How did this reveal a lack of faith?
2. What am I forgetting when I focus on the difficulties and the evil around me?
3. What happens when I eat the food and follow the customs of Egypt? Why should I be so concerned about being healthy?
4. How did the supply of manna impress upon God’s people the sacredness of the Sabbath?
5. As I fill myself with the Bread of Life, through the study of the Word, what will happen to me? Why is it so important for me to eat this Bread every day?

First Sabbath Offering for World Disaster Relief

“Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. . . . I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest” (Psalm 55:6, 8).

Windy storms, tempests, earthquakes, accidents, floods, famines, and fires—the list goes on and on. Are more of such disasters looming on the horizon?



“The day of test and purification is just upon us. Signs of a most startling character appear, in floods, in hurricanes, in tornadoes, in cloud-bursts, in casualties by land and by sea, that proclaim the approach of the end of all things. The judgments of God are falling on the world, that men may be awakened to the fact that Christ will come speedily.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 8, 1892.

“In accidents and calamities by land and by sea, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes—in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. The visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast.”—*Ibid.*, March 14, 1912.

As the great controversy thus escalates on our planet—what would God have us to do in behalf of suffering humanity? “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”—a God who “delighteth in mercy” (Micah 6:8; 7:18).

In times of disaster, the woes of suffering humanity cry out for deeds of mercy—to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, repair the rubble of toppled buildings, apply the healing balm to the wounded. Emergency aid requires much funding, so only by your generous support to this great need can it happen. Those who give generously to this need will be amply repaid, for “blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

In behalf of the GC Stewardship and Welfare Department

God Provides for His People

“But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun” (Exodus 17:12).

“Happy the minister who has a faithful Aaron and Hur to strengthen his hands when they become weary and to hold them up by faith and prayer. Such a support is a powerful aid to the servant of Christ in his work and will often make the cause of truth to triumph gloriously.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 531.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 297–300.

Sunday

March 1

1. THE PEOPLE MURMUR AGAIN

- a. How did the children of Israel murmur against Moses when they arrived at Rephidim? Why? Exodus 17:1–3.

“The Lord directed their course where there was no water, to prove them, to see if, after receiving so many evidences of His power, they had learned to turn to Him in their affliction, and had repented of their past rebellious murmurings against Him. They had charged Moses and Aaron with selfish motives in bringing them from Egypt to kill them and their children with hunger, that they might be enriched with their possessions. In doing this the Israelites ascribed to man that which they had received unmistakable evidence was from God alone, whose power is unlimited. These wonderful manifestations of the power of God He would have them ascribe to Him alone, and magnify His name upon the earth. . . . If they would not glorify God in their trials and adversity, in their travels through the wilderness to the Canaan in prospect, while God was continually giving them unmistakable evidence of His power and glory, and His care for them, they would not magnify His name and glorify Him when established in the land of Canaan, surrounded with blessings and prosperity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 107.

2. GOD PROVIDES

- a. **What did Moses do after he had heard their complaints? Exodus 17:4; Jeremiah 29:12.**
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“The Lord says, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble.’ Psalm 50:15. He invites us to present to Him our perplexities and necessities, and our need of divine help. He bids us be instant in prayer. As soon as difficulties arise, we are to offer to Him our sincere, earnest petitions. By our importunate prayers we give evidence of our strong confidence in God. The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 172.

- b. **To what place, and with what specific instructions, did God send Moses for water? How was water miraculously provided? Exodus 17:5, 6.**
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“In distress Moses cried to the Lord, ‘What shall I do unto this people?’ He was directed to take the elders of Israel and the rod wherewith he had wrought wonders in Egypt, and to go on before the people. And the Lord said unto him, ‘Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.’ He obeyed, and the waters burst forth in a living stream that abundantly supplied the encampment. Instead of commanding Moses to lift up his rod and call down some terrible plague, like those on Egypt, upon the leaders in this wicked murmuring, the Lord in His great mercy made the rod His instrument to work their deliverance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 298.

- c. **What other names did Moses give to that place, and why did he rename it? Exodus 17:7 (margin).**
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“In their thirst the people had tempted God, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us, or not?’—‘If God has brought us here, why does He not give us water as well as bread?’ The unbelief thus manifested was criminal, and Moses feared that the judgments of God would rest upon them. And he called the name of the place Massah, ‘temptation,’ and Meribah, ‘chiding,’ as a memorial of their sin.”—*Ibid.*

3. SYMBOLS OF CHRIST

a. Of whom is the smitten rock a type? 1 Corinthians 10:4.

“Moses smote the rock, but it was the Son of God who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, stood beside Moses, and caused the life-giving water to flow. Not only Moses and the elders, but all the congregation who stood at a distance, beheld the glory of the Lord; but had the cloud been removed, they would have been slain by the terrible brightness of Him who abode therein.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 298.

b. In what other sense is Jesus referred to as a rock? Psalm 94:22; Mark 12:10.

“In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone, and laid it Himself. He called it ‘a sure foundation.’ The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and griefs; it can endure them all. With perfect safety they may build upon it. Christ is a ‘tried stone.’ Those who trust in Him, He never disappoints. He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam’s guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security.

“By connection with Christ, the living stone, all who build upon this foundation become living stones. Many persons are by their own endeavors hewn, polished, and beautified; but they cannot become ‘living stones,’ because they are not connected with Christ. Without this connection, no man can be saved. Without the life of Christ in us, we cannot withstand the storms of temptation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 598, 599.

c. What is symbolized by the water that flowed from the smitten rock? John 4:10–14; 7:37–39.

“He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

4. THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK

a. What danger next threatened the people of Israel? Exodus 17:8.

“Because of Israel’s disobedience and departure from God, they were allowed to be brought into close places and to suffer adversity; their enemies were permitted to make war with them, to humble them and lead them to seek God in their trouble and distress. ‘Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.’ This took place immediately after the children of Israel had given themselves up to their rebellious murmurings and to unjust, unreasonable complaints against their leaders whom God had qualified and appointed to lead them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 106, 107.

b. How did God defeat the Amalekites? Exodus 17:9–12.

“When the Amalekites came to attack the camp of Israel in the wilderness, Moses knew that his people were not prepared for the encounter. He sent Joshua with a band of soldiers to meet the enemy, while he himself, with Aaron and Hur, took his position on a hill overlooking the battlefield. There the man of God laid the case before Him who alone was able to give them the victory. With hands outstretched toward heaven, Moses prayed earnestly for the success of the armies of Israel. It was observed that while his hands were reaching upward, Israel prevailed against the foe; but when through fatigue they were allowed to fall, Amalek prevailed. Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses until victory, full and complete, turned upon the side of Israel and their enemies were driven from the field.

“This instance was to be a lesson to all Israel to the close of time that God is the strength of His people. When Israel triumphed, Moses was reaching his hands toward heaven and interceding in their behalf; so when all the Israel of God prevail, it is because the Mighty One undertakes their case and fights their battles for them. Moses did not ask or believe that God would overcome their foes while Israel remained inactive. He marshals all his forces and sends them out as well prepared as their facilities can make them, and then he takes the whole matter to God in prayer. Moses on the mount is pleading with the Lord, while Joshua with his brave followers is below, doing his best to meet and repulse the enemies of Israel and of God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 530, 531.

5. AMALEK IS OVERCOME

- a. **After the Amalekites had been defeated, what sentence was pronounced upon them? Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 25:17–19.**

“The wonders wrought by Moses before the Egyptians were made a subject of mockery by the people of Amalek, and the fears of surrounding nations were ridiculed. They had taken oath by their gods that they would destroy the Hebrews, so that not one should escape, and they boasted that Israel’s God would be powerless to resist them. They had not been injured or threatened by the Israelites. Their assault was wholly unprovoked. It was to manifest their hatred and defiance of God that they sought to destroy His people. . . . When the men of Amalek fell upon the wearied and defenseless ranks of Israel, they sealed their nation’s doom. The care of God is over the weakest of His children. No act of cruelty or oppression toward them is unmarked by Heaven. Over all who love and fear Him, His hand extends as a shield; let men beware that they smite not that hand; for it wields the sword of justice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 300.

- b. **What should we remember when we are persecuted in a similar manner today as was Israel by the Amalekites? Matthew 5:11, 12. How does God regard those who persecute their own brethren?**

“If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must He regard those who, professing to be His people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in His cause?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 245.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **How is trial and adversity a test for us today, as it was for the Israelites?**
2. **When we pray earnestly in difficult situations, what does this reveal?**
3. **What is the key to becoming a living stone?**
4. **What is sometimes the cause of us being brought into difficult places?**
5. **What sin sealed Amalek’s doom? How are we sometimes guilty of the same sin?**

The Visit of Jethro

“And Moses’ father in law said unto him, . . . Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” (Exodus 18:17, 21).

“In His instruction to Moses the Lord very plainly set forth the character of those who were to fill important positions as counselors.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 341.

Suggested Reading: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 13–18.

Sunday

March 8

1. A HAPPY REUNION

- a. After the battle with the Amalekites, who came to visit Moses, and whom did he bring with him? Exodus 18:1–5.
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“Not far distant from where the Israelites were now encamped was the home of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Jethro had heard of the deliverance of the Hebrews, and he now set out to visit them, and restore to Moses his wife and two sons.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 300.

- b. When Jethro sent word to Moses that he was coming, what did Moses do at once? Exodus 18:6, 7.
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“The great leader was informed by messengers of their approach, and he went out with joy to meet them, and, the first greetings over, conducted them to his tent. He had sent back his family when on his way to the perils of leading Israel from Egypt, but now he could again enjoy the relief and comfort of their society.”—*Ibid.*

2. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

a. What did Moses tell his father-in-law? Exodus 18:8.

b. How did Jethro react to the good news? Exodus 18:9–12.

“To Jethro [Moses] recounted the wonderful dealings of God with Israel, and the patriarch rejoiced and blessed the Lord, and with Moses and the elders he united in offering sacrifice and holding a solemn feast in commemoration of God’s mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 300.

c. As we consider this time of sharing between Moses and Jethro, what should we remember as we come in contact with others, both within and without the church? Psalm 105:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. . . . For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. . . . We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works. . . .

“Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 364.

“We are the constant recipients of God’s mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us.”—*Steps to Christ*, p.103.

3. JETHRO GIVES ADVICE

- a. What did Jethro observe concerning the judicial work of Moses, and what was Moses' response? Exodus 18:13–16.
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“As Jethro remained in the camp, he soon saw how heavy were the burdens that rested upon Moses. To maintain order and discipline among that vast, ignorant, and untrained multitude was indeed a stupendous task. Moses was their recognized leader and magistrate, and not only the general interests and duties of the people, but the controversies that arose among them, were referred to him. He had permitted this, for it gave him an opportunity to instruct them; as he said, ‘I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws.’ But Jethro remonstrated against this.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 300, 301.

- b. What advice did the godly priest then give to his son-in-law? Exodus 18:17–23.
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- c. What were the four main qualifications that the visitor emphasized in the selections of the men who were to share Moses' burdens? Exodus 18:21 (first part). What counsel, given to those selecting managers for schools, is just as applicable in the various departments of the work today?
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“Wherever schools are established, wise managers must be provided, ‘able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness,’ men who will do their very best in the various responsibilities of their positions. Business ability they should have, but it is of still greater importance that they walk humbly with God and are guided by the Holy Spirit. Such men will be taught of God, and they will seek counsel of their brethren who are men of prayer.

“The managers of our schools must labor with pure motives. In their unselfishness they will remember that other parts of the great harvest field will require the same facilities that are provided for the school under their care.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 215.

4. FOLLOWING THE ADVICE

- a. **How did Moses respond to the wise counsel of his father-in-law? Exodus 18:24, 25.**
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“The Lord had greatly honored Moses, and had wrought wonders by his hand; but the fact that he had been chosen to instruct others did not lead him to conclude that he himself needed no instruction. The chosen leader of Israel listened gladly to the suggestions of the godly priest of Midian, and adopted his plan as a wise arrangement.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 301.

- b. **What does this teach us about how we should treat those who are older and more experienced than we are? What makes their advice valuable? Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31.**
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“Reverence should be shown for God’s representatives—for ministers, teachers, and parents who are called to speak and act in His stead. In the respect shown to them He is honored.

“And God has especially enjoined tender respect toward the aged. He says, ‘The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.’ Proverbs 16:31. It tells of battles fought, and victories gained; of burdens borne, and temptations resisted. It tells of weary feet nearing their rest, of places soon to be vacant. Help the children to think of this, and they will smooth the path of the aged by their courtesy and respect, and will bring grace and beauty into their young lives as they heed the command to ‘rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man.’ Leviticus 19:32.”—*Education*, p. 244.

- c. **What was the result of the recommended delegation of authority? Exodus 18:26.**
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“This counsel was accepted, and it not only brought relief to Moses, but resulted in establishing more perfect order among the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 301.

5. MOSES' QUALIFICATION FOR LEADERSHIP

- a. **Just as God required those under Moses to have certain qualities, what were Moses' special qualifications? What important attribute did he possess? Numbers 12:3.**
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“Moses was a humble man; God called him the meekest man on earth. He was generous, noble, well-balanced; he was not defective, and his qualities were not merely half developed. He could successfully exhort his fellow men, because his life itself was a living representation of what man can become and accomplish with God as his helper, of what he taught to others, of what he desired them to be, and of what God required of him. He spoke from the heart and it reached the heart. He was accomplished in knowledge and yet simple as a child in the manifestation of his deep sympathies. Endowed with a remarkable instinct, he could judge instantly of the needs of all who surrounded him, and of the things which were in bad condition and required attention, and he did not neglect them.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1113.

- b. **What special promise was given by Jesus to the meek? Matthew 5:5.**
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“Meekness is a precious, Christian attribute. The meekness and lowliness of Christ are only learned by wearing Christ's yoke. . . . That yoke signifies entire submission.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 236.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What qualities should we look for in choosing leaders in the work today? Should those who lack these qualities be chosen?**
2. **What is of greater importance than business ability when choosing men for responsible positions?**
3. **What should we often speak about in our contact with others? Why?**
4. **How should we treat our ministers, parents, and teachers in the faith? Why?**
5. **Why were Moses' exhortations so powerful? What does this teach me?**

God Speaks to His People

“The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire” (Deuteronomy 5:4).

“When the law was spoken, the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, stood by the side of His Son, enshrouded in the fire and the smoke on the mount.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1103.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 301–305.

Sunday

March 15

1. ARRIVING AT SINAI

- a. **How long after they had left Egypt did the Israelites come to Mount Sinai? Exodus 19:1. 2. What revelation was God about to make to them?**

“On every hand vast, rugged heights seemed in their solitary grandeur to speak of eternal endurance and majesty. Here the mind was impressed with solemnity and awe. Man was made to feel his ignorance and weakness in the presence of Him who ‘weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.’ Isaiah 40:12. Here Israel was to receive the most wonderful revelation ever made by God to men. Here the Lord had gathered His people that He might impress upon them the sacredness of His requirements by declaring with His own voice His holy law. Great and radical changes were to be wrought in them; for the degrading influences of servitude and a long-continued association with idolatry had left their mark upon habits and character. God was working to lift them to a higher moral level by giving them a knowledge of Himself.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 302.

- b. **What beautiful words did God speak to Moses in the Mount, sharing His desire for the Israelites as well as His people in all ages? Exodus 19:3–6.**
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2. PREPARING TO MEET GOD

- a. After Moses shared with the people what God had spoken to him, how did the people respond? Exodus 19:7–9.
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“Moses returned to the camp, and having summoned the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the divine message. Their answer was, ‘All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.’ Thus they entered into a solemn covenant with God, pledging themselves to accept Him as their ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of His authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

“This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days. Their acceptance with God depends on a faithful fulfilment of the terms of their agreement with Him. God includes in His covenant all who will obey Him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1103.

- b. What preparation was required of the people in order to appear in God’s presence when He presented His law? Exodus 19:10–15. What care should we take before we appear in the presence of God at church?
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“That great and mighty God who created the beautiful Eden and everything lovely in it is a God of order, and He wants order and cleanliness with His people. . . .

“There was to be nothing slack and untidy about those who appeared before Him when they came into His holy presence. And why was this? What was the object of all this carefulness? Was it merely to recommend the people to God? Was it merely to gain His approbation? The reason that was given me was this, that a right impression might be made upon the people. If those who ministered in sacred office should fail to manifest care, and reverence for God, in their apparel and their deportment, the people would lose their awe and their reverence for God and His sacred service. If the priests showed great reverence for God by being very careful and very particular as they came into His presence, it gave the people an exalted idea of God and His requirements. It showed them that God was holy, that His work was sacred, and that everything in connection with His work must be holy; that it must be free from everything like impurity and uncleanness; and that all defilement must be put away from those who approach nigh to God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 611, 612.

3. IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

- a. Describe the majesty and solemnity of the scene when God descended from heaven to speak to His people. Exodus 19:16–20; Deuteronomy 33:2, 3.
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“On the morning of the third day, as the eyes of all the people were turned toward the mount, its summit was covered with a thick cloud, which grew more black and dense, sweeping downward until the entire mountain was wrapped in darkness and awful mystery. Then a sound as of a trumpet was heard, summoning the people to meet with God; and Moses led them forth to the base of the mountain. From the thick darkness flashed vivid lightnings, while peals of thunder echoed and re-echoed among the surrounding heights. . . .

“And now the thunders ceased; the trumpet was no longer heard; the earth was still. There was a period of solemn silence, and then the voice of God was heard. Speaking out of the thick darkness that enshrouded Him, as He stood upon the mount, surrounded by a retinue of angels, the Lord made known His law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 304.

“By proclaiming the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel with His own voice, God demonstrated their importance. In awful grandeur He made known His majesty and authority as Ruler of the world. This He did to impress the people with the sacredness of His law and the importance of obeying it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 198.

- b. When Moses was again called to the top of the mountain, what did the Lord say to him? Exodus 19:21–25.
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“When the divine Presence was manifested upon Sinai, the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the sight of all Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 339.

“God is a being of infinite love and compassion, but He also declares Himself to be a ‘consuming fire, even a jealous God.’ ”—*The Review and Herald*, August 14, 1900.

“To sin, wherever found, ‘our God is a consuming fire.’ Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107.

4. THE LAW OF LOVE

- a. **Who spoke the law on Mount Sinai? What did He later do with the law? Deuteronomy 5:4, 5; 9:10.**
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“The law, which is the transcript of His character, no one need fail to understand. The words written by the finger of God on tables of stone so perfectly reveal His will concerning His people that none need make any mistake.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 225.

- b. **What is the basic principle behind the law? Matthew 22:37–39.**
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“The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined.

“The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai’s mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, ‘This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.’ There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1105.

- c. **How do genuine Christians show that they have the love of God in their hearts? 1 John 5:2, 3; Romans 13:10.**
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“The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all hatred, selfishness, and envy; for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. There is health in obedience to God’s law. The affections of the obedient are drawn out after God. Looking unto the Lord Jesus, we may encourage and serve one another. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our souls, and there is no dissension and strife among us.”—*Ibid.*

“The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves.”—*Education*, p. 16.

5. AN UNCHANGING LAW

- a. What effect did the proclamation of the law have upon the people? Exodus 20:18–20. What effect did it have upon Moses? Hebrews 12:20, 21.
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“The people of Israel were overwhelmed with terror. The awful power of God’s utterances seemed more than their trembling hearts could bear. For as God’s great rule of right was presented before them, they realized as never before the offensive character of sin, and their own guilt in the sight of a holy God. They shrank away from the mountain in fear and awe.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 309, 310.

- b. Was there a need to change this law? Did Jesus change it? Psalm 111:7, 8; Matthew 5:17–19.
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“The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. . . . The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, ‘as a faithful witness in heaven.’ Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist: ‘Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.’ ‘All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever.’ Psalm 119:89; 111:7, 8.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 434.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the natural beauty surrounding Mount Sinai affect the Israelites? Why is it so important to regularly spend time in nature?
2. What pledge does God want me to make with Him daily?
3. Why did God speak with His own voice when proclaiming the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel?
4. What is the result of having the law of love, the love of Jesus, in the soul?
5. Explain why the law is unchanging.

A Wall of Protection

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 119:1).

“He who has an understanding of the far-reaching claims of God’s law can understand something of the heinousness of sin. And the more exalted his ideas of God’s requirements, the greater will be his gratitude of the pardon granted him.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 137.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 305–310.

Sunday

March 22

1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE CREATOR

- a. **When was the Sabbath given to mankind? What was the purpose of the Sabbath? Genesis 2:1–3.**
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“The Sabbath . . . 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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

- b. **What are some general guidelines in true Sabbathkeeping? Isaiah 58:13.**
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- c. **Why do we often fail to guard our words upon the Sabbath? Matthew 12:34.**
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“To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character.”—*Ibid.*

“But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

2. PUTTING GOD FIRST

- a. What does God express right at the beginning of the law, showing its importance? Exodus 20:3. How do we show that we have given something first preference in our life? What types of other gods do we sometimes serve?
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“Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

- b. What should our attitude be toward God? Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 10:12.
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“Christ’s service requires the whole man—the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. He will not accept a divided heart. He expects us to do our best.”—*This Day with God*, p. 161.

- c. Which attribute is vital if we are to enter into a relationship with God where He holds first place? Galatians 5:6.
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“The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. . . . It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God’s commandments, for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 108.

“[The true believer] abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from Him.

“This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will; our feelings, desires, interests, and honor, identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.”—*My Life Today*, p. 11.

3. PUTTING AWAY SELFISH DESIRES

- a. **Where does the sinful desire originate which leads to grave sins such as covetousness and adultery? Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19; 22:37.**
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“The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 125.

“The tenth commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act. He who in obedience to God’s law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for that which belongs to another will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

- b. **As we realize that the battleground is within the mind, what should we do? Philippians 2:5–8; Revelation 3:20.**
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“Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God, . . . that He might restore to man the original mind which he lost in Eden through Satan’s alluring temptation.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 291.

“By conversion and transformation men are to receive the mind of Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 134.

- c. **How far-reaching is obedience to the seventh commandment? Matthew 5:27, 28.**
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“This commandment forbids not only acts of impurity, but sensual thoughts and desires, or any practice that tends to excite them. Purity is demanded not only in the outward life but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart. Christ, who taught the far-reaching obligation of the law of God, declared the evil thought or look to be as truly sin as is the unlawful deed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

4. REJECTING DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS

- a. **What is the root from which murder springs? 1 John 3:15. What else is involved in keeping the sixth commandment?**
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“All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for ‘whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer’); a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

- b. **What characteristic of the carnal heart leads to hatred, and how does this evil trait affect those who harbor it? 1 Corinthians 3:3; Proverbs 14:30.**
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“Envy is the offspring of pride, and if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to hatred, and eventually to revenge and murder.”—*Ibid.*, p. 651.

“Envy is one of the most despicable traits of Satanic character. It is constantly seeking the lifting up of self, by casting slurs upon others. A man who is envious will belittle his neighbor, thinking to exalt himself.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1159.

“Envy, jealousy, and evil surmising is a hellish shadow by which Satan seeks to intercept your views of the character of Christ, so that by beholding the evil you may be fully changed into its likeness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 1163.

- c. **How far should our honesty extend, if we truly desire to keep the eighth commandment? 2 Corinthians 8:21.**
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“[The eighth commandment] condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

5. THE HIGHEST EARTHLY HONOR

- a. What is special about the fifth commandment? Ephesians 6:2; Exodus 20:12.
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“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

“Our obligation to our parents never ceases. Our love for them, and theirs for us, is not measured by years or distance, and our responsibility can never be set aside.”—*My Life Today*, p. 278.

“Those who would truly follow Christ must let Him abide in the heart, and enthrone Him there as supreme. They must represent His spirit and character in their home life, and show courtesy and kindness to those with whom they come in contact. There are many children who profess to know the truth, who do not render to their parents the honor and affection that are due to them, who manifest but little love to father and mother, and fail to honor them in deferring to their wishes, or in seeking to relieve them of anxiety.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 60.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

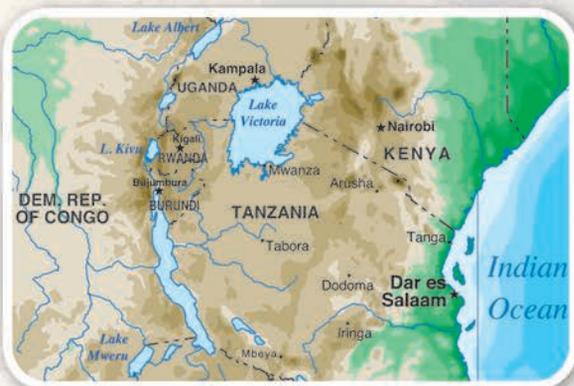
1. How only can I keep the Sabbath holy? What will my words and actions reveal?
2. If I have a vital connection with Christ, what will be the result?
3. What happens when a sinful desire is cherished, a sinful thought dwelt upon?
4. What is envy? What is the result of cherishing this sinful trait?
5. Why are parents entitled to love and respect more than any other person?

First Sabbath Offerings



JANUARY 4
the Amazon (ARAM)
Field headquarters, Brazil
(see p. 4.)

FEBRUARY 1
for the Tanzanian Mission
(see p. 25.)



MARCH 7
for World Disaster Relief
(see p. 51.)

