

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

A large crowd of people in white robes, with a central figure in a white robe and yellow sash standing with arms raised.

Sealed
for Eternity

Vol. 86, No. 3

July–September, 2010

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

Illustrations: Design Pix on pp. 32, 76; Map-Resources on pp. 4, 53, 76; PhotoDisc on back cover; Sermon View on front cover.

Sabbath Bible Lessons (USPS 005-118), Vol. 86, No. 3, July–September, 2010. Published quarterly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, Sabbath School Department. Copyright © 2010, printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, Virginia 24019–5048, U.S.A. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022–9993.

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Foreword

During this quarter, Sabbath School students around the world will be studying the subject *Sealed for Eternity*. What does this mean? How might it be illustrated in a practical sense?

Often when you open a new jar or bottle of some type of food or medicine, beneath the lid there is an additional plastic seal which forms an extra barrier to shield the contents inside. This covering may bear an inscription such as, "Sealed for your protection." It is designed to protect the contents from contamination and decay.

Likewise in the spiritual sense we are told that, throughout eternity, the kingdom of heaven is to be protected against the contamination of sin. Iniquity's "affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9). All who are redeemed for the kingdom of glory must have the seal of protection in order to maintain the purity of that perfect realm and to ensure their safe, continued adherence to the principles of the celestial government—both for their own protection and for that of others. All who would be saints in heaven must first become saints on earth. This process is a vital aspect of the plan of redemption.

"If you would impress upon the wax a clear and vivid impression of the seal, you would not dash the seal upon it in hasty, violent action; but you would carefully place the seal on the plastic wax, and quietly and steadily press it down, until it has hardened in the mold. In like manner deal with human souls. The continuity of Christian influence upon minds trains the soul after Christ and puts through human instrumentalities the new life implanted by the Spirit of God after His own divine likeness."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 100.

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

The Holy Spirit of God is to deeply, clearly impress the character of Christ into our hearts and minds as a seal is indelibly impressed into wax. Then as the wax hardens, the seal endures as a lasting memorial. That the study of these lessons may be instrumental toward that aim is the earnest prayer of

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Poland

“Polska” is a country in Central Europe known as the Republic of Poland. Since it first became identified with Christianity in A.D. 966, the borders of this country have changed innumerable times according to the wars in the region. There have been flourishing, glorious days, followed by terrible wars which brought the country almost to extinction. The nation would then reappear with a different shape on the world map. The population has suffered greatly, especially during World War II when over 6 million people lost their lives—a never-to-be-forgotten experience in modern world history.



Today Poland is bordered by the Baltic Sea to the north; the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south; Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania to the east, and Germany to the west. The population has grown to 38.2 million, and its religious background is composed of: 90% Roman Catholics, 8.3% irreligious, 1% Orthodox, and 0.7% Evangelicals.

The SDA Reform Movement work began in Poland after World War I. From 1925 until the outbreak of World War II our church was legally registered, but during the occupation the members suffered much persecution, and the church could not function any longer. After the war, freedom was regained for a short time until 1950, but again, the church was abolished. Only in 1990 the government granted us freedom after Communism was disbanded, and church activities were legalized.

With the help of our believers and the support of our worldwide membership, our first place of worship was bought and built. However, the finishing touches were never completed, and now that Poland is also suffering from the worldwide economic crisis, we have great financial need in trying to finish the Lord's first monument in this country. We need your help, prayers, and offerings.

Thank you in advance for your generous gifts.

Your brethren and sisters from the Polish Field

The Sabbath as a Test

“I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Revelation 7:4).

“I . . . saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, ‘Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.’ ”—*Early Writings*, p. 118.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 36–38, 42–44, 280–282.

Sunday

June 27

1. THE SEALING WORK

- a. What must be done before the winds of contention are allowed to blow? Revelation 7:1, 3 (compare Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:32). What will happen when these “winds” are released? 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

“John sees the elements of nature—earthquake, tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. . . . [The] mightiest of angels has in his hand the seal of the living God, or of Him who alone can give life, who can inscribe upon the foreheads the mark or inscription, to whom shall be granted immortality, eternal life.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 444, 445.

- b. How do we know that the time of probation, in which sinners are invited to turn to the Lord, will not be extended forever? Luke 13:23–25; 17:28–30; Jeremiah 8:20. What evidence shows that the sealing work must be completed before the plagues begin to fall at the final close of probation? Revelation 22:11.
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2. AN OPENED DOOR

- a. **When was the door of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary opened? Revelation 3:7, 8; 11:19; Daniel 8:14.**
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“The time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God’s people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.”—*Early Writings*, p. 42.

- b. **Since the Sabbath has been revealed as a part of the law of God, and since the Day of Atonement clearly identifies obedience to that selfsame law, has the Sabbath been a test since 1844, or are we to wait for a future Sabbath test? Acts 17:30; John 15:22.**
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“The present test on the Sabbath could not come until the mediation of Jesus in the holy place was finished and He had passed within the second veil; therefore Christians who fell asleep before the door was opened into the most holy, when the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844, and who had not kept the true Sabbath, now rest in hope; for they had not the light and the test on the Sabbath which we now have since that door was opened. I saw that Satan was tempting some of God’s people on this point. Because so many good Christians have fallen asleep in the triumphs of faith and have not kept the true Sabbath, [some] were doubting about its being a test for us now.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

“Satan was trying his every art to hold [these] where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God’s people, and they left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter.”—*Ibid.*, p. 44.

3. THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

- a. How does prophecy describe the restoration of the Lord's Sabbath and the work of the sealing angel? Isaiah 56:1, 2, 6; 58:12, 13; Ezekiel 9:1-11; Revelation 14:9-12. Those who are preparing to receive the seal of God, what will be their attitude toward sin in the congregation?

"This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.

"Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and who murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 267.

"The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people."—*Ibid.*, p. 266.

- b. Although many will be saved without the knowledge of the Sabbath truth, can believers in the third angel's message be sealed without being tested on the commandments of God and the Sabbath? Ezekiel 20:12, 16, 19, 20; Revelation 12:17; 14:12.

"Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This is what distinguishes them from the disloyal, who have accepted a man-made institution in the place of the true Sabbath. The observance of God's rest day is the mark of distinction between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 970.

4. THE FINAL ISSUE

- a. Since the light of present truth began to shine, focusing the attention of God's people on the heavenly sanctuary, the law of God, and the Sabbath (Revelation 11:19), can we as believers in the three angels' message be saved without having the seal of God? James 4:17.
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"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 970.

"Those who reveal the meek and lowly spirit of Christ are tenderly regarded by God. They may be looked upon with scorn by the world, but they are of great value in His sight. Not only the wise, the great, the beneficent, will gain a passport to the heavenly courts; not only the busy worker, full of zeal and restless activity. No; the poor in spirit, who crave the presence of an abiding Christ, the humble in heart, whose highest ambition is to do God's will—these will gain an abundant entrance. They will be among that number who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 301, 302.

- b. What question will become quite clear under the final conflict regarding the Sabbath issue? Malachi 3:18.
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"The final issue on the Sabbath question has not yet come, and by imprudent actions we may bring on a crisis before the time. . . . We must work cautiously, presenting the truth by degrees, as the hearers can bear it, but keep close to the Word."—*The Southern Work*, p. 71.

"The worshippers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment, since this is the sign of God's creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 16.

"The world can only be warned by seeing those who believe the truth sanctified through the truth, acting upon high and holy principles, showing in a high, elevated sense, the line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and those who trample them under their feet."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 980.

5. THE FINAL ISSUE (CONTINUED)

- a. How many are to be sealed in the time of the end? Revelation 7:4; 14:1–3. Describe the details of their victory.

“The decree is to go forth that all who will not receive the mark of the beast shall neither buy nor sell, and, finally, that they shall be put to death. But the saints of God do not receive this mark. . . .

“To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than men? . . . Who are prepared to stand firmly under the banner on which is inscribed, “The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus’?”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 8, 1899.

- b. Describe the troublous times that are coming upon the world, according to prophecy. Luke 21:26; Isaiah 24:1–6; 33:16.

“The time will come when men will not only forbid Sunday work, but they will try to force men to labor on the Sabbath.”—*The Southern Work*, p. 69.

“It requires moral courage to take a position to keep the commandments of the Lord. . . . It takes moral courage, firmness, decision, perseverance, and very much prayer to step out on the unpopular side. . . . You may have to suffer distress, you may go hungry sometimes; but God will not forsake you in your suffering. He will test your faith. We are not to live to please ourselves. We are here to manifest Christ to the world, to represent Him and His power to mankind.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1895.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What are the four winds that are being held back, and why are they held in check?
- What door was opened before the servants of God in 1844?
- What is the work of the third angel of Revelation 14?
- Why was the Lord’s Sabbath not a test for God’s people before 1844—and why has it been a test ever since?
- What question will be clear to all under the final test?

THE SABBATH AS A TEST

“The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.’ So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. ‘From one Sabbath to another’ the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up ‘to worship before Me, saith the Lord’ (Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23).

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

“As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God’s rest day with burdensome requirements. In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hard-hearted and cruel. It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 283, 284.

The Special Resurrection

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, p. 285.

Sunday

July 4

1. TWO CLASSES

- a. **What event will announce the imminent deliverance of the saints?** Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26; Revelation 16:17 (last part), 18.

“Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters. . . .

“That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636, 637.

- b. **Who are resurrected when God’s voice resounds before Christ’s return?** Daniel 12:1, 2; Matthew 26:63, 64; Revelation 1:7. **Will those raised to everlasting life be among those who will hear God’s covenant?**

“Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth . . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt’ (Daniel 12:2). All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’ (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.”—*Ibid.*, p. 637.

2. 144,000 IN NUMBER

- a. **When God delivers the everlasting covenant to His people and gives the day and hour of Christ's coming, how many saints will be alive to answer the question in Revelation 6:17? Revelation 14:13.**
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“When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still; for then there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father's throne. Therefore what is done to rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath must be done before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.”—*Early Writings*, p. 48.

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai.

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground.”—*Ibid.*, p. 15.

- b. **Is this number figurative or literal? How is the phrase “in number” used by the Spirit of Prophecy? Revelation 7:4; 1 Kings 18:19; 19:18.**
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“Jezebel's prophets, eight hundred and fifty in number, like a regiment of soldiers prepared for battle, march out in a body with instrumental music and imposing display.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 279, 280.

3. ADDITION OR INCLUSION?

- a. Did the early Advent people believe that those who have died in the faith of the third angel's message are included in the number of the sealed saints? Revelation 14:12, 13.

“As [John] looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God's commandment-keeping people. They had upon their foreheads the seal of the living God, and he said: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth' (Revelation 14:12, 13).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 15.

- b. Show examples in the Spirit of Prophecy that the word “with” is also used to indicate inclusion (not always addition).

“The news of your wife's death was to me overwhelming. . . .

“I saw that she was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 263.

“With the rest of the disciples, Judas partook of the bread and wine symbolizing the body and blood of Christ. This was the last time that Judas was present with the twelve.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 22, 1897.

- c. Is Ellen G. White included in the 144,000?

“Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple. . . . And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, ‘Only the 144,000 enter this place,’ and we shouted, ‘Alleluia.’ . . .

“After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, ‘Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.’ ”—*Early Writings*, p. 19.

4. ADDITION OR INCLUSION? (CONTINUED)

- a. What should be our goal under the third angel's message, since only 144,000 will be sealed? Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 4:14.
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"The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 928.

- b. Can the word "among" be used to mean inclusion? Give examples. Numbers 17:6, 8.
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"Even when Jesus Himself was upon earth, and walked with and taught His disciples, there was one among the twelve who was a devil. Judas betrayed his Lord. Christ had a perfect knowledge of the life of Judas. He knew of the covetousness which Judas did not overcome, and in His sermons to others He gave him many lessons upon this subject."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 41.

"The Saviour did not repulse Judas. He gave him a place among the twelve."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 717.

- c. What scriptures show the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church? Philippians 1:6. How many are there in this group of overcomers? Revelation 14:1, 5; 15:2, 3.
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"In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church. He writes: [Revelation 15:2, 3 and 14:1 quoted.] In this world their minds were consecrated to God; they served Him with the intellect and with the heart; and now He can place His name 'in their foreheads.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591.

- d. If a group is known or named according to the number of its constituents, does that group carry that name even when it is numerically incomplete? Mention at least one example. 1 Corinthians 15:5.
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5. TWO DISTINCT RESURRECTIONS

- a. Who will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus? John 5:28, 29 (first part); 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17. What will the righteous receive at this resurrection? Revelation 22:12; 1 Corinthians 15:51–55; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

- b. What will be the main occupation of the righteous during the millennium? 1 Corinthians 6:1–3; Revelation 20:4–6.

- c. Who are resurrected after the 1,000 years are over and the wicked have been judged? John 5:28, 29 (last part); Revelation 20:5, 7–10.

“At the end of one thousand years, Jesus, the king of glory, descends. . . . The city of God comes down and settles upon the mighty plain prepared for it. Then Jesus leaves the city surrounded by the redeemed host and is escorted on His way by the angelic throng. In fearful majesty He calls forth the wicked dead. They are wakened from their long sleep. What a dreadful waking!”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 83, 84.

“At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead and appear before God for the execution of ‘the judgment written.’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 661.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. Describe the special resurrection when two groups will be raised from the tomb at the voice of God, just before the coming of Christ.
- b. For what purpose will be raised those who, since 1844, have died in the faith of the third angel’s message?
- c. After those saints have been brought back to life, how many living saints will there be on this earth to hear God’s covenant of peace?
- d. With what Bible verses does the Spirit of Prophecy identify the last remnant church that will be ready to meet Christ?
- e. Describe the two general resurrections to take place, one at the coming of Christ and the other one thousand years later.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deuteronomy 32:8).

“The true children of Abraham would live, as he did, a life of obedience to God. . . . A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 466, 467.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 106, 465–469.

Sunday

July 11

1. THE GOSPEL PROMISE

- a. What was the first promise given to Abraham, and how does that promise depict the gospel? Genesis 12:1–3; 15:6; 22:18; Galatians 3:8, 9.

“[Abraham] trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

- b. What is the gospel? Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18; Colossians 1:20. How was Calvary illustrated to Abraham in a practical way? Genesis 22:2–13; John 8:56–58.

“The offering of Isaac was designed by God to prefigure the sacrifice of His Son. . . . All the agony that Abraham endured during that dark and fearful trial was for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1094.

2. CHRIST—THE MAIN PROMISED BLESSING

- a. Did Abraham understand the blessings that were to come through faith in the cross of Christ? Galatians 3:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:21.
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“When to Isaac’s question, ‘Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ Abraham made answer, ‘God will provide Himself a lamb;’ and when the father’s hand was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac—then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man’s salvation (1 Peter 1:12).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 155.

- b. How does Paul explain the important promise made to Abraham? Galatians 3:16, 27–29; Colossians 2:10–13. What blessings do we receive through Christ, the Seed of Abraham? Romans 3:23–25; Titus 2:11–14.
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“Though [the people of Israel ‘according to the flesh’] had despised God’s mercy and forfeited their blessings as His chosen people—yet God had not cast off the seed of Abraham; the glorious purposes which He had undertaken to accomplish through Israel were to be fulfilled. All who through Christ should become the children of faith were to be counted as Abraham’s seed; they were inheritors of the covenant promises; like Abraham, they were called to guard and to make known to the world the law of God and the gospel of His Son.”—*Ibid.*, p. 476.

“Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles’ spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 467.

“No one will be entitled to the heavenly inheritance who has not been purified, refined, ennobled, and sanctified. Then let us be diligent to make our calling and election sure.”—*The Messenger*, May 10, 1893.

3. HEAVENLY CANAAN

- a. **What did the inheritance promised to Abraham include? Genesis 17:8; Romans 4:13. Why couldn't he inherit immediately the land of Canaan? Genesis 15:16.**
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“The heritage that God has promised to His people is not in this world. Abraham had no possession in the earth, ‘no, not so much as to set his foot on’ (Acts 7:5). He possessed great substance, and he used it to the glory of God and the good of his fellow men; but he did not look upon this world as his home. The Lord had called him to leave his idolatrous countrymen, with the promise of the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession; yet neither he nor his son nor his son’s son received it. When Abraham desired a burial place for his dead, he had to buy it of the Canaanites. His sole possession in the Land of Promise was that rock-hewn tomb in the cave of Machpelah.”
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 169.

- b. **What was the actual hope of Abraham, based on God’s promise—a hope that is shared by all the faithful? Hebrews 11:8–10; Daniel 7:27; 2 Peter 3:13. How did he consider himself in this world? Hebrews 11:13–16.**
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“The word of God had not failed; neither did it meet its final accomplishment in the occupation of Canaan by the Jewish people. . . . The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan, but the whole earth. So says the apostle, ‘The promise, that he should be the *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith’ (Romans 4:13). And the Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ. All that are Christ’s are ‘Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise’—heirs to ‘an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away’—the earth freed from the curse of sin (Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4). For ‘the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High’ (Daniel 7:27).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 169, 170.

4. HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

- a. **What kind of people will inherit the heavenly Canaan? Matthew 5:5; 1 John 3:2, 3; Isaiah 60:21.**
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“A title to a possession in this world must be without flaw, or it is valueless, and the right of inheritance is not given. And will heaven be given to those who have a faulty title? The apostle reveals the line through which the heavenly inheritance is to come. He says: ‘If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise’ (Galatians 3:29). If we are Christ’s, our title to the heavenly inheritance is without flaw, for we are then under the only saving covenant, the covenant of grace; and through grace we shall be able to make our calling and election sure by putting on the excellency of Christ in faith, in spirit, in character; for no one will be entitled to the heavenly inheritance who has not been purified, refined, ennobled, elevated, and wholly sanctified. Those whose lives are hid with Christ in God, who have been clothed upon with His righteousness, will have a right to the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 2, 1892.

- b. **What target regarding character is set before us to be reached before we can receive the seal of God’s approval? Ephesians 3:19; 4:13; Colossians 1:26–28; 2:10. When the people of God have attained to the stature of complete men and women in Christ, what declaration will be made concerning the work of the gospel? Revelation 10:7.**
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“We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the Lord’s people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, ‘It is finished.’ ”—*Our High Calling*, p. 150.

5. ENTRANCE INTO THE HOLY CITY

- a. How many gates are there in the New Jerusalem, whose names point to distinct character traits, and which are open to the redeemed? Revelation 21:10–12. How are the 144,000 classified by their different victorious experiences to fit in with the characteristics of each gate? Revelation 7:4–8.
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- b. Mention some of the characters that will find no open gate and that will be debarred from entering the Holy City. Revelation 21:27; 22:15; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.
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“Amid the ransomed throng are the apostles of Christ, the heroic Paul, the ardent Peter, the loved and loving John, and their true-hearted brethren, and with them the vast host of martyrs; while outside the walls, with every vile and abominable thing, are those by whom they were persecuted, imprisoned, and slain. There is Nero, that monster of cruelty and vice, beholding the joy and exaltation of those whom he once tortured, and in whose extremest anguish he found satanic delight.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 667.

“Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 24, 25.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. In essence, what is the gospel, and how was it preached to Abraham?
- b. Who is Abraham’s seed? How is it possible to be a part of that seed?
- c. What inheritance was promised to Abraham?
- d. Describe the character required to receive the promised inheritance.
- e. What are the conditions of admittance into the Holy City? Who will be kept out?

Prepared for the Seal

“And in [the] mouth [of the hundred and forty and four thousand] was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5).

“Those who have learned of Christ will ‘have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness’ (Ephesians 5:11). In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth ‘was found no guile.’ ”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 69.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.

Sunday

July 18

1. NAME AND CHARACTER

- a. What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus and to have the Father’s name written in the forehead? John 14:13–15; 15:16; 16:23, 24.

“To pray in Christ’s name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

“The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 287.

“In every act of life you are to make manifest the name of God. This petition calls upon you to possess His character. You cannot hallow His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 107.

- b. How important was a name in Old Testament times, and what did a name reveal? 1 Samuel 25:25; Genesis 27:36; 32:27, 28. When a person’s character changed, what happened to his or her name? Genesis 17:5, 15, 16; 32:28.

2. CHURCH ASSOCIATION

- a. What does a woman symbolize in Scripture, and what does it mean not to be defiled with women as a condition to be sealed? Isaiah 4:1; Hosea 2:2, 20; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 14:4 (first part). What does the term “Babylon” mean? Revelation 17:4, 5.
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“The term ‘Babylon’ is derived from ‘Babel,’ and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion. In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman—a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

- b. Can we say that anyone connected with a false church is defiled? 2 Corinthians 6:14–18. At what point does defilement begin? Revelation 18:4.
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“[In the early centuries,] after a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 45.

“[God] would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him and are not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all. But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins. In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, they should seek God earnestly, in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve His Spirit are searched out and put away.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 265.

3. FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

- a. What does “in their mouth was found no guile” mean? Revelation 14:5; James 3:2; Matthew 5:37; 12:36, 37. How does the Sabbath become a sign of sanctification? Exodus 31:13; Isaiah 58:13.
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“My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 175.

“The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of . . . men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 216.

- b. How do the sealed believers follow the Lamb here on earth? Revelation 14:4 (middle part); 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:6; 3:3–7.
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“In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death. The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be ‘redeemed from the earth’ (Revelation 14:3) at the time of Christ’s second advent. Then, as in the world before the Flood, iniquity will prevail. Following the promptings of their corrupt hearts and the teachings of a deceptive philosophy, men will rebel against the authority of Heaven. But like Enoch, God’s people will seek for purity of heart and conformity to His will, until they shall reflect the likeness of Christ. Like Enoch, they will warn the world of the Lord’s second coming and of the judgments to be visited upon transgression, and by their holy conversation and example they will condemn the sins of the ungodly. As Enoch was translated to heaven before the destruction of the world by water, so the living righteous will be translated from the earth before its destruction by fire.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 88, 89.

4. EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER

- a. **What is shown by the fact that the sealed believers sigh and cry for all the abominations which are done both in the land and in the church? Ezekiel 9:4; Hebrews 10:24–26.**
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“The day of God’s vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 212.

“The leaven of godliness has not entirely lost its power. At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world. . . .

“In the time when [God’s] wrath shall go forth in judgments, . . . humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God’s honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 209, 210.

- b. **Will anyone be saved if one does not show concern for the souls of fellow believers as well as of those living around him or her? Ezekiel 33:7–11.**
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“The Lord seeks to save, not to destroy. He delights in the rescue of sinners. [Ezekiel 33:11 quoted.] By warnings and entreaties He calls the wayward to cease from their evil-doing and to turn to Him and live. He gives His chosen messengers a holy boldness, that those who hear may fear and be brought to repentance.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 105.

“If wrongs are apparent among [God’s] people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 265, 266.

5. ABSOLUTE VICTORY

- a. In order to obtain perfect victory and be sealed, what are some of the prerequisites? John 15:5; Revelation 14:12; 2 Peter 1:5–11.

“God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 153, 154.

“[Satan] fell for the same reason that thousands are falling today, because of an ambition to be first, an unwillingness to be under restraint. The Lord would teach man the lesson that, though united in church capacity, he is not saved until the seal of God is placed upon him.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 969.

- b. What is the song that the 144,000 learn which no one else can learn? Revelation 14:2, 3. What must be their specific victory? Revelation 15:2, 3.

“Although church and state will unite their power to compel ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond’ (Revelation 13:16), to receive ‘the mark of the beast,’ yet the people of God will not receive it.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 450.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. How important is it to have the Father’s name in our foreheads, and what does that mean?
- b. How does one get defiled with women in a prophetic sense?
- c. What does it mean to be without guile?
- d. Why do we need to have a concern for the spirituality of other members as well as of those around us?
- e. What role does our diet have on perfect victory?

PREPARED FOR THE SEAL

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. . . .

“In this life we must meet fiery trials and make costly sacrifices, but the peace of Christ is the reward. There has been so little self-denial, so little suffering for Christ’s sake, that the cross is almost entirely forgotten. We must be partakers with Christ of His sufferings if we would sit down in triumph with Him on His throne. So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus nor the joy that comes through conscious victory. The most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clad in white, know the conflict of overcoming, for they have come up through great tribulation. Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul, when, though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could save neither son nor daughter, for everyone must deliver his soul by his own righteousness.

“No one need say that his case is hopeless, that he cannot live the life of a Christian. Ample provision is made by the death of Christ for every soul. Jesus is our ever-present help in time of need. Only call upon Him in faith, and He has promised to hear and answer your petitions. . . .

“It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts’ (Hebrews 4:7). We are in a most trying position, waiting, watching for our Lord’s appearing. The world is in darkness. ‘But ye, brethren,’ says Paul, ‘are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief’ (1 Thessalonians 5:4). It is ever God’s purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness for the waiting, longing soul.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 214–216.

The Final Warning

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory” (Revelation 18:1).

“The efforts made to retard the progress of truth will serve to extend it. . . . The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 454.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 603–612.

Sunday

July 25

1. THE GLORY OF THE TEMPLE

- a. At the beginning of the reconstruction of Jerusalem when the foundation of the new temple was laid, there was, on the one hand, weeping and, on the other, shouts of joy. Why were there two opposite reactions? Ezra 3:10–12; Haggai 2:3.

“There were them . . . aged men who had seen the glory of Solomon’s temple, and who wept at the foundation of the new building, that it must be so inferior to the former. . . . Then was given the promise that the glory of this latter house should be greater than that of the former.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 23, 24.

- b. How, or in what work, did the Jews hope to see, in the second temple, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Haggai 2:9? John 2:20.

“The disciples had been filled with awe and wonder at Christ’s prediction of the overthrow of the temple, and they desired to understand more fully the meaning of His words. Wealth, labor, and architectural skill had for more than forty years been freely expended to enhance its splendors.”—*Ibid.*, p. 24.

2. THE GLORY OF THE TEMPLE (CONTINUED)

- a. To what did Haggai refer when speaking about the glory of the second temple? Haggai 2:7, 9 (compare Malachi 3:1). In what manner did the second temple supersede the glory of the first temple? In other words, whose presence filled the second temple with superior glory? John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 2:8.
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“For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet’s words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah’s glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily—who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The ‘Desire of all nations’ had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory. But Israel had put from her the proffered Gift of heaven. With the humble Teacher who had that day passed out from its golden gate, the glory had forever departed from the temple. Already were the Saviour’s words fulfilled: ‘Your house is left unto you desolate’ (Matthew 23:38).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 24.

- b. What did Jesus say about the surprising fate of the second temple? Matthew 24:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6.
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“The stones of the temple were of the purest marble, of perfect whiteness, and some of them of almost fabulous size. A portion of the wall had withstood the siege by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. In its perfect masonry it appeared like one solid stone dug entire from the quarry. How those mighty walls could be overthrown the disciples could not comprehend.

“As Christ’s attention was attracted to the magnificence of the temple, what must have been the unuttered thoughts of that Rejected One! The view before Him was indeed beautiful, but He said with sadness, I see it all. The buildings are indeed wonderful. You point to these walls as apparently indestructible; but listen to My words: The day will come when ‘there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down’ (Mark 13:2).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 627.

3. CHRIST IN YOU

- a. How can human nature be briefly summarized? Romans 3:10–12, 23.
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- b. What is the glory of God that must shine through His servants? Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:5–7.
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“The followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom’s home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 414.

- c. What must happen in us if we want to reflect the glory of God? Colossians 1:27. How does God work in our life to prepare us for such an experience? 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:17.
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“The closer our communion with God, and the clearer our knowledge of His requirements, the more fully shall we be conformed to the divine image, and the more readily do we become partakers of the divine nature.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 330.

“Before giving us the baptism of the Holy Spirit, our heavenly Father will try us, to see if we can live without dishonoring Him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 426, 427.

“Christ is seeking to uplift all who will be lifted to companionship with Himself, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He permits us to come in contact with suffering and calamity in order to call us out of our selfishness; He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character—compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God. By rejecting it, we reject His instruction, and choose eternal separation from His presence.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 388, 389.

4. THE EARTH LIGHTENED WITH GOD'S GLORY

- a. What is the glory that will lighten the whole earth, and why is another angel needed to accomplish this work? Revelation 18:1.

“Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

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

“There must be no toning down of the truth, no muffling of the message for this time. The third angel’s message must be strengthened and confirmed. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power. . . . There has been too much beating about the bush in the proclamation of the third angel’s message. The message has not been given as clearly and distinctly as it should have been.”—*Evangelism*, p. 230.

“The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19.

- b. When did the light of Revelation 18:1 begin to shine?

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 363. [Written in 1892 with reference to the 1888 Minneapolis conference.]

5. “COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE”

- a. What is the message of this other angel, and how does it compare with the second angel’s message? Revelation 18:2, 3; 14:8.

“The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel’s message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel’s message.”—*Early Writings*, p. 277.

“While Satan is working with his lying wonders, the time has come [that was] foretold in the Revelation, when the mighty angel that shall lighten the earth with his glory will proclaim the fall of Babylon and call upon God’s people to forsake her.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 406, 407.

- b. In what manner is the message so severe? What is found in Babylon that demands such forceful action? Revelation 18:5–24.

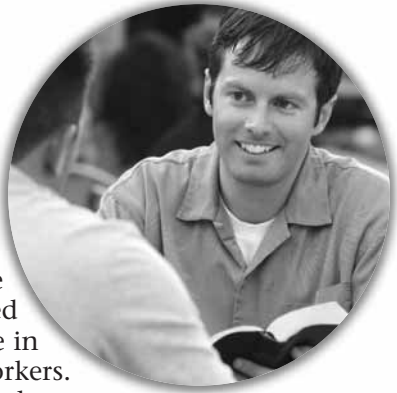
- c. What must God’s people in other folds do in order to escape the coming plagues? Revelation 18:4; Isaiah 56:1–7; John 10:16.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. When the Bible speaks of the glory of God, what does it mean?
- b. In what way did the second temple exceed the glory of the first?
- c. How is it possible for a human being to reflect the glory of God?
- d. Why is there a need for the fourth angel, and when did he begin his work?
- e. What do people who are in the popular churches need to do in order to be spared?

First Sabbath Offering for the missionary schools

By His marvelous grace, God has opened the way for a few missionary schools to be established to prepare the youth to labor in His vineyard. Since the message of reformation has reached many corners of the world, we are in great need of more trained workers. Therefore, more missionary schools are to be opened—like the schools of the prophets.



Souls are being won to the Saviour every day in different countries around the world. The increase in missionary work has resulted in an increased need for trained workers to complete the commission given to us by the Saviour.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!

“We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor. . . .

“Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibilities, they are more favorably situated to engage in the work than are those who must provide for the training and support of a large family. Furthermore, young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climates and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are.”—*Christian Service*, pp. 30–32.

We need financial help to operate such schools of the prophets, to open others in different countries, and also to send teachers to help in these programs. We are doing our best—can we count on you, too? On Sabbath, August 7, please remember our missionary schools!

The General Conference Education Department

The Seven Last Plagues

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Revelation 15:1).

“The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s people.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 627, 628.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 36, 52–54, 64–67, 118–121.

Sunday

August 1

1. THE WRATH OF GOD

- a. What warning does the third angel sound against those who receive the mark of the beast, and what is the fullness of the wrath of God? Revelation 14:9, 10; 15:1.

- b. Can the seven last plagues be poured out while Jesus is ministering in the temple in heaven? Revelation 7:1–3; 8:3, 4. What will happen when He ceases His intercessory ministry? Revelation 8:5; 15:5–8.

“It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God.”—*Early Writings*, p. 280.

- c. Who will receive the seal of protection against the seven last plagues? Psalms 27:2–5; 91:9, 10.

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.

2. THE FIRST THREE PLAGUES

- a. What reasons are given for the first three plagues? Revelation 16:2–7.
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“God’s judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

- b. What measures will be taken against the people of God? Revelation 13:15.
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“These [seven last] plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob’s trouble.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 36, 37.

“By condemning the people of God to death, [those who receive the mark of the beast] have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 628.

- c. How did Ellen White respond when shown the plagues in vision?
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“Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight [of the plagues] to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. Then I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a great wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them.”—*Early Writings*, p. 65.

3. THE FOURTH AND FIFTH PLAGUES

- a. Describe the fourth and fifth plagues. Revelation 16:8–11.
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“In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat’ (Verses 8, 9). The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: ‘The land mourneth; . . . because the harvest of the field is perished. . . . All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.’ ‘The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate. . . . How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture. . . . The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ ‘The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence’ (Joel 1:10–12, 17–20; Amos 8:3).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 628.

“With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth.”—*Ibid*, pp. 635, 636.

- b. Describe the woe that will come upon those who have believed in the third angel’s message, yet have compromised with the prevailing apostasy in Christendom. Isaiah 8:22; Jeremiah 8:20; Matthew 7:22, 23.
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“I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, ‘Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.’ I asked who this company were. The angel said, ‘These are they who have once kept the Sabbath and have given it up.’ I heard them cry with a loud voice, ‘We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy.’ And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet—trodden the Sabbath underfoot—and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting.”—*Early Writings*, p. 37.

4. THE SIXTH PLAGUE

a. During the sixth plague, what will occur? Revelation 16:12.

“When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

“The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. . . .

“With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God’s covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 635, 636.

b. What powers are involved in bringing the whole world together for the last battle? Revelation 16:13, 14.

“Every form of evil is to spring into intense activity. Evil angels unite their powers with evil men, and as they have been in constant conflict and attained an experience in the best modes of deception and battle, and have been strengthening for centuries, they will not yield the last great final contest without a desperate struggle. All the world will be on one side or the other of the question. The battle of Armageddon will be fought, and that day must find none of us sleeping.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 982.

c. How are the events under the sixth plague disclosed by God through the prophet Joel? Joel 3:2.

5. THE SEVENTH PLAGUE

- a. What will happen under the seventh plague? Revelation 16:17–21. Why only can God’s faithful remnant have hope through all this accumulated turmoil? Isaiah 26:20, 21.

“It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: ‘It is done’ (Revelation 16:17).

“That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, ‘such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great’ (Verses 17, 18). The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, ‘to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.’ Great hailstones, every one ‘about the weight of a talent,’ are doing their work of destruction (Verses 19, 21).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636, 637.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What triggers the beginning of the seven last plagues?
- What opposition will the people of God have to suffer?
- How will rebellion continue even during the plagues?
- What powers unite to usher in the climax of the ages?
- What is essential in order to be protected during the plagues?

Jacob's Trouble

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

“Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of. . . . If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God's holy name would be reproached.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 619.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613–623.

Sunday

August 8

1. SOWING AND REAPING

a. What was the cause of Jacob's escape to Haran? Genesis 27:41–46.

“Let us never forget that the efforts we make in our own strength are utterly worthless.”—*The Signs of Times*, October 29, 1902.

b. How was the result of trying to obtain God's promise by deception bitterly felt in Jacob's life with Laban? Galatians 6:7, 8; Genesis 29:21–30; 31:4–7, 36–42.

“To gain the birthright that was his already by God's promise, Jacob resorted to fraud, and he reaped the harvest in his brother's hatred. Through twenty years of exile he was himself wronged and defrauded, and was at last forced to find safety in flight; and he reaped a second harvest, as the evils of his own character were seen to crop out in his sons—all but too true a picture of the retributions of human life.”—*Education*, p. 147.

2. LIVING BY THE WORD OF GOD

- a. In spite of his act of deception, what experience gave Jacob the courage to remain faithful to God all through the difficult years with his father-in-law? Genesis 28:10–22. Whom does the ladder represent? John 1:51.
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“The Lord knew the evil influences that would surround Jacob, and the perils to which he would be exposed. In mercy He opened up the future before the repentant fugitive, that he might understand the divine purpose with reference to himself, and be prepared to resist the temptations that would surely come to him when alone amid idolaters and scheming men. There would be ever before him the high standard at which he must aim; and the knowledge that through him the purpose of God was reaching its accomplishment, would constantly prompt him to faithfulness. . . .

“The world was not left in solitary hopelessness. The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 184.

- b. Although God was constantly blessing him, why did Jacob leave the comforts of his new home and go back to meet an unknown fate by going to face his brother? Genesis 31:11–13; Hebrews 10:38.
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“Jacob would have left his crafty kinsman long before but for the fear of encountering Esau. Now he felt that he was in danger from the sons of Laban, who, looking upon his wealth as their own, might endeavor to secure it by violence. He was in great perplexity and distress, not knowing which way to turn. But mindful of the gracious Bethel promise, he carried his case to God and sought direction from Him. In a dream his prayer was answered: ‘Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee’ (Genesis 31:3).”—*Ibid.*, p. 193.

3. WRESTLING WITH GOD

- a. What was the greatest obstacle before Jacob in his return to Canaan, and how did he meet the crisis? Genesis 32:3–12.
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“As [Jacob] drew nearer his journey’s end, the thought of Esau brought many a troubled foreboding. After the flight of Jacob, Esau had regarded himself as the sole heir of their father’s possessions. The news of Jacob’s return would excite the fear that he was coming to claim the inheritance. Esau was now able to do his brother great injury, if so disposed, and he might be moved to violence against him, not only by the desire for revenge, but in order to secure undisturbed possession of the wealth which he had so long looked upon as his own.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 195.

“In [Jacob’s] terrible extremity he remembered God’s promises, and his whole heart went out in entreaty for His mercy. . . . He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned. Physical pain was not sufficient to divert his mind from this object. His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release Himself; He urged, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaketh;’ but Jacob answered, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me’ (Genesis 32:26). Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 197.

- b. In that long night of wrestling, what was the secret of his victory and, as a result, his change of name? Genesis 32:24–30.
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“The error that had led to Jacob’s sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now clearly set before him. He had not trusted God’s promises but had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God would have accomplished in His own time and way.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 197, 198.

4. HOLDING ON TO GOD'S PROMISES

- a. How will the episode called “Jacob’s trouble” be repeated with God’s remnant people in the last days? Jeremiah 30:5–7.
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“Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24–30), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble. Because of the deception practiced to secure his father’s blessing, intended for Esau, Jacob had fled for his life, alarmed by his brother’s deadly threats. After remaining for many years an exile, he had set out, at God’s command, to return with his wives and children, his flocks and herds, to his native country. On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau’s approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge. Jacob’s company, unarmed and defenseless, seemed about to fall helpless victims of violence and slaughter. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. Yet he leaves nothing undone on his own part to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger. So should the followers of Christ, as they approach the time of trouble, make every exertion to place themselves in a proper light before the people, to disarm prejudice, and to avert the danger which threatens liberty of conscience.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 616.

- b. What evidence shows that the remnant will endure the conflict? Jeremiah 30:10, 11; Revelation 14:1–3.
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“[The victorious remnant] 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.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 648, 649.

5. NO UNCONFESSED SINS

- a. **What physical phenomenon will be observed at the close of human probation? Joel 2:2.**

“When [Christ] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

- b. **What will be the condition of God’s remnant when they need to live in the sight of a holy God without a Mediator? Isaiah 43:25.**

“In the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance.”—*Ibid.*, p. 620.

- c. **What will actually cause the remnant to suffer anguish after the close of probation, that is during the time of trouble? What assurance do they ardently wish to obtain? Revelation 3:10.**

“[God’s people] fear that every sin has not been repented of. . . . If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God’s holy name would be reproached.”—*Ibid.*, p. 619.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. How do sin’s consequences still linger even after repentance?
- b. What safety measures did Jacob take before facing Esau?
- c. What are we to learn from Jacob’s secret to victory?
- d. Explain the real cause of anguish in the time of Jacob’s trouble.
- e. How can we live in God’s sight without a Mediator?

The Great Final Harvest

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle” (Revelation 14:14).

“The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 406.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 624, 625, 636–646.

Sunday

August 15

1. EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

- a. What promise did Jesus leave His beloved disciples as they longed to remain continually in His presence? John 14:1–3; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28.
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“The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

- b. Will this coming be invisible, secret, or something that everyone will be able to see? Matthew 24:23–27; Acts 1:9–11; Revelation 1:7.
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“[When Christ returns,] the whole world will know and understand. They will realize who and what they, poor, feeble, finite beings, have been warring against.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 739, 740.

- c. Describe the terror that will take possession of the wicked when they see Christ coming in glory. Revelation 6:14–17.
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2. HOW WILL JESUS COME?

- a. Describe the manner of Christ's coming. Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38.
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"[Christ] the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at God's right hand. He would be the judge of all the earth, and from His decision there could be no appeal. Then every secret thing would be set in the light of God's countenance, and judgment be passed upon every man according to his deeds."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 708.

- b. What happened to the soldiers guarding the tomb of Christ when an angel appeared to them in his glory? Matthew 28:2–4.
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"At sight of the angels and the glorified Saviour the Roman guard had fainted and become as dead men. When the heavenly train was hidden from their view, they arose to their feet, and as quickly as their trembling limbs could carry them, made their way to the gate of the garden. Staggering like drunken men, they hurried on to the city, telling those whom they met the wonderful news. They were making their way to Pilate, but their report had been carried to the Jewish authorities, and the chief priests and rulers sent for them to be brought first into their presence. A strange appearance those soldiers presented. Trembling with fear, their faces colorless, they bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ. The soldiers told all, just as they had seen it; they had not had time to think or speak anything but the truth. With painful utterance they said, It was the Son of God who was crucified; we have heard an angel proclaiming Him as the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory."—*Ibid.*, p. 781.

- c. How will the nations react at the coming of Christ in glory? Matthew 24:27, 30; Isaiah 13:6–9.
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3. THE HARVEST

- a. Describe the spiritual harvest that will be reaped at Christ's second coming. Revelation 14:14–16; Matthew 24:31.
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“Christ is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to raise the dead, and to change the living saints from glory to glory. He will come to honor those who have loved Him, and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them nor His promise. There will be a relinking of the family chain. When we look upon our dead, we may think of the morning when the trump of God shall sound, when ‘the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed’ (1 Corinthians 15:52). A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. A little longer, and He will present us ‘faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ (Jude 24). Wherefore, when He gave the signs of His coming He said, ‘When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh’ (Luke 21:28).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 632.

- b. How will the saints be rewarded at the coming of Christ? Matthew 16:27; 25:34; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8; 1 John 3:2, 3.
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“[Matthew 16:27 quoted.] The reward will not be according to his faith but according to his works, and the life will be eternal with Jesus.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 98.

“Good works will be rewarded according to the motive that prompted them; that skill and intellect used in the service of God will prove a success, and will be rewarded according to the fidelity of the worker. Those who have had an eye single to the glory of God will have the richest reward. Selfishness, indolence, worldliness, pride, covetousness, and human ambition will appear in their true and hateful character, as the works of Satan; while every work done from love to Jesus, with a sincere desire to glorify Him, will appear as the height of human excellence and wisdom.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1884.

4. THE RESURRECTION MORNING

- a. **At the coming of Christ, what will happen to the righteous dead and to the living righteous? Where will they meet Jesus? 1 Corinthians 15:51–58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.**
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“Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: ‘Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!’ Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. . . . And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

“All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb. Adam, who stands among the risen throng, is of lofty height and majestic form, in stature but little below the Son of God. He presents a marked contrast to the people of later generations; in this one respect is shown the great degeneracy of the race. But all arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. . . .

“The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye’ (1 Corinthians 15:52). At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels ‘gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other’ (Matthew 24:31). Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers’ arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.

- b. **What protection do those who are resurrected at Christ’s coming receive? Revelation 20:6.**
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5. WATCH AND BE SOBER

- a. What should be our main concern in view of the expectation of Christ's coming? Mark 13:35–37; James 5:7–9.
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- b. Is Jesus going to come as a surprise to the waiting saints? 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6. When are we going to know the exact day and hour of Jesus' coming? Revelation 16:17, 18.
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“As God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, ‘Glory! Alleluia!’ Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God; and they shone with the glory, as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look on them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image.”—*Early Writings*, p. 34.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What is the most glorious event of all ages?
- b. Describe the second coming of our Lord and Saviour.
- c. Will the unconcerned multitudes, who are without God and without salvation, have a second chance at the coming of Christ or at any time thereafter?
- d. Who is resurrected at the second coming?
- e. How can we get ready for His second appearing?

The Millennium

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 660.

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

Sunday

August 22

1. THE FIRST RESURRECTION

a. What event takes place to open the millennium at the second coming of Christ? Luke 14:14.

b. Who are those that lie in the graves and that, hearing the voice of the Son of man, shall take part in the first resurrection (the resurrection of life)? 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16; Revelation 20:6. What misleading doctrine on this topic is taught by the popular churches?

“[2 Peter 3:3, 4 quoted.] Do we not hear these very words repeated, not merely by the openly ungodly, but by many who occupy the pulpits of our land? ‘There is no cause for alarm,’ they cry. ‘Before Christ shall come, all the world is to be converted, and righteousness is to reign for a thousand years. Peace, peace! all things continue as they were from the beginning. Let none be disturbed by the exciting message of these alarmists.’ But this doctrine of the millennium does not harmonize with the teachings of Christ and His apostles.”—*Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 103.

2. DESTRUCTION

- a. **At the coming of Christ, what will happen to the finally impenitent?** Isaiah 66:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9.
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“At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

- b. **What is the condition of the earth after the saints have departed?** Isaiah 24:1, 3 (first part).
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“The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations. . . .

“The revelator foretells the banishment of Satan and the condition of chaos and desolation to which the earth is to be reduced, and he declares that this condition will exist for a thousand years. After presenting the scenes of the Lord’s second coming and the destruction of the wicked, the prophecy continues: ‘I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season’ (Revelation 20:1–3).

“That the expression ‘bottomless pit’ represents the earth in a state of confusion and darkness is evident from other scriptures. Concerning the condition of the earth ‘in the beginning,’ the Bible record says that it ‘was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep’ (Genesis 1:2) [The Hebrew word here translated ‘deep’ is rendered in the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Old Testament by the same word rendered ‘bottomless pit’ in Revelation 20:1–3.] Prophecy teaches that it will be brought back, partially at least, to this condition.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 657–659.

3. THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

- a. How does the prophet Jeremiah describe the condition of the earth (the “bottomless pit” of Revelation 20:3) during the millennium? Jeremiah 4:23–27.
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“Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Limited to the earth, he will not have access to other worlds to tempt and annoy those who have never fallen. It is in this sense that he is bound: there are none remaining, upon whom he can exercise his power. He is wholly cut off from the work of deception and ruin which for so many centuries has been his sole delight.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 659.

“Even the wicked are now placed beyond the power of Satan, and alone with his evil angels he remains to realize the effect of the curse which sin has brought.”—*Ibid.*, p. 660.

- b. What is the cause for such utter destruction that is coming upon the face of the entire earth? Isaiah 13:9, 11, 13; 24:5, 6.
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“For six thousand years, Satan’s work of rebellion has ‘made the earth to tremble.’ He had ‘made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof.’ And he ‘opened not the house of his prisoners’ (Isaiah 14:16, 17). For six thousand years his prison house has received God’s people, and he would have held them captive forever; but Christ had broken his bonds and set the prisoners free.”—*Ibid.*, p. 659.

- c. Who are the “few men” that will escape the coming destruction? Matthew 25:34–40; Philippians 3:20, 21.
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“What rejoicing there will be as these redeemed ones meet and greet those who have had a burden in their behalf! And those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings—how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction!”—*My Life Today*, p. 353.

4. SATAN BOUND

- a. **How does the Bible state, in symbolic terms, the restriction to be put on Satan at the beginning of the millennium? Revelation 20:1, 2.**
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“When the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed, then in the presence of God and heavenly angels and the hosts of the redeemed the sins of God’s people will be placed upon Satan; he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit. And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness.

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

“Limited alone to the earth, [Satan] will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen.”—*Early Writings*, p. 290.

- b. **What will Satan be prevented from doing while confined by a chain of circumstances in his prison house, this earth? Revelation 20:3.**
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“For a thousand years, Satan will wander to and fro in the desolate earth to behold the results of his rebellion against the law of God. During this time his sufferings are intense. Since his fall his life of unceasing activity has banished reflection; but he is now deprived of his power and left to contemplate the part which he has acted since first he rebelled against the government of heaven, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for the sins that he has caused to be committed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 660.

- c. **At the end of the millennium, what will Satan do when loosed immediately after the wicked are resurrected? Revelation 20:7, 8.**
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5. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

- a. What will be the main occupation of the saints during the thousand years in heaven? Revelation 20:4 (first part); Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. . . . It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, ‘the saints shall judge the world’ (1 Corinthians 6:2). In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.

- b. Why do the wicked have to be judged? Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Romans 2:5, 6.

“The saints, in unison with Jesus, pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. ‘Behold ye,’ said the angel, ‘the saints, in unison with Jesus, sit in judgment, and mete out to the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, and that which they must receive at the execution of the judgment is set off against their names.’”—*Early Writings*, pp. 52, 53.

- c. Would extra time granted to the ungodly nations eventually lead them to repentance? Isaiah 26:10.

“[The self-righteous] have not served God here [on earth], therefore, they would not serve Him hereafter [in heaven].”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 271.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What event marks the beginning of the thousand years?
- What happens to this earth right after Christ’s second coming?
- Who will be the only ones to inhabit the earth during the millennium?
- What is the chain that will bind Satan to the desolated planet?
- What will be the duty of the saints for 1,000 years?

First Sabbath Offering for Angola

“Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord” (Haggai 1:8).

“Whatever we give we shall receive again. The earthly blessings which we impart to others may be, and often are, repaid in kind. What we give does, in time of need, often come back to us in fourfold measure in the coin of the realm.”—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 312.

The Central Angolan Field is formed by four provinces: Benguela, South Kuanza, Bie, and Huambo where the headquarters of our work is located. Geographically speaking, this is a vast area, and its population consists of approximately one third of Angola's total inhabitants. The soil is very fertile, but the civil war that lasted nearly 30 years caused a lot of damage to the general growth of the country on all levels. In 2004 the work in Angola was reorganized as a Field according to the size of its membership [over 1500 members], and at the last General Conference in 2007, Angola was approved to be organized as a Union.

The work has advanced well in this region, reaching many localities. The great difficulty that we have is the lack of an administrative headquarters that will represent and dignify the work here. With the small resources that we were able to gather, a plot of land was bought, measuring 1.5 hectares, approximately 8 km from Huambo, the second largest city in the country. Now we kindly request that all brethren, sisters, and friends around the world remember us with a generous offering so that this project can be completed.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

Your brethren and sisters from the Angolan Union



The Universe Cleansed

“Before [the Son of man] shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another” (Matthew 25:32).

“The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 662–678.

Sunday

August 29

1. AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

- a. **At the end of the millennium, when Christ comes to this earth for the third time, whom will He bid to arise from the dead? John 5:29 (second half); Revelation 20:5 (first half).**

“At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

- b. **For what purpose will the wicked be raised? Isaiah 24:22; Jude 6; Psalm 97:1–3.**

“At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead and appear before God for the execution of ‘the judgment written.’ Thus the revelator, after describing the resurrection of the righteous, says: ‘The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished’ (Revelation 20:5).”—*Ibid.*, p. 661.

2. THE MOUNT OF OLIVES IS LEVELED

- a. When Christ comes again, at the end of the thousand years, where will He descend? Zechariah 14:4.
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“Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives, whence, after His resurrection, He ascended.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

- b. As Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives, surrounded by the holy angels and all the saints, what will be clear to all concerning the sovereignty of the Son of man? Zechariah 14:5 (last part), 9.
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- c. In Christ's presence, how will the wicked show the same desperate feeling they manifested a thousand years before? Isaiah 2:19.
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“When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family.”—*Christ's Objects Lessons*, p. 270.

- d. Describe what unrepentant sinners must face. Psalm 145:20.
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“As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart—all appear as if written in letters of fire.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 666.

3. AN AWFUL SPECTACLE

- a. What scenes are revealed, as in a moving picture film, before Satan, his angels, and the wicked multitudes? When the godless crowds realize that, through their actions, they have pierced the Son of God, how will they show fear before the expected punishment? Zechariah 12:10 (last part); Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 10:28, 29, 27.
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“Before the swaying multitude are revealed the final scenes—the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world’s Redeemer yielded up His life.

“The awful spectacle appears just as it was. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. Each actor recalls the part which he performed. Herod, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base Herodias, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving Pilate; the mocking soldiers; the priests and rulers and the maddened throng who cried, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children!’—all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Saviour’s feet, exclaiming: ‘He died for me!’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 667.

- b. What new scene is suddenly displayed before the wailing multitudes? Revelation 21:2. What must all realize about the awesome magnitude of this moment? Job 37:5.
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“As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.”—*Ibid.*, p. 663.

“Let the imaginations of the people be on the highest stretch to contemplate the glories of the New Jerusalem and yet they have but just entered upon the borders of the eternal weight of glory that shall be realized by the faithful overcomer.”—*This Day With God*, p. 103.

4. THE LAST DAYS OF SATAN

- a. As Satan contemplates the New Jerusalem and the home that he has lost, how does he recall the history of his rebellion? Isaiah 14:12–20.
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“Memory recalls the home of [Satan’s] innocence and purity, the peace and content that were his until he indulged in murmuring against God, and envy of Christ. His accusations, his rebellion, his deceptions to gain the sympathy and support of the angels, his stubborn persistence in making no effort for self-recovery when God would have granted him forgiveness—all come vividly before him. He reviews his work among men and its results—the enmity of man toward his fellow man, the terrible destruction of life, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the overturning of thrones, the long succession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions. He recalls his constant efforts to oppose the work of Christ and to sink man lower and lower. He sees that his hellish plots have been powerless to destroy those who have put their trust in Jesus. As Satan looks upon his kingdom, the fruit of his toil, he sees only failure and ruin.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 669.

- b. How will the great deceiver rally the finally impenitent for the last great battle before he and his cohorts are destroyed? Revelation 20:9.
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“Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, ‘The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.’

“Satan and his angels suffered long. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 294, 295.

5. THE FINAL DESTRUCTION

- a. In order to make the entire universe a safe place for all who want to live and work in harmony with the Great Lawgiver, what must each person admit? Romans 14:10–12; Philippians 2:10, 11.

“Said the angel: ‘If [those who fail to imitate the self-sacrificing Pattern] should be ushered into the city of God, and told that all its rich beauty and glory was theirs to enjoy eternally, they would have no sense of how dearly that inheritance was purchased for them. They would never realize the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love. They have not drunk of the cup, nor been baptized with the baptism. Heaven would be marred if such should dwell there.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 155.

“Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 670.

- b. What is the final, eternal destiny of the wicked? Who are the only ones exempt? How will all the wicked, including the originator of all evil, be annihilated? Psalm 37:9, 10; Malachi 4:1–3; 2 Peter 3:10, 11; Revelation 20:9 (last part), 10, 14, 15.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What will be the new capital of the universe?
- b. What is the purpose of the great white-throned judgment?
- c. What type of record books are being kept in heaven?
- d. Describe the final struggle for preeminence.
- e. How is the originator of sin finally annihilated?

THE UNIVERSE CLEANSED

“The wicked receive their recompense in the earth (Proverbs 11:31). They ‘shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Malachi 4:1). Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished ‘according to their deeds’ (Psalm 28:4). The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch—Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah.

“Satan’s work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God’s creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. ‘The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing’ (Isaiah 14:7). And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. ‘The voice of a great multitude,’ ‘as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,’ is heard, saying: ‘Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth’ (Revelation 19:6).

“While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield (Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11). . . .

“One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power’ (Habakkuk 3:4, margin). That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s glory, there ‘the hiding of His power.’ ‘Mighty to save’ (Isaiah 63:1), through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God’s mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 673, 674.

The Character of God Vindicated

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

“The commandments of God are His expressed character flowing out of a heart of love in thoughtful plans that man may be preserved from every evil.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1893.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33–43.

Sunday

September 5

1. GOD’S CHARACTER REVEALED

- a. **What is one of the main attributes of God’s character? 1 John 4:8. What are the conditions that must be fulfilled by those who want to be in the kingdom? Luke 10:25–28; Ephesians 5:28. What are the different aspects of genuine love? 1 Corinthians 13:4–8.**

“The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

- b. **What are the two basic principles of the divine law? Romans 13:8–10; Matthew 22:36–40.**

“Whatever is contrary to love, humility, and faith, denies Christ. Although the professor of religion may make professions of love for his brethren, still if love is not in his heart, he cannot diffuse it to those who are about him.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 2, 1897.

2. LOVE TO GOD AND TO OUR NEIGHBOR

- a. What does it mean to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and soul? Deuteronomy 6:5, 6; 5:6–15; Mark 12:29, 30.
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“Whosoever will willfully break one command cannot in spirit and in truth keep any of them. He may claim that, with the exception of what he may regard as slight deviations, he keeps them all; yet if he willingly offends in one point he is guilty of all.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 434.

“To love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves is to keep the first four and the last six commandments. God has given to man a large field in which he may work; and in doing the work appointed him of God, man will not lift up himself but will exalt Christ. He will cherish love for God and love for his brethren and for all men. Love will soon die out of the heart if it is left without cultivation; we can only keep divine love in the soul by doing the words of the Master. . . . It is impossible to keep the last six commandments unless we keep the first four.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 22, 1890.

- b. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves? Mark 10:17–19; 12:31.
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“God is love, and when we love God supremely and love our neighbor as ourselves, we reflect the character of the Father and the Son. But those who truly love God will be obedient to all His commands. Obedience is the test of love.”—*Ibid.*, October 22, 1894.

“The Lord requires at this time just what He required of Adam in Eden—perfect obedience to the law of God. We must have righteousness without a flaw, without a blemish. God gave His Son to die for the world, but He did not die to repeal the law which was holy and just and good. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is an unanswerable argument showing the immutability of the law. Its penalty was felt by the Son of God in behalf of guilty man, that through His merits the sinner might obtain the virtue of His spotless character by faith in His name.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 89, 90.

3. DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW

- a. **What is sin? Romans 7:7; 1 John 3:4. Who originated sin? John 8:44. What has been at the center of the dispute between Christ and Satan from the very beginning? Matthew 5:19, 20.**
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“In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law.”—*Amazing Grace*, p. 20.

- b. **How was sin introduced into the world? Genesis 3:4, 5. How did the whole universe react when sin entered into the world?**
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“It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

“The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

- c. **How are we to avoid the pitfall of Satan in his self-exalting attitude? 1 Corinthians 10:12.**
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“No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul. . . .

“All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 159, 160.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

- a. What desire does God have for every person on this earth? Ezekiel 18:30–32; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9.
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“The reason why the Bridegroom delays is because He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. O the precious longsuffering of our merciful Saviour! O that each of the dear youth would appreciate the value of the soul that has been purchased at infinite cost on Calvary! O that each one would place a proper estimate upon the capabilities that have been given him of God! Through Christ you may climb the ladder of progress, and bring every power under the control of Jesus. . . . In spirit, in thought, in word, and in action, you may make manifest that you are moved by the Spirit of Christ, and your life may wield a power of influence over others.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 118.

- b. What is the evidence of a new heart? Deuteronomy 5:29; John 14:15, 21; 15:10.
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“The law of God is the foundation of all enduring reformation. We are to present to the world in clear, distinct lines the need of obeying this law.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 199.

“He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

“True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God. Rebellious thoughts and feelings are overcome, and the voice of Jesus awakens a new life, which pervades the entire being. Those who are truly sanctified will not set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 9.

“Sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 360.

5. IDENTIFYING THE FAITHFUL

- a. Throughout the history of the world, by what mark of identification have God's remnant people been clearly distinguished? Malachi 4:4; 1 Corinthians 7:19.
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“Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.

- b. How does prophecy identify the faithful right up to the end of time? Isaiah 8:20; Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:14.
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“[Revelation 14:12 quoted.] Since those who keep God's commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 445, 446.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What is the basic attribute of God's character?
- b. What are the two fundamental principles of divine love, and where are these principles specified and exemplified?
- c. What is the biblical definition of sin?
- d. Describe a person who has received a new heart.
- e. By what identifying mark are God's people distinguished from the world?

THE CHARACTER OF GOD VINDICATED

“The aim of the great rebel has ever been to justify himself and to prove the divine government responsible for the rebellion. To this end he has bent all the power of his giant intellect. He has worked deliberately and systematically, and with marvelous success, leading vast multitudes to accept his version of the great controversy which has been so long in progress. For thousands of years this chief of conspiracy has palmed off falsehood for truth. But the time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated and the history and character of Satan disclosed. In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy His people, and take possession of the City of God, the archdeceiver has been fully unmasked. Those who have united with him see the total failure of his cause. Christ’s followers and the loyal angels behold the full extent of his machinations against the government of God. He is the object of universal abhorrence.

“Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence. . . .

“Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man’s behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him—that He might bring many sons unto glory—that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory. He looks upon the redeemed, renewed in His own image, every heart bearing the perfect impress of the divine, every face reflecting the likeness of their King. He beholds in them the result of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied. Then, in a voice that reaches the assembled multitudes of the righteous and the wicked, He declares: ‘Behold the purchase of My blood! For these I suffered, for these I died, that they might dwell in My presence throughout eternal ages.’ And the song of praise ascends from the white-robed ones about the throne: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing’ (Revelation 5:12).”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 670, 671.

By the Tree of Life

“In the midst of the street of [the holy Jerusalem], and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).

“The fruit of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden possessed supernatural virtue. To eat of it was to live forever. Its fruit was the antidote of death. Its leaves were for the sustaining of life and immortality.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 288.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 13–20.

Sunday

September 12

1. THE TREE OF LIFE

- a. Where do we first learn of the existence of the tree of life? Genesis 2:9. What restriction, placed upon our first parents, shows that access to the tree of life was conditional? Genesis 2:16, 17.
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“In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 60.

- b. Describe the test to which Adam and Eve were submitted, after which they were debarred from eating of the tree. Genesis 3:22–24.
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“The first great moral lesson given Adam was that of self-denial. The reins of self-government were placed in his hands. Judgment, reason, and conscience were to bear sway.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 14.

2. THE SOURCE OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

- a. **What does the tree of life represent? Through whom and how do we have access to the tree of life in a spiritual sense? Proverbs 3:13–18.**
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“The tree of life is a representation of the preserving care of Christ for His children. As Adam and Eve ate of this tree, they acknowledged their dependence upon God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 988.

“Jesus Christ is to the world as the tree of life to which Adam and Eve had access in the Garden of Eden. When, by disobedience, the fallen pair were deprived of the fruit of this tree, they lost everlasting life. The tree of knowledge became a curse to them, not because of its poisonous qualities, but because of their act of disobedience. It was attractive to them; and in their great desire for it, they partook of it, and lost their purity and their allegiance to God. But Christ presents Himself as the Life-giver, the tree of life for the world. By feeding upon His flesh, and drinking His blood, our spiritual life is perfected.”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 6, 1899.

- b. **How are we to eat and share the fruit of the tree of life? Proverbs 11:30; 15:4. When we are working for souls, how do we show them the way to the tree of life? Daniel 12:3; Philippians 1:10, 11.**
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“[Jesus’ earthly] brothers . . . regarded the precepts of men more highly than the word of God, and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. His strict obedience to the law of God they condemned as stubbornness. . . . They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that He had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 86.

“In Nazareth Christ announced that His work was to restore and uplift, to bring peace and happiness. He came to this world to represent the Father, and He revealed His divine power by giving life to the dead, by restoring the sick and suffering to soundness and health. He was in this world as the tree of life.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 21, 1900.

3. THE TWO TREES IN THE NEW DISPENSATION

- a. **How can the tree of life be identified in the New Testament? 1 Corinthians 1:21, 30; Colossians 2:2, 3. What is the tree of knowledge of good and evil in our days? 1 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 2:7, 8.**
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“The garden of Eden was not only Adam’s dwelling, but his school room. As in that school, so in the school of earth today, two trees are planted—the tree of life, which bears the fruit of the true education, and the tree of knowledge, yielding the fruit of ‘science falsely so called.’ All who have a connection with Christ have access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which the world is ignorant.”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 6, 1899.

“Christ’s teachings are to be to us as the leaves of the tree of life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1135.

“The lessons drawn from the parables of our Saviour will be to very many as the leaves of the tree of life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 475.

- b. **What does Jesus say to all those who want to live? Matthew 4:4; John 5:39; 6:63; Luke 11:28.**
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“The knowledge that comes from God is the bread of life. It is the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations. The current of spiritual life thrills the soul as the words of Christ are believed and practiced. Thus it is that we are made one with Christ. The experience that was weak and feeble becomes strong. It is eternal life to us if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 224.

“The word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 393.

4. A PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMERS

- a. **To what extent must we eat of the tree of life and stand firm in the truth to be overcomers? Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:6, 14; Revelation 2:10, 26.**
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“Must we wait until we are translated before we eat of the leaves of the tree of life? He who receives into his heart the words of Christ knows what it means to eat the leaves of the tree of life.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 224.

“After the entrance of sin the heavenly Husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above; but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world. Through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, we may still eat of its life-giving fruit.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 288.

- b. **What is the final reward of all who overcome? Revelation 2:7.**
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“[Revelation 22:1, 2 quoted.] Talk it, pray it, sing it, and remember that you must eat of the leaves of the tree of life here in this world, if you would know the healing power of the grace of God. When words are spoken that tempt you to feel provoked, ask the Lord Jesus to give you a taste of the healing brought by the tree of life. Get your mind on some subject of eternal interest, and it will be easy for you to keep still when you ought to keep still, and to speak when you ought to speak.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 20, 1905.

“Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father’s house. Those who accept the teachings of God’s word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him’ (1 Corinthians 2:9). Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

5. THE TREE OF LIFE FOR ETERNITY

- a. Where is the Paradise of God today? Revelation 2:7. How did the apostle Paul describe one of his visions in which he was “caught up to the third heaven,” “into paradise”? 2 Corinthians 12:2–4. How will our first parents respond upon entering that place?
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“Transported with joy, [Adam] beholds the trees that were once his delight—the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God. Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 648.

- b. How does the Bible describe Eden restored? Revelation 22:1, 2.
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“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country (Hebrews 11:14–16). There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations.”—*Ibid.*, p. 675.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why was humanity debarred from eating of the tree of life after sin?
- What is the reward promised to all who teach the truth to others?
- How can we eat of the tree of life today?
- What promise belongs to those who will stand firm to the end?
- What privilege will be restored to the people of God?

The Saints' Eternal Inheritance

“Thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:8).

“God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family.”—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 344.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 675–678.

Sunday

September 19

1. THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

- a. For what two reasons did God create the earth and the human being? Isaiah 45:18; 43:7.

“All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made ‘in the image of God,’ and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 7.

“It was God’s purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1082.

- b. How did our first parents turn away from the purpose for which they were created, and what was the result? Genesis 3:9–14, 23.

“When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world. Where God’s throne should have been, Satan placed his throne. The world laid its homage, as a willing offering, at the feet of the enemy.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 51.

2. RESTORING THE FIRST DOMINION

- a. **Throughout history, what was constantly promised to our forefathers in the faith? Psalms 25:13; 37:9; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13.**
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“The meek ‘shall inherit the earth’ (Matthew 5:5). It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when ‘the meek shall inherit the earth’ (Psalm 37:11).

“The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

- b. **Besides the restoration of humanity, what else is to be restored by the plan of redemption? Luke 19:10; Micah 4:8; Ephesians 1:14.**
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“God’s original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. ‘The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever’ (Psalm 37:29). The time has come to which holy men have looked with longing since the flaming sword barred the first pair from Eden—the time for ‘the redemption of the purchased possession’ (Ephesians 1:14). The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption.

“All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second. The prophet says, ‘O Tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto Thee shall it come, even the first dominion’ (Micah 4:8). And the apostle Paul points forward to the ‘redemption of the purchased possession.’ God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal abode of the redeemed.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 540.

3. OUR FUTURE INHERITANCE

- a. **How are we assured that our promised inheritance is a real place?** John 14:1–4; Hebrews 11:13–16.

“As Christ's earthly ministry drew to a close, and He realized that He must soon leave His disciples to carry on the work without His personal supervision, He sought to encourage them and to prepare them for the future. He did not deceive them with false hopes. As an open book He read what was to be. He knew He was about to be separated from them, to leave them as sheep among wolves. He knew that they would suffer persecution, that they would be cast out of the synagogues, and would be thrown into prison. He knew that for witnessing to Him as the Messiah, some of them would suffer death. And something of this He told them. In speaking of their future, He was plain and definite, that in their coming trial they might remember His words and be strengthened to believe in Him as the Redeemer.”—*The Acts of Apostles*, p. 21.

- b. **How can we be sure that our future inheritance is a clean and safe place?** Psalm 24:3–5; Isaiah 32:18; 35:8; 2 Peter 3:13.

“[In the New Jerusalem] immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork.”—*Ibid.*, p. 677.

4. OUR FUTURE INHERITANCE (CONTINUED)

a. What are some glorious words of assurance we can declare about the earth made new? Isaiah 33:24; 35:10; Revelation 21:4; 22:3.

b. Will there be real work for the redeemed to do in eternity? Isaiah 65:17–25. What is written about the regular meetings that will be held there? Isaiah 66:22, 23.

“We cannot suppose that when the final triumph shall come, and we have the mansions prepared for us, idleness will be our portion—that we shall rest in a blissful, do-nothing state.

“In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field.”—*Maranatha*, p. 360.

“[In the school of the hereafter] every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God’s handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. . . .

“‘The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ (Matthew 20:28). Christ’s work below is His work above, and our reward for working with Him in this world will be the greater power and wider privilege of working with Him in the world to come.”—*Education*, pp. 307, 308.

“When there shall be a ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph’s tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as ‘from one Sabbath to another’ (Isaiah 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 769, 770.

5. FINAL WORDS

a. When will the redeemed take possession of the new earth? Revelation 20:6 (last part), 7; 21:1–4.

b. Since our language is inadequate, what can we say to describe our future inheritance? 1 Corinthians 2:9. In view of this profound thought, what desire should mold our priorities in life?

“The apostle Paul was taken to the third heaven, and while there was given a view of celestial things. When he returned to a consciousness of earthly things, he found that it was impossible for him to describe the enrapturing scenes that had passed before him. But he kept in his soul the wonderful picture of what he had seen.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 153.

“The overcomer will have a whole heaven of bliss, with no tempting devil, no sorrow, sickness, pain, or death. I desire to know more about heaven, and I am determined by God’s grace to be there. Let us all strive to obtain an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, where we shall be surrounded with beautiful objects surpassing by far anything that we could imagine. . . .

“I want to see the whole heavenly host casting their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then touching their golden harps, and filling all heaven with rich music and with songs to the Lamb.

“Will you be there? God wants you to be there; Christ wants you to be there; the angels want you to be there.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 223, 224.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. Why were we created?
- b. What was the first dominion, and how was it lost?
- c. How is it being restored?
- d. Why is it wrong to spiritualize away our future inheritance?
- e. How much can we know about what God is preparing for His faithful people?

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 3
for Poland
(See p. 4.)

AUGUST 7
for missionary schools
(See p. 32.)



SEPTEMBER 4
for Angola
(See p. 53.)