

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the First Quarter 2016

Keep the Truth Faithfully, Part 3

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INTRODUCTION

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Later, referring to the word of God, He stated: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” John 14:16; 17:1. Thus, Jesus and God’s holy word are the truth; we have this truth in our hands, just as Pilate had Jesus in his presence. Did the governor value for His excellence the One who was the truth? And what about us? What use are we making of this great treasure?

Knowing the great darkness of error and sin existing in the world, Jesus gave the great commission to His people to go and preach the truth of the gospel. “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20. Faithful to this mandate, the apostle Paul could say that he had “not shunned to declare ... all the counsel of God.” To the believers in his charge he repeated that “by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” Acts 20:27, 31.

To carry out the divine commission, we have to study the word of the Lord with all that it contains. The Spirit of prophecy states: “If we are to be sanctified through a knowledge of the truth found in the word of God, we must have an intelligent knowledge of His will therein revealed. We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewel of truth which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles and temptations of the arch-deceiver.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 19.

These Sabbath School Lessons have been prepared so we can understand “all the counsel of God.” They cover the list of subjects found in the Principles of Faith. In the first quarter of 2016, we will complete the study of the Principles in order. It is our sincere desire that this will result in a great blessing for God’s people all around the world.

Truth is like light; and as light scatters darkness, so truth reveals and conquers error. More than this, divine truth has the capacity to transform. “The Scriptures are the great agency in ... transformation of character.... If studied and obeyed, the word

of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

Let us make this wonderful experience of transformation as from Sabbath to Sabbath we study the truth deeply, not just consider it as a theoretical message from God. We are urged to go even further, bringing all truth into our daily lives, for “However enlightened the youth may be through Bible studies, their nature is such that unless the truth of which they have knowledge is practiced in the daily life, every attempt to elevate and ennoble will be unavailing.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 68.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us study these lessons not only to know the truth and be able to present it to others, but with a much higher goal—to obey it, to “be established in the present truth.” And being established in the truth, let us be purified in our “souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:12; 1 Peter 1:22.

“The Father,” writes the Spirit of prophecy, “sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith He hath loved them. Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the word of God with a child’s simplicity will be among the elect of God.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

Let us pray earnestly together that this will be our experience as from day to day and from Sabbath to Sabbath we study and live the precious truth that the Lord permits to shine on our pathway.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference*

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
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1

Sabbath, January 2, 2016

Taking Oaths

“Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

SWEARING UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. What was required in the past and still is today under special circumstances to hold an individual accountable for speaking the truth or for carrying out a promise?

GENESIS 21:23, 24 *Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.*
²⁴*And Abraham said, I will swear.*

EXODUS 22:11 *Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good.*

“In every business transaction be rigidly honest. However tempted, never deceive or prevaricate in the least matter. At times a natural impulse may bring temptation to diverge from the straightforward path of honesty, but do not vary one hairsbreadth. If in any matter you make a statement as to what you will do, and afterward find that you have favored others to your own loss, do not vary a hairsbreadth from principle. Carry out your agreement. By seeking to change your plans you would show that you could not be depended on. And should you draw back in little transactions, you would draw back in larger ones. Under such circumstances some are tempted to deceive, saying, I was not understood. My words have been taken to mean more than I intended. The fact is, they meant just what they said, but lost the good impulse, and then wanted to draw back from their agreement, lest it prove a loss to them. The Lord requires us to do justice, to love mercy, and truth, and righteousness.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 154.

2. What is expected with such an oath? In the past, how was a violation of an oath considered, especially if it was made in the Lord's name?

PSALM 15:4 *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

JOSHUA 9:18, 19 *And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. ¹⁹But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.*

2 CHRONICLES 36:13 *And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.*

"In all the details of life the strictest principles of honesty are to be maintained.... Deviation from perfect fairness in business deal may appear as a small thing in the estimation of some, but our Saviour did not thus regard it. His words on this point are plain and explicit: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.' A man who will overreach his neighbor on a small scale will overreach in a larger scale if the temptation is brought to bear upon him. A false representation in a small matter is as much dishonesty in the sight of God as falsity in a larger matter.

"Honesty should stamp every action of our lives. Heavenly angels examine the work that is put into our hands; and where there has been a departure from the principles of truth, 'wanting' is written in the records." —*Child Guidance*, pp. 154, 155.

ABUSES AND FALSEHOOD

3. What does the Bible record about people who took oaths and promises lightly and misused God's name?

MALACHI 3:5 *And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.*

ISAIAH 48:1 *Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.*

"Through the apostle Paul, Christ bids us, 'Let your speech be alway with grace.' 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.' Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29. In the light of these scriptures the words of Christ upon the mount are seen to condemn jesting, trifling, and unchaste conversation. They require that our words should be not only truthful, but pure.

"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.' Revelation 14:5." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 68, 69.

4. What clear prohibitions were part of the law to prevent such sins? Who was dishonored when oaths were not respected?

LEVITICUS 6:3; 19:12 *Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein:...* ^{19:12}*And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.*

EXODUS 20:7 *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

“This commandment not only prohibits false oaths and common swearing, but it forbids us to use the name of God in a light or careless manner, without regard to its awful significance. By the thoughtless mention of God in common conversation, by appeals to Him in trivial matters, and by the frequent and thoughtless repetition of His name, we dishonor Him. ‘Holy and reverend is His name.’ Psalm 111:9. All should meditate upon His majesty, His purity and holiness, that the heart may be impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name should be uttered with reverence and solemnity.”
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 306, 307.

“Reverence should be shown also for the name of God. Never should that name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly. Even in prayer its frequent or needless repetition should be avoided.” —*My Life Today*, p. 282.

5. What was going on at the time of Jesus in regard to swearing, not only among the people but also among the scribes and Pharisees?

MATTHEW 23:16-22 *Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! ¹⁷Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? ¹⁸And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. ¹⁹Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? ²⁰Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. ²¹And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. ²²And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*

“The Jews understood the third commandment as prohibiting the profane use of the name of God; but they thought themselves at liberty to employ other oaths. Oath taking was common among them. Through Moses they had been forbidden to swear falsely, but they had many devices for freeing themselves from the obligation imposed by an oath. They did not fear to indulge in what was really profanity, nor did they shrink from perjury so long as it was veiled by some technical evasion of the law.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 66.

JESUS’ TEACHING ABOUT TAKING AN OATH

6. What did Jesus teach about such abuses as well as frequent common swearing? What is the reason for this?

MATTHEW 5:33-36 *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: ³⁴But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: ³⁵Nor by the earth; for it is*

his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

“The reason for this command is given: We are not to swear ‘by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.’ R.V....

“All things come of God. We have nothing that we have not received; and, more than this, we have nothing that has not been purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Everything we possess comes to us stamped with the cross, bought with the blood that is precious above all estimate, because it is the life of God. Hence there is nothing that we have a right to pledge, as if it were our own, for the fulfillment of our word.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 66.

7. Was Jesus forbidding judicial oaths required by authorities? How did He respond when he was required to take such an oath?

MATTHEW 26:63, 64 *But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. ⁶⁴Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

“Jesus condemned their practices, declaring that their custom in oath taking was a transgression of the commandment of God. Our Saviour did not, however, forbid the use of the judicial oath, in which God is solemnly called to witness that what is said is truth and nothing but the truth. Jesus Himself, at His trial before the Sanhedrin, did not refuse to testify under oath. The high priest said unto Him, ‘I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus answered, ‘Thou hast said.’ Matthew 26:63, 64. Had Christ in the Sermon on the Mount condemned the judicial oath, He would at His trial have reproved the high priest and thus, for the benefit of His followers, have enforced His own teaching.

“If there is anyone who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. He lives constantly as in the presence of God, knowing that every thought is open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; and when required to do so in a lawful manner, it is right for him to appeal to God as a witness that what he says is the truth, and nothing but the truth.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 66, 67.

8. To avoid all doubt and misunderstanding, what principle should govern our speech, including everyday communication?

MATTHEW 5:37 *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

JAMES 5:12 *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*

“Jesus proceeded to lay down a principle that would make oath taking needless. He teaches that the exact truth should be the law of speech. ‘Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.’ R.V....”

“These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering

phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 67, 68.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

1 Samuel 24:21, 22 [in some versions verses 22, 23]

“Those who are brought into covenant relation with God are pledged to speak of Him in the most respectful, reverential manner....

“Swearing, and all words spoken in the form of an oath, are dishonoring to God. The Lord sees, the Lord hears, and He will not hold the transgressor guiltless. He will not be mocked. Those who take the name of the Lord in vain will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” —*My Life Today*, p. 282.

“If these words of Christ [Matthew 5:37] were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And ‘whatsoever is more than’ truth, ‘is of the evil one.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

* * *

2

Sabbath, January 9, 2016

The Earthly and Heavenly Sanctuaries

“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol—that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshipping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 192.

COMMAND TO BUILD A SACRED SANCTUARY

1. What did God command concerning building a sanctuary for Him? What was the purpose of this?

EXODUS 25:8, 9 *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. ⁹According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*

“During his stay in the mount, Moses received directions for the building of a sanctuary in which the divine presence would be specially manifested. ‘Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them’ (Exodus 25:8), was the command of God.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 313.

“God commanded Moses for Israel, ‘Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them’ (Exodus 25:8), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. ‘The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.’ John 1:14, R.V., margin.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 23, 24.

2. What other name was it given, and why? Where did the people go to seek the Lord?

EXODUS 29:42, 43; 33:7 *This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.* ⁴³*And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory....* ^{33:7}*And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.*

“Henceforth the people were to be honored with the abiding presence of their King. ‘I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God,’ ‘and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory’ (Exodus 29:45, 43), was the assurance given to Moses. As the symbol of God’s authority and the embodiment of His will, there was delivered to Moses a copy of the Decalogue engraved by the finger of God Himself upon two tables of stone (Deuteronomy 9:10; Exodus 32:15, 16), to be sacredly enshrined in the sanctuary, which, when made, was to be the visible center of the nation’s worship.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 314.

DAILY SACRIFICES

3. What offerings were presented daily—every morning and evening? What was the Lord’s purpose for the sanctuary and its services?

EXODUS 29:38, 39, 45, 46 *Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually.* ³⁹*The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even:...* ⁴⁵*And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.* ⁴⁶*And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God.*

“The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. And there were also offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts....

Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ.... Only an offering ‘without blemish’ could be a symbol of His perfect purity who was to offer Himself as ‘a

lamb without blemish and without spot.' 1 Peter 1:19. The apostle Paul points to these sacrifices as an illustration of what the followers of Christ are to become. He says, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' Romans 12:1. We are to give ourselves to the service of God, and we should seek to make the offering as nearly perfect as possible.... Those who love Him with all the heart, will desire to give Him the best service of the life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 352, 353.

YEARLY ATONEMENT

4. In addition to many other offerings presented on different occasions for the benefit of individuals and the people as a whole, what special service took place on the Day of Atonement? What was the purpose of this service?

LEVITICUS 16:15, 16, 20-22 *Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: ¹⁶And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.... ²⁰And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: ²¹And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: ²²And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.*

"Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration. On the Day of Atonement two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, 'one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.' Verse 8. The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. The blood was also to be sprinkled upon the altar of incense that was before the veil." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 419.

THE TRUE SACRIFICE FOR SIN

5. To whom did all the sacrifices for sin point? What happens to man's sin through the divine atonement?

ISAIAH 53:7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

JOHN 1:29 *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

HEBREWS 5:8-10 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; ⁹And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; ¹⁰Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

“Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. To many it has been a mystery why so many sacrificial offerings were required in the old dispensation, why so many bleeding victims were led to the altar. But the great truth that was to be kept before men, and imprinted upon mind and heart, was this, ‘Without shedding of blood is no remission.’ In every bleeding sacrifice was typified ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

THE HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVEN

6. Who is now our High Priest? Where does the true Lamb of God and perfect High Priest minister?

HEBREWS 9:11, 12; 8:1, 2 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us... ^{8:2}Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ²A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

“As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne. Revelation 3:21. Upon the throne with the eternal, self-existent One is He who ‘hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,’ who ‘was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,’ that He might be ‘able to succor them that are tempted.’ ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.’ Isaiah 53:4; Hebrews 4:15; 2:18; 1 John 2:1. His intercession is that of a pierced and broken body, of a spotless life. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet, plead for fallen man, whose redemption was purchased at such infinite cost.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 416.

CONTINUAL INTERCESSION

7. Since returning to heaven after His service and great sacrifice on earth, how has Jesus been ministering on man’s behalf? What are all invited to do in full trust?

HEBREWS 7:25; 4:16 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.... ^{4:16}Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy, and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.

“Do not let your thoughts dwell upon yourselves. Think of Jesus. He is in His holy place, not in a state of solitude and grandeur, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand of heavenly beings who wait to do their Master’s bidding. And He bids them

go and work for the weakest saint who puts his trust in God. High and low, rich and poor, have the same help provided.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 933.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.’ Not until the goat had been thus sent away did the people regard themselves as freed from the burden of their sins. Every man was to afflict his soul while the work of atonement was going forward. All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 355.

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3

Sabbath, January 16, 2016

The 2,300 Days

“Such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2,300 days, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. These, I have frequently seen, were the principal subjects on which the messengers should dwell.”—*Early Writings*, p. 63.

THE DESTRUCTIVE WORK OF THE LITTLE HORN

- 1. What power was presented to the prophet Daniel in vision? What destructive, sacrilegious work did prophecy declare that it would carry out during its existence?**

DANIEL 8:9-12 *And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. ¹⁰And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. ¹¹Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. ¹²And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered.*

“This little horn must be understood to symbolize Rome in its entire history including its two phases, pagan and papal.”—Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 159.

“Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the

papal power cast down the truth to the ground. The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honor the Sunday as a holy day. Amid the prevailing error and superstition, many, even of the true people of God, became so bewildered that while they observed the Sabbath, they refrained from labor also on the Sunday. But this did not satisfy the papal leaders. They demanded not only that Sunday be hallowed, but that the Sabbath be profaned; and they denounced in the strongest language those who dared to show it honor. It was only by fleeing from the power of Rome that any could obey God's law in peace." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 65.

CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

2. For how long would the little horn carry out its activities? What would happen in the heavenly sanctuary at the end of the 2,300 prophetic days?

DANIEL 8:13, 14 *Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? ¹⁴And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

"At the termination of the 2,300 days, in 1844, there had been no sanctuary on earth for many centuries. Thus the prophecy, 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,' unquestionably points to the sanctuary in heaven....

"What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such a service in connection with the earthly sanctuary is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In Hebrews 9 the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught. 'Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these [the blood of animals]; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these' (Hebrews 9:22, 23), even the precious blood of Christ." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 417.

THE PRINCIPLE OF A DAY FOR A YEAR

3. How do the Bible verses present the prophetic principle of "a day for a year"—one day in prophecy equals one year in fulfillment? According to this principle, how long would the 2,300 days last?

NUMBERS 14:34 *After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.*

EZEKIEL 4:6 *And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.*

"Following his rule of making Scripture its own interpreter, Miller learned that a day in symbolic prophecy represents a year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6); he saw that the period of 2,300 prophetic days, or literal years, would extend far beyond the close of the Jewish dispensation, hence it could not refer to the sanctuary of that dispensation." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 324.

THE BEGINNING OF THE 2,300 YEARS

4. With what prophetic period did the long time of 2,300 years begin? Who was to be anointed at the end of the seventy prophetic weeks?

DANIEL 9:24 *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

“The word here translated ‘determined’ literally signifies ‘cut off.’ Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2,300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2,300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2,300 days would be ascertained.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 326.

5. What was the starting date for the seventy weeks, and thus also for the 2,300 years? When was the decree to restore Jerusalem issued?

DANIEL 9:25 *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

EZRA 7:6-8 *This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. ⁷And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. ⁸And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.*

“The 2,300 days had been found to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes for the restoration and building of Jerusalem went into effect, in the autumn of B.C. 457. Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25-27.... The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period, the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2,300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. ‘Then,’ said the angel, ‘shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ ” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 208.

END OF THE 2,300 DAYS AND CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

6. Beginning in B.C. 457, the prophetic period of the 2,300 days would be completed in what year? What began in the heavenly sanctuary at that time and would finally bring Jesus’ mediatorial work to a close?

DANIEL 8:14 *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

HEBREWS 9:22, 23 *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. ²³It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

“For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed, there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2,300 days ended. At that time ... our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary...” —*Maranatha*, p. 248.

“The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be offered by Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary.” —*Early Writings*, p. 253.

A PROPHECY FOR THE TIME OF THE END

7. What confirmation do we have that this prophecy of the 2,300 prophetic days and the cleansing of the sanctuary is for our time? How does the prophecy present this?

DANIEL 8:17, 26 *So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.... ²⁶And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.*

“Thus far every specification of the prophecies is strikingly fulfilled, and the beginning of the seventy weeks is fixed beyond question at 457 B.C., and their expiration in A.D. 34. From this data there is no difficulty in finding the termination of the 2,300 days. The seventy weeks—490 days—having been cut off from the 2,300, there were 1810 days remaining. After the end of 490 days, the 1,810 days were still to be fulfilled. From A.D. 34, 1,810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844. At the expiration of this great prophetic period, upon the testimony of the angel of God, ‘the sanctuary shall be cleansed.’ Thus the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary—which was almost universally believed to take place at the second advent—was definitely pointed out.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 328.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Luke 13:32, 33

“For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s

work for the redemption of men is completed, there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2,300 days ended. At that time ... our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary....” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 207.

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Sabbath, January 23, 2016

Preaching of the Gospel

“It is the very essence of all right faith to do the right thing at the right time. God is the great Master Worker, and by His providence He prepares the way for His work to be accomplished. He provides opportunities, opens up lines of influence and channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and stand ready to cooperate with Him, they will see a great work accomplished. Their efforts, rightly directed, will produce a hundredfold greater results than can be accomplished with the same means and facilities in another channel where God is not so manifestly working. Our work is reformative, and it is God’s purpose that the excellence of the work in all lines shall be an object lesson to the people.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 24, 25.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

1. How did John the Baptist carry out his mission in the Judean desert? From the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry, what activity characterized His work?

MATTHEW 3:1, 2; 4:17 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.... ^{4:17}From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

“Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ’s message to the people was, ‘Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent.” —*Evangelism*, p. 179.

“His work there had continued some months before the Sermon on the Mount was given. The message He had proclaimed throughout the land, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Matthew 4:17), had arrested the attention of all classes, and had still further fanned the flame of their ambitious hopes. The fame of the new Teacher had spread beyond the limits of Palestine, and, notwithstanding the attitude of the hierarchy, the feeling was widespread that this might be the hoped-for Deliverer. Great multitudes thronged the steps of Jesus, and the popular enthusiasm ran high.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 2, 3.

SENDING HIS DISCIPLES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

2. What urgent need did Jesus see when He looked upon the spiritually ripe fields, ready for the harvest? After schooling His disciples, on what mission did He send them?

MATTHEW 9:36-38; 10:5-7 *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; ³⁸Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.... ^{10:5}These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: ⁶But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

“During His ministry, Jesus had kept constantly before the disciples the fact that they were to be one with Him in His work for the recovery of the world from the slavery of sin. When He sent forth the twelve and afterward the seventy, to proclaim the kingdom of God, He was teaching them their duty to impart to others what He had made known to them. In all His work He was training them for individual labor, to be extended as their numbers increased, and eventually to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. The last lesson He gave His followers was that they held in trust for the world the glad tidings of salvation.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 32.

3. As the number of Jesus’ disciples grew, for what work did He educate them? What did they experience?

LUKE 10:1, 17 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.... ¹⁷And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*

“Calling the twelve about Him, Jesus bade them go out two and two through the towns and villages. None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counseling and praying together, each one’s strength supplementing the other’s weakness. In the same manner He afterward sent forth the seventy. It was the Saviour’s purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be far more successful if this example were more closely followed.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO REACH THE WHOLE WORLD

4. According to the Saviour’s great prophecy, how far is the preaching of the eternal gospel to reach? With what invitation is this compared?

MATTHEW 24:14; 22:9, 10 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.... ^{22:9}Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.*

“The vineyard includes the whole world, and every part of it is to be worked. There are places which are now a moral wilderness, and these are to become as the garden of the Lord. The waste places of the earth are to be cultivated, that they may bud and blossom as the rose. New territories are to be worked by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. New churches must be established, new congregations organized. At this time there should be representatives of present truth in every city and in the remote parts of the

earth. The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God's truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples. And it is from those who have received the light that it is to shine forth. The daystar has risen upon us, and we are to flash its light upon the pathway of those in darkness.

"A crisis is right upon us. We must now by the Holy Spirit's power proclaim the great truths for these last days. It will not be long before everyone will have heard the warning and made his decision. Then shall the end come." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 24.

THE CHURCH'S GREAT COMMISSION

5. In harmony with the previous prophecy, what commission did Jesus entrust to His disciples and the church for all time? What will happen in the very last phase of the gospel?

MATTHEW 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

MARK 16:15-18 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

"The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

"The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. Today, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. The Lord calls for pastors, teachers, and evangelists. From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation. To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people the tidings of pardon through Christ are to be carried. Not with tame, lifeless utterances is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity. Not merely in a few places, but throughout the world, messages of mercy are needed." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 29.

BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL PREACHER

6. What great promise is connected with the preaching of the saving message?

ACTS 2:16-18; 1:8 *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:... ^{1:8}But ye shall receive power,*

after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

“Provision is made by God Himself for every soul that turns to the Lord, to receive His immediate cooperation. The Holy Spirit becomes His efficiency.

“It is the Spirit’s power that we need. This can do more for us in one minute than we can ever accomplish by talking.” —*My Life Today*, p. 47.

7. What joy will experienced by those who spread the good news and lead souls to Christ?

ISAIAH 52:7 *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

PSALM 126:5, 6 *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. ⁶He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

DANIEL 12:3 *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

“The converted soul lives in Christ. His darkness passes away, and a new and heavenly light shines into his soul. ‘He that winneth souls is wise.’ ‘And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.’ What is done through the cooperation of men with God is a work that shall never perish, but endure through the eternal ages. He that makes God his wisdom, that grows up into the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, will stand before kings, before the so-called great men of the world, and show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvelous light.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 199.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

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

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of the Saviour shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own. It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten, the coming of our Lord. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel! Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 324.

* * *

Means to Spread the Gospel

“God has made men His stewards. The property which He has placed in their hands is the means that He has provided for the spread of the gospel. To those who prove themselves faithful stewards He will commit greater trusts. Saith the Lord, ‘Them that honor Me I will honor.’ 1 Samuel 2:30. ‘God loveth a cheerful giver,’ and when His people, with grateful hearts, bring their gifts and offerings to Him, ‘not grudgingly, or of necessity,’ His blessing will attend them, as He has promised. ‘Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’ Malachi 3:10.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 529.

SOURCE OF ALL

1. To whom does the earth and everything in it belong? In His great love and generosity, what privilege has He given to man?

DEUTERONOMY 10:14 *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.*

PSALM 24:1; 8:6-8 *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein....^{8:6}Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:⁷All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;⁸The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

“Although now almost wholly in the possession of wicked men, all the world, with its riches and treasures, belongs to God. ‘The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.’ ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts.’ ‘Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.’ O that Christians might realize more and still more fully that it is their privilege and their duty, while cherishing right principles, to take advantage of every heaven-sent opportunity for advancing God's kingdom in this world.” —*Christian Service*, p. 168.

“‘He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.’ Acts 17:25. The Lord declares, ‘Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.’ Psalm 50:10. ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine.’ Haggai 2:8. And it is God who gives men power to get wealth. Deuteronomy 8:18.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

THE TITHE RESERVED FOR THE LORD'S WORK

2. From the beginning, what part of His people's income has God reserved as sacred for Himself? For what purpose was the tithe used in the time of ancient Israel?

LEVITICUS 27:30, 32 *And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord... ³²And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.*

NUMBERS 18:21 *And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

"In the Hebrew economy one tenth of the income of the people was set apart to support the public worship of God." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

"God's plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it are combined simplicity and utility, and it does not require depth of learning to understand and execute it. All may feel that they can act a part in carrying forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: 'Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.' —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 388, 389.

"As an acknowledgment that all things came from Him, the Lord directed that a portion of His bounty should be returned to Him in gifts and offerings to sustain His worship." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

THE TITHING SYSTEM CONFIRMED

3. How did Jesus and the apostles confirm the principle of returning tithes and offerings to the Lord?

MATTHEW 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

HEBREWS 7:1, 2, 4, 8 *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; ²To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all... ⁴Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils... ⁸And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

"In these words Christ again condemns the abuse of sacred obligation. The obligation itself He does not set aside. The tithing system was ordained by God, and it had been observed from the earliest times. Abraham, the father of the faithful, paid tithes of all that he possessed....

"All that God commands is of consequence. Christ recognized the payment of tithes as a duty; but He showed that this could not excuse the neglect of other duties. The Pharisees were very exact in tithing garden herbs, such as mint, anise, and rue; this cost them little, and it gave them a reputation for exactness and sanctity. At the same time their useless restrictions oppressed the people and destroyed respect for the sacred system of God's own appointing. They occupied men's minds with trifling distinctions, and turned their attention from essential truths. The weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and truth, were neglected. 'These,' Christ said, 'ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 616, 617.

SUPPORT FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

4. What is necessary in the New Testament period to support the preaching of the gospel?

1 CORINTHIANS 9:13, 14 *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? ¹⁴Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

2 CORINTHIANS 11:8, 9 *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. ⁹And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

“The apostle here referred to the Lord’s plan for the maintenance of the priests who ministered in the temple. Those who were set apart to this holy office were supported by their brethren, to whom they ministered spiritual blessings. ‘Verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law.’ Hebrews 7:5. The tribe of Levi was chosen by the Lord for the sacred offices pertaining to the temple and the priesthood. Of the priest it was said, ‘The Lord thy God hath chosen him ... to stand to minister in the name of the Lord.’ Deuteronomy 18:5. One tenth of all the increase was claimed by the Lord as His own, and to withhold the tithe was regarded by Him as robbery.

“It was to this plan for the support of the ministry that Paul referred when he said, ‘Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.’ And later, in writing to Timothy, the apostle said, ‘The laborer is worthy of his reward.’ 1 Timothy 5:18.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 336.

FIRST FRUITS AND OFFERINGS

5. What is taught in the Scriptures concerning giving to God first fruits and offerings?

PROVERBS 3:9 *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.*

PSALM 96:8 *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

“Not only does the Lord claim the tithe as His own, but He tells us how it should be reserved for Him. He says, ‘Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.’ This does not teach that we are to spend our means on ourselves and bring to the Lord the remnant, even though it should be otherwise an honest tithe. Let God’s portion be first set apart. The directions given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul in regard to gifts present a principle that applies also to tithing. ‘Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.’ Parents and children are here included.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 389.

“It is God who blesses men with property, and He does this that they may be able to give toward the advancement of His cause. He sends the sunshine and the rain. He causes vegetation to flourish. He gives health and the ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn, He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings. Should means flow into the treasury in accordance with this divinely appointed plan—a tenth of all the increase, and liberal offerings—there would be an abundance for the advancement of the Lord’s work.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 75.

PROMISES OF BLESSINGS

6. What great blessings are promised to those who faithfully return to the Lord the tithe and offerings? What happened when people joyfully gave their first fruits, tithe, and offerings to the Lord?

MALACHI 3:10-12 *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. ¹²And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delight-some land, saith the Lord of hosts.*

“The contributions required of the Hebrews for religious and charitable purposes amounted to fully one fourth of their income. So heavy a tax upon the resources of the people might be expected to reduce them to poverty; but, on the contrary, the faithful observance of these regulations was one of the conditions of their prosperity. On condition of their obedience God made them this promise: ‘I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field.... And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Malachi 3:11.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 527.

7. What is the foundation of the divine principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive? What will happen to those who sow abundantly?

ACTS 20:35 *I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6, 7 *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

“Those who realize their dependence upon God will feel that they must be honest with their fellow men, and, above all, they must be honest with God, from whom come all the blessings of life. The evasion of the positive commands of God concerning tithes and offerings is registered in the books of heaven as robbery toward Him.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 152.

“This is not a request of man; it is one of God’s ordinances, whereby His work may be sustained and carried on in the world. God help us to repent. ‘Return unto Me,’ He says, ‘and I will return unto You.’ Men who have a desire to do their duty, have it all laid down in clear lines in this chapter. No one can excuse himself from paying his tithes and offerings to the Lord.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 307.

GOD GIVES CONTINUALLY

8. Following the heavenly principle of giving, what other great gift has the Lord given in addition to life and material goods?

2 PETER 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*

JOHN 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

ROMANS 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

“It should be kept before the young and tender minds that God is constantly giving His blessing to His dependent children, in the sunshine and showers, which cause vegetation to flourish, and the earth to yield her bounties for the service of man. These blessings are not bestowed upon us to encourage our selfish natures, by retaining the treasures of God’s bounty, and fixing our affections on them, but that we may render back to the Giver, gifts and offerings. This is the least expression of gratitude and love that we can return to our benevolent Creator.” –*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 140.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

2 Chronicles 31:10

“In many cases God tests man with blessings, and if unfaithfulness is manifested in rendering to Him tithes and offerings, His blessing is withdrawn. ‘He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.’ By the mercies of Christ and the riches of His goodness, and for the honor of truth and religion, we beseech you who are followers of Christ to dedicate yourselves and your property anew to God. In view of the love and compassion of Christ, which brought Him from the royal courts to suffer self-denial, humiliation, and death, let each ask himself the question, ‘How much do I owe my Lord?’ and then let your grateful offerings be in accordance with your appreciation of the great gift of heaven in God’s dear Son.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 484.

“The only means which God has ordained to advance His cause is to bless men with property. He gives them the sunshine and the rain; He causes vegetation to flourish; He gives health, and ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 150.

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The Three Angels' Messages

“To prepare a people to stand in the day of God, a great work of reform was to be accomplished. God saw that many of His professed people were not building for eternity, and in His mercy He was about to send a message of warning to arouse them from their stupor and lead them to make ready for the coming of the Lord.

“This warning is brought to view in Revelation 14. Here is a threefold message represented as proclaimed by heavenly beings and immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man to reap ‘the harvest of the earth.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 311.

THE FIRST MESSAGE

1. Whom did God’s servant see flying in the midst of heaven? What great message did the first angel proclaim?

REVELATION 14:6 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*

“John in the Revelation foretells the proclamation of the gospel message just before Christ’s second coming. He beholds an angel flying ‘in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ Revelation 14:6, 7.

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

2. What compelling invitation did he extend to the earth’s inhabitants? What hour has this earth’s history reached?

REVELATION 14:7 *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

“By the first angel, men are called upon to ‘fear God, and give glory to Him’ and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: ‘Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’ Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ ‘He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.’ 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

THE SECOND MESSAGE

3. What shocking message did this messenger proclaim? What power can be identified as “Babylon,” that has made all the nations drink of its wine?

REVELATION 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

“In Revelation 14 the first angel is followed by a second proclaiming: ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ Revelation 14:8. 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.

“I saw that since the second angel proclaimed the fall of the churches, they have been growing more and more corrupt. They bear the name of being Christ’s followers; yet it is impossible to distinguish them from the world.” –*Early Writings*, p. 273.

THE THIRD MESSAGE

4. Is there a difference between worshipping God and worshipping the beast? What will those who support the worship of the beast and its image receive?

REVELATION 14:9 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand.*

“This angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven... This is the people that are repairing the breach in the law of God. They see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been supplanted by a spurious sabbath, a day that has no sanction in the Word of God. Amid great opposition they become loyal to their God, and take their position under the standard of the third angel.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1152.

“The third angel’s warning is: ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.’ ‘The beast’ mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopard-like beast of Revelation 13—the papacy.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 445.

5. What will be the consequence of staying in Babylon and accepting its mark?

REVELATION 14:10, 11 *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

“The world and the churches are breaking God’s law, and the warning must be given, ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in

his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.' With such a curse hanging over the transgressors of God's holy Sabbath, should we not show greater earnestness, greater zeal? Why are we so indifferent, so selfish, so engrossed in temporal interests? Is our interest separated from Jesus?...

"All should have a living faith—a faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. Men and women are ready to do anything to indulge self, but how little are they willing to do for Jesus, and for their fellow men who are perishing for the want of the truth!" —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 51.

6. While the beast will force people to drink of its cup, who will refuse to do so? What will they steadfastly uphold, despite persecution?

REVELATION 14:12; 12:17 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus....* ^{12:17}*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

"The third angel is flying in the midst of heaven, heralding the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This represents the work which is to be done in these last days. The message loses none of its power in its onward flight. John sees the work increasing in power till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God. The message, 'Fear God and keep His commandments; for the hour of His judgment is come,' is to go with a loud voice. With intensified zeal and energy human beings are to carry forward the work of the Lord. In the home, in the school, and in the church men, women, and youth are to be prepared to give the message to the world.... Now, just now, we need Calebs and Joshuas. We need strong, devoted, self-sacrificing young men and young women, who will press to the front." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 207.

7. What is said of those who die from henceforth in the Lord? What blessing will those who pass through the great conflict and gain the victory receive?

REVELATION 14:13; 21:7 *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them....* ^{21:7}*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

"There are living upon our earth men who have passed the age of fourscore and ten. The natural results of old age are seen in their feebleness. But they believe God, and God loves them. The seal of God is upon them, and they will be among the number of whom the Lord has said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' With Paul they can say, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also which love His appearing.' There are many whose grey hairs God honors because they have fought a good fight and kept the faith." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 982.

"If we would be overcomers, we must search our hearts to be sure that we are not cherishing anything that is offensive to God. If we are, we cannot wear the white raiment that is here promised. If we would stand before God in the white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, we must now do the work of overcoming." —*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 138.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God’s law to obey a human enactment receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

“The third angel’s message is to be proclaimed with a loud voice. Tremendous issues are before us. We have no time to lose. God forbid that we should allow minor matters to eclipse the light which should be given to the world.

“The warning message is to be carried to all parts of the world. Our books are to be published in many different languages. With these books, humble, faithful men are to go forth as colporteur evangelists, bearing the truth to many who otherwise would never be enlightened.” –*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 120.

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7

Sabbath, February 13, 2016

The Angel of Revelation 18

“Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that ‘believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: ‘Come out of her, My people.’ Revelation 18:4.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 390.

BABYLON

1. How is Babylon portrayed in the book of Revelation? How does it influence the earth’s inhabitants?

REVELATION 17:1-5 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: ²With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. ³So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

“The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared ‘drunken with the blood of the saints’ as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with ‘the kings of the earth.’ It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 382.

ANOTHER ANGEL

2. After the scene of the harlot sitting upon a horrible beast, what did the prophet see? What happened to the earth as this messenger descended?

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

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven, preparing for the fulfillment of some important event. Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere...” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

“A work of worldwide extent and unwonted power is here foretold.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 335.

3. Is this angel coming down from heaven and proclaiming his message to be considered as literal or symbolic? What clues can be found in the book of Malachi? According to the Spirit of prophecy, whom does this angel represent?

MALACHI 2:7; 3:1 *For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger angel of the Lord of hosts....^{3:2} Behold, I will send my messenger angel, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

“‘Another angel’ is to come down from heaven. This angel represents the giving of the loud cry, which is to come from those who are preparing to cry mightily, with a strong voice, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.’ Revelation 18:1, 2.

“As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

THE MESSAGE

4. What terrible message does the glorious angel of Revelation 18 repeat? How is Babylon described in this message?

REVELATION 18:2 *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

“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.

“Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 390.

5. Who drinks the wine offered by this power and is involved in spiritual fornication with it?

REVELATION 18:3 *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

“The message in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is plain and clearly defined. ‘For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies’ (verse 3). Anyone who reads this chapter need not be deceived.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 68.

A CALL TO COME OUT

6. After Babylon’s fall is proclaimed, what message is heard directly from heaven? Why is it absolutely necessary for one to come out of Babylon and escape from its system?

REVELATION 18:4, 5 *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

“This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that ‘believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: ‘Come out of her, My people.’ Revelation 18:4.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 390.

“Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, ‘Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins....’ This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel’s message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God’s people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 277, 278.

7. What similar appeal was made to God's people in times past? What is necessary to keep from being corrupted and to be God's children?

ISAIAH 48:20, FIRST PART *Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans,...*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

"The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. 'Escape for thy life' is the warning from the angels of God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233.

"The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate,... and touch not the unclean.' 2 Corinthians 6:17." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 354.

"God calls for separation from the world. Will you obey? Will you come out from among them, and remain separate and distinct from them? 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' You cannot mingle with worldlings, and partake of their spirit, and follow their example, and be at the same time a child of God. The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father. If you separate from the world in your affections, and remain free from its contamination, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, God will be your Father, He will adopt you into His family, and you will be His heir. In place of the world, He will give you, for a life of obedience, the kingdom under the whole heavens. He will give you an eternal weight of glory and a life that is as enduring as eternity." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 44.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"You must remember that this angel represents the people that have this message to give to the world. Are you among that people? Do you really believe that this work in which we are engaged is truly the third angel's message? If so, then you understand that we have a mighty work to do, and that we ought to be about it. We must sanctify ourselves by a strict obedience to the truth, placing ourselves in right relation to God and His work." —*Review and Herald*, August 18, 1885.

Revelation 2:1, first part; 2:12; 3:1

"In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust, as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe, and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Emmanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: 'Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the

unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will, come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.'” —*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 228.

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8

Sabbath, February 20, 2016

Sealing of the 144,000

“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....

“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.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 14, 15.

CARE AND RESTRAINT OVER WORLD EVENTS

1. **What would happen to people and the earth itself if God’s angels did not hold back the winds of strife and war? What did another angel have with him when he appeared?**

REVELATION 7:1, 2 *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. ²And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.*

“Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing, by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.

“Angels are holding the four winds, which are represented as an angry horse seeking to break loose and rush over the face of the whole earth, bearing destruction and death in its path.” —*My Life Today*, p. 308.

THE NUMBER SEALED

2. **What did the angel carrying God’s seal say to the angels holding back the winds of strife? According to what the prophet heard, how many would be sealed?**

REVELATION 7:3, 4 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. ⁴And 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.

“A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose.... The principalities and powers of earth ... are filled with hatred against those who serve Him, and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battlefield—the scene of the final contest and the final victory.

“While their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.” —*My Life Today*, p. 308.

THE SIGN OR SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD

3. What do the Holy Scriptures define as the sign between God and His people? What elements are included in the seal of the living God?

EXODUS 31:13, 17; 20:8-11 *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you....* ¹⁷*It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.* ^{20:8}*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* ⁹*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:* ¹⁰*But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:* ¹¹*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

“The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors.

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience....

“The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 349, 350.

4. What characterizes God’s people, according to the Revelation? Accordingly to this information, what is impressed in their hearts and minds?

REVELATION 12:17; 14:12; 22:4 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ....* ^{14:12}*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that*

keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus....^{22:4} And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

“Two classes were presented before me. One class embraced the great bodies of professed Christians. They were trampling upon God’s law and bowing to a papal institution. They were keeping the first day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord. The other class, who were but few in number, were bowing to the great Lawgiver. They were keeping the fourth commandment. The peculiar and prominent features of their faith were the observance of the seventh day, and waiting for the appearing of our Lord from heaven.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 223.

“Those who have in their foreheads the seal of the infinite God will regard the world and its attractions as subordinate to eternal interests.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

VICTORY WITH THE LAMB

5. After receiving the seal of the living God, where were the 144,000 seen in the prophetic view? What will they sing before God’s throne?

REVELATION 14:1-3 *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.² And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:³ And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

“John saw a Lamb on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. They bore the signet of heaven. They reflected the image of God. They were full of the light and the glory of the Holy One. If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ. While we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God will work in us to will and to do of His own good.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

6. What can be said of those who follow the Lamb? By God’s grace, how are they found before His throne?

REVELATION 14:4, 5 *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.⁵ And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

“The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish. Heavenly angels conduct this search, and spiritual activity is demanded of all who believe present truth, that they may join the angels in their work.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

A GREAT MULTITUDE OF REDEEMED

7. Besides the special group of 144,000 described as singing on Mount Zion, what other group of redeemed were seen in vision standing before the throne and before the Lamb? Who will feed them and guide them to the living fountains of water?

REVELATION 7:9, 15-17 *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;...¹⁵Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.¹⁶They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.¹⁷For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

“And beyond is the ‘great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,... before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.’ Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 665.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“‘And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads.’ Revelation 14:1. 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.’ ‘And they shall reign for ever and ever.’ Revelation 22:5. They do not go in and out as those who beg a place. They are of that number to whom Christ says, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ He welcomes them as His children, saying, ‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ Matthew 25:34, 21.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591.

“Why were they so specially singled out? Because they had to stand with a wonderful truth right before the whole world, and receive their opposition, and while receiving this opposition they were to remember that they were sons and daughters of God, that they must have Christ formed within them the hope of glory.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

“Then, in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. In that great multitude which no man could number, presented ‘faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ (Jude 24), He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us, ‘shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.’ Isaiah 53:11.” —*Education*, p. 309.

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**Please read the Missionary Report from the
Computer Science School
in Coatepeque, Guatemala, on page 44**

9

Sabbath, February 27, 2016

Jesus Is Coming Back

“Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’ John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

PROMISE AND CONFIRMATION

1. What amazing, powerful promise did Jesus give His disciples before He left this earth? Who provided a special confirmation of this?

JOHN 14:18, 1-3 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you...¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.²In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

ACTS 1:9-11 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.¹⁰And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

“For your sake I came into the world. I am working in your behalf. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came into the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to the Father to cooperate with Him in your behalf. The object of Christ’s departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

LOUD VOICE AND SOUND OF THE TRUMPET

2. What is the first thing that will draw the attention of everyone in the world when Jesus returns? Who will accompany Him on His descent from heaven?

JOHN 5:25, 28 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. ²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.*

MATTHEW 24:31 *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

“Paul showed that those living when Christ should come would not go to meet their Lord in advance of those who had fallen asleep in Jesus. The voice of the Archangel and the trump of God would reach the sleeping ones, and the dead in Christ should rise first, before the touch of immortality should be given to the living.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 258.

“Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man’s hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour... He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. ‘Faithful and True,’ ‘in righteousness He doth judge and make war.’ And ‘the armies which were in heaven’ (Revelation 19:11, 14) follow Him. With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.’ No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 640, 641.

BRILLIANT AS LIGHTNING

3. What else will rivet the people’s attention all over the world? How will Jesus appear in the clouds of heaven?

MATTHEW 24:26, 27, 30 *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁷For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be... ³⁰And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

LUKE 9:26 *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.*

“When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven’s King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

“Christ is coming with power and great glory.... While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the

Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 420, 421.

CHANGE OF THE LIVING AND RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

4. What will bring an immediate change to the living, waiting saints? When the trumpet sounds, what will happen to God's people who are sleeping the sleep of death?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-54 *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

"The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call and came forth clothed with glorious immortality, crying, 'Victory, victory, over death and the grave! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated were united, never more to part." —*Early Writings*, p. 287.

ASCENSION

5. After the living are changed and the sleeping saints rise from the dead, what will take place for all of them at once? What prayer of Jesus will thus be fulfilled?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14, 16, 17 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.... ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

JOHN 17:24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

"Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is

no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1093; *Maranatha*, p. 301.

HOPE, FAITH, AND PREPARATION

6. Has Jesus provided information about the exact date of His return? Even though many signs of the times are everywhere all around the world, what will happen to many people?

MATTHEW 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:2-4 *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ³For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

“The times and seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge? Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed.... No one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for ‘of that day and hour knoweth no man.’ You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.... We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.” –*Evangelism*, p. 221.

7. Since no one knows the day or hour of Jesus’ return, what will God’s children do as they wait for Him to come back? What will be said about those who watch, wait, and are faithful and wise as they wait for that supremely glorious event?

MATTHEW 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:5-8 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. ⁸But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

MATTHEW 24:45, 46 *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

“I have borne you a message of the near coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. I have not presented before you any definite time, but have repeated to you the injunction of Christ Himself, to watch unto prayer, ‘For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.’ The warning has come echoing down the ages to our time, ‘Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give

every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." *—Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 137.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

1 Thessalonians 4:16, first part; 2 Thessalonians 1:10

"The world, who act as though there were no God, absorbed in selfish pursuits, will soon experience sudden destruction, and shall not escape. Many continue in the careless gratification of self until they become so disgusted with life that they kill themselves. Dancing and carousing, drinking and smoking, indulging their animal passions, they go as an ox to the slaughter. Satan is working with all his art and enchantments to keep men marching blindly onward until the Lord arises out of His place to punish the inhabitants of earth for their iniquities, when the earth shall disclose her blood and no more cover her slain. The whole world appears to be in the march to death....

"Jesus has told His disciples to 'watch,' but not for definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord." *—Evangelism*, pp. 26, 221.

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MISSIONARY REPORT
from the Computer Science School
in Coatepeque, Guatemala

To be read on Sabbath, February 27, 2016

*The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, March 5, 2016*

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6.

“In every place where there is a church, large or small, there a school should be established.” –(Letter 108, 1899) Selected Messages, book 3, p. 227.

According to the Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy, it is God’s plan that educational institutions be established to advance the comprehensive education of mind, heart, and body with a Christian focus, educating children and youth in the special truths for this time.

In 2007 with the help of God, we acquired the rights to the Computer Science School (Colegio Científico de Estudios en Computación), which encompasses education on three levels:

1. Primary Level
2. Basic Level
3. Advanced Level, with 6 pre-university high school diplomas (High School Computer Science with a Marketing focus, Accounting, Business Administration, Marketing and Advertising, Bilingual Secretary, and Secretary and Clerk).

Today this school is owned by the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, with the Spanish acronym SMIASDIMOR, in Guatemala. Our goal from the very beginning has been to provide the students at the primary, basic, and advanced levels with the knowledge of God’s word through a Bible course that is taught as well as daily devotionals. In addition, financial aid has been provided in this school year to two hundred students with scarce resources by distributing different levels of scholarships that were given by the General Conference Good Samaritan Department and the school.

We have obtained a loan to buy land, and it is the dream of the teachers, the administrative staff, and the students soon to see their own building erected. Therefore, with God’s help, we are progressing with the construction and need funds to make bricks for the first floor. The project consists of four modules housing a pre-university institution with the goal to become a university of the church in the near future.

We believe that God will continue to provide means through the generosity of His faithful children whose objective is also the desire for many people to come to the knowledge of His word and for this project to become a reality.

“Help will come to us. We expect to have a school building, in which the Bible can be taught, in which prayers can be offered to God, and in which the children can be instructed in Bible principles. We expect that every one who can take hold with us will want to have a share in erecting this building.”
—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 245.

Therefore, we appeal to all our dear fellow believers, friends, and visitors around the world: Please give your financial support in accordance with the blessings you have received from God so that this project may be completed with God’s help and your support.

For more information on the progress of construction of the private Computer Science School, go to www.cec.edu.gt.

—*Danilo López Monterroso*
General Conference Education Department Leader

**Special Sabbath School Offering for the
COMPUTER SCIENCE SCHOOL IN COATEPEQUE, GUATEMALA**

May God multiply your generous offerings!

10

Sabbath, March 5, 2016

State of the Dead

“Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 549, 550.

NO WISDOM OR KNOWLEDGE IN THE GRAVE

1. What do the Scriptures say about a person’s state after he dies? What does not exist for him then?

ECCLESIASTES 9:5, 10 *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten....*

¹⁰*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

“A correct understanding of ‘what saith the Scriptures’ in regard to the state of the dead is essential for this time. God’s word declares that the dead know not anything, their hatred and love have alike perished.... Unless we are rooted and grounded in the truth, we shall be swept away by Satan’s delusive snares. We must cling to our Bibles. If Satan can make you believe that there are things in the word of God that are not inspired, he will then be prepared to ensnare your soul. We shall have no assurance, no certainty, at the very time we need to know what is truth.” –*Evangelism*, p. 249.

2. According to the holy word, after a person dies, does he have any knowledge of what is happening with his family or anyone else? Is he able to communicate with anyone?

JOB 14:12, 21 *So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep....* ²¹*His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*

ECCLESIASTES 9:6 *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.*

“The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 556.

NO REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD

3. Does one who has died remember or praise the Lord? What else is he completely unaware of?

PSALM 6:5; 115:17; 88:10-12 *For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?...^{115:17}The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence....^{88:10}Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.¹¹Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?¹²Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

“When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah’s life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song he tells the reason why he thus rejoices: ‘The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day.’ Isaiah 38:18, 19. Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: ‘In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?’ ‘The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.’ Psalms 6:5; 115:17.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 546.

4. What else ends when a person dies? According to the word of the Lord, to what does the body return?

JOB 17:11 *My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.*

PSALM 146:3, 4 *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. ‘His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*

GENESIS 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

“Man is only mortal, and while he feels himself too wise to accept Jesus, he will remain only mortal.

“Physical life is ... not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life.

“The word of God nowhere teaches that the soul of man is immortal. Immortality is an attribute of God only.

“Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity.... What say the Scriptures concerning these things? David declares that man is not conscious in death. ‘His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.’ Psalm 146:4.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 174.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL AND SPIRIT

5. To whom does the spirit of life given by the Lord return? Where does the soul remain until the moment of the resurrection?

ECCLESIASTES 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

EZEKIEL 18:4, 20, FIRST PART *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die....²⁰The soul that sinneth, it shall die....*

PSALM 49:15 *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.*

ACTS 2:29 *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.*

“Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that the patriarch David ‘is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.’ ‘For David is not ascended into the heavens.’ Acts 2:29, 34. The fact that David remains in the grave until the resurrection, proves that the righteous do not go to heaven at death. It is only through the resurrection, and by virtue of the fact that Christ has risen, that David can at last sit at the right hand of God.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 174.

IMMORTALITY AND GLORY GIVEN AT JESUS’ COMING

6. What did Jesus say about Lazarus, contradicting the idea that the dead are with Jesus in glory or in the torment of a burning hell? In what state do they remain until the resurrection day?

JOHN 11:11-13 *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.¹²Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.¹³Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.*

REVELATION 14:13 *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

“But if the dead are already enjoying the bliss of heaven or writhing in the flames of hell, what need of a future judgment? The teachings of God’s word on these important points are neither obscure nor contradictory; they may be understood by common minds....

“The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome, borrowing from paganism, incorporated into the religion of Christendom. Martin Luther classed it with the ‘monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals.’ ... Commenting on the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes, that the dead know not anything, the Reformer says: ‘Another place proving that the dead have no ... feeling. There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awakened, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute.’ ” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 549.

7. When will the righteous be given immortality and enter into glory? How will it be possible for one to receive the gift of eternal life?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:53, 54 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

JOHN 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

“They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. ‘For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.’ I Corinthians 15:52-54. As they are called forth from their deep slumber, they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout: ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ Verse 55.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 550.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6), man’s thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Job 14:21. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 550.

Psalm 16:10; Philippians 3:20, 21.

“When Christ comes, He takes those who have purified their souls by obeying the truth. Some will go into the grave who are now in active life, and some will be alive and be changed when Christ shall come. This mortal shall put on immortality and these corruptible bodies, subject to disease, will be changed from mortal to immortal. We shall then be gifted with a higher nature. The bodies of all who purify their souls by obeying the truth shall be glorified....” –*The Upward Look*, p. 97.

* * *

The Resurrection

“‘The hour is coming,’ Christ said, ‘in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.’ That voice is to resound through all the habitations of the dead; and every saint who sleeps in Jesus will awake and leave his prisonhouse. Then the virtue of character we received from Christ’s righteousness will ally us to true greatness of the highest order.

“The victory of the sleeping saints will be glorious on the morning of the resurrection.... The Life-giver will crown with immortality all who come forth from the grave.” *—Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 359.

A SHINING RAY OF HOPE

1. In the past, what did God’s children see concerning death—a dark cloud or rays of light? What hope sustained the patriarch Job in the middle of severe trials?

PSALMS 16:10; 49:15 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption....* ^{49:15}*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.*

JOB 19:25-27 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

“To God’s pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in ‘the region and shadow of death,’ a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is ‘the resurrection and the life,’ to ‘bring home again His banished.’ The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures.... Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope.... The patriarch Job in the night of his affliction exclaimed with unshaken trust: ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ... in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.’ Job 19:25-27.” *—The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

2. What amazing picture of the miracle of resurrection did the Lord give to the prophet Ezekiel? What other prophecy given around the same time confirms this view?

EZEKIEL 37:1-5 *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, ²And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. ³And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. ⁴Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones,*

and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.

DANIEL 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

“At one time the prophet Ezekiel was in vision set down in the midst of a large valley. Before him lay a dismal scene. Throughout its whole extent the valley was covered with the bones of the dead. The question was asked, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ The prophet replied, ‘O Lord God, Thou knowest.’ What could the might and power of man accomplish with these dead bones? The prophet could see no hope of life being imparted to them. But as he looked, the power of God began to work. The scattered bones were shaken, and began to come together, ‘bone to his bone,’ and were bound together by sinews. They were covered with flesh, and as the Lord breathed upon the bodies thus formed, ‘the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.’” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1165.

RESURRECTION POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF JESUS

3. How did Jesus confirm the absolute surety of the resurrection? What provides the assurance of one’s being resurrected from death to life?

JOHN 6:39; 11:25 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.... ^{11:25}Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

“Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God. The command will come from the Life-giver, ‘Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.’ Isaiah 26:19.

“The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 271.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE RESURRECTION

4. What important facts did the apostle Paul present to some people who had doubts about the resurrection? What did he say about those whose hope in God is confined to the present life?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:16-23 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.

“And said Paul: ‘If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.’ 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. If for four thousand years the righteous had gone directly to heaven at death, how could Paul have said that if there is no resurrection, ‘they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished’? No resurrection would be necessary.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 546, 547.

“With convincing power the apostle set forth the great truth of the resurrection....

“The apostle carried the minds of the Corinthian brethren forward to the triumphs of the resurrection morn, when all the sleeping saints are to be raised, henceforth to live forever with their Lord.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 320.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

5. When will the resurrection take place? According to the clear teaching of the Scriptures, who will be resurrected and rise to meet Jesus first?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14-18 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

“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 whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

INCORRUPTIBLE AND IMMORTAL

6. What will the resurrected body of the saints be like? What great changes will be part of the resurrection?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:52, FIRST PART-54 ... *For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

“Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time

will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1093.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

7. When will the second resurrection—the resurrection of the unjust—take place? In only what resurrection will those who receive life and blessing rise?

REVELATION 20:5, FIRST PART, 6 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished....* ⁶*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.*

“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. And Isaiah declares, concerning the wicked: ‘They shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.’ Isaiah 24:22.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 661.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 359.

“He that used the two talents entrusted in this life, will, in the future life, show that his talents have not been corrupted. They will be used on a wider and nobler plan in the future life. There is appointed to every man his certain work. Those who are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions which are in the world through lust, will reveal a purified life in this time of preparation for the higher life. The commence to live the life of the heavenly order here below, and carry the divine nature with them into every line of work. No swindlers have a place in the heavenly courts. No falsifiers, no liars, no adulterers, no cruel-minded persons will be there. They will never see His face.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 97.

* * *

The Thousand Years

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

THE ENEMY TO BE BOUND

1. **How is the prophecy concerning the thousand years introduced? Considering that Satan is a fallen angel, in reality what is the “great chain” that binds him for such a long time?**

REVELATION 20:1, 2 *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*

“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....

“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*, pp. 658, 659.

2. **What is the meaning of the word “abyss” (bottomless pit) where Satan will be cast and remain for the duration of the thousand years? How do the Scriptures describe another time when the earth was like an “abyss”—completely empty and dark?**

REVELATION 20:3 *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.*

GENESIS 1:2 *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

“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. Prophecy teaches that it will be brought back, partially at least, to this condition. Looking forward to the great day of God, the prophet Jeremiah declares: ‘I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down.’ Jeremiah 4:23-26.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 658, 659.

JESUS’ RETURN AND THE BEGINNING OF THE THOUSAND YEARS

3. At what point will the thousand years begin, with Satan bound and the earth reduced to rubble and waste?

2 PETER 3:7, 10, 12 *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men....¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up....¹²Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7, 8 *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,⁸In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“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. ‘Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.’ ‘The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.’ ‘Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.’ Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

JUDGMENT IN HEAVEN

4. While Satan is confined to the abyss or the broken-down earth, what will take place in heaven? Who will participate in this important work?

REVELATION 20:4, 6 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years....⁶Blessed 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.*

1 CORINTHIANS 6:2, 3 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?³Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

“During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. ‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ 1 Corinthians 4:5.... At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: ‘I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.’ ‘They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.’ Revelation 20:4, 6.... 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. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.”
—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.

END OF THE THOUSAND YEARS

5. What will be transported to the earth at the end of the thousand years? Who will be with it?

REVELATION 21:1-3, 10 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ²And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.... ¹⁰And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*

“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. What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

RESURRECTION OF THE UNJUST

6. Who will be resurrected after the thousand years? What does the prophecy say about Satan’s plans and actions?

REVELATION 20:5, 7, 8 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.... ⁷And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

“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. And Isaiah declares, concerning the wicked: ‘They shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.’ Isaiah 24:22.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 661.

LAST ATTACK AND DEFEAT

7. With billions of supporters on his side, what will he do? What will be the final result for him and his followers?

REVELATION 20:9, 10 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. ¹⁰And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

MALACHI 4:1 *For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

“Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy.... As the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans....

“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle.... With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 663, 664.

NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

8. After the final victory of God, truth, and righteousness, what special, glorious work will take place?

2 PETER 3:13, 14 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. ¹⁴Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

REVELATION 21:1 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

“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....

“‘I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.’ Revelation 21:1. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 673, 674.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Isaiah 24:1, 3, 19, 20

“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.’...

“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....

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 673, 674, 678.

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Sabbath, March 26, 2016

Home of the Redeemed

“Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will ‘grow up’ (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ’s faithful ones will appear in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God,’ in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

THE CITY BUILT BY GOD

- 1. Even though Abraham received the promise concerning the earthly Canaan and his descendants, what did he look forward to most of all? To whom is the new earth promised as their inheritance?**

HEBREWS 11:10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

MATTHEW 5:5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

“The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. ‘We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ ‘There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.’ 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 22:3.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

A PLACE OF PEACE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JOY

2. What will never exist in the new world? Will the redeemed remember their past with all its grief and turmoil?

REVELATION 21:4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

ISAIAH 65:17 *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

“Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. ‘The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.’ Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 286.

3. What will characterize the new heaven and the new earth? How will the holy people who live there conduct their lives?

2 PETER 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

ISAIAH 32:17, 18; 65:22 *And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. ¹⁸And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;... ^{65:22}They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

“The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.” –*Early Writings*, p. 295.

“‘My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.’ ‘Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.’ ‘They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat:... Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.’ Isaiah 32:18; 60:18; 65:21, 22.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

4. What about the animals? What will they be like? Who will then even play with creatures that today are wild and dangerous?

ISAIAH 11:5-9 *And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. ⁶The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. ⁹They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

“The grass will be a living green, and will never wither. There will be roses and lilies and all kinds of flowers there. They will never blight or fade or lose their beauty and fragrance.

“The lion, we should much dread and fear here, will then lie down with the lamb, and everything in the New Earth will be peace and harmony. The trees of the New Earth will be straight and lofty, without deformity.

“In the New Earth there are no chilling winds, no disagreeable changes. The atmosphere is ever right and healthful.” —*My Life Today*, p. 354.

THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WILL BE WITH MEN

5. Like the earthly Jerusalem, the capital city of the king and nation, what will be found in the heavenly Jerusalem? Who will live there with the redeemed of all ages?

REVELATION 22:3; 21:3 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:...* ^{21:3}*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

“The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God’s grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, ‘and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.’ ” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 26.

RETURN TO THE FOOD OF EDEN

6. As in Eden, what will grow abundantly in support of its inhabitants’ life, health and joy?

REVELATION 22:2 *In the midst of the street of it, 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.*

ISAIAH 65:21 *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.*

EZEKIEL 47:12 *And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

“There the Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. ‘They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.’ Isaiah 65:21, 22.” —*Education*, pp. 303, 304.

"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. 'They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.'" —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 730.

REGULAR SEASONS FOR WORSHIP

7. What is the Lord's promise concerning regular times for worship, praise, and supreme joy for those whom He redeemed?

ISAIAH 66:22, 23 *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. ²³And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.*

"I was shown that the law of God would stand fast forever, and exist in the new earth to all eternity. At the creation, when the foundations of the earth were laid, the sons of God looked with admiration upon the work of the Creator, and all the heavenly host shouted for joy. It was then that the foundation of the Sabbath was laid. At the close of the six days of creation, God rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made; and He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work. The Sabbath was instituted in Eden before the fall, and was observed by Adam and Eve, and all the heavenly host. God rested on the seventh day, and blessed and hallowed it. I saw that the Sabbath never will be done away; but that the redeemed saints, and all the angelic host, will observe it in honor of the great Creator to all eternity." —*Early Writings*, p. 217.

INDESCRIBABLE BEAUTY AND WONDER

8. Is it possible to describe or even imagine how wonderful life on the new earth will be? Only who will be there?

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

REVELATION 2:7 *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

"A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' 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." —*My Life Today*, p. 354.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Isaiah 65:25; Revelation 21:5-7

“Every trace of the curse is swept away....

“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....

“The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly.’ 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 674, 676, 677.

“The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths.... When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ (Revelation 21:1), it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 62.

“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

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