

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Third Quarter 2016

***God's People
in the Last Days***

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INTRODUCTION

As he considered the last days, the apostle Paul saw clearly how it would be and wrote: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” 2 Timothy 3:1. Other versions translate the word “perilous” as “difficult.”

The message of Jesus for the last days is also very impressive: “... Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12. What is the world without love? Who can be happy without it in the family, in the church, and in society?

His next picture of our days is related to faith: “... When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8. This sentence is very short, but also very significant. Fewer and fewer people believe in God, His word, His miracles, His resurrection, and His second coming. What is left of spirituality for many people? Only “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:5. Every day shows that the end is coming.

Looking back at history, the servant of the Lord writes: “The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.

“Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.

“The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God’s law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.

“The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot Him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value.” –*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 22, 1903.

Then, turning her view to her day, she added: “We have come to a time when God’s sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble. Every soul who is loyal to the commandments of God will see that the distinguishing feature of our faith is the seventh-day Sabbath. If the government would honor the Sabbath as God has commanded, it would stand in the strength of God and in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But statesmen will uphold the spurious sabbath, and will mingle their religious faith with the observance of this child of the papacy, placing it above the Sabbath which the Lord has sanctified and blessed, setting it apart for man to keep holy, as a sign be-

tween Him and His people to a thousand generations. The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves." —(Manuscript 63, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1168, 1169.

The coming events will be much more shocking and severe than we can imagine, because everything that is not firmly established will be shaken. Hebrews 12:27. Therefore, in view of the future test, the Spirit of prophecy counsels: "There is an earnest work of preparation to be done by Seventh-day Adventists if they would stand firm in the trying experiences just before them. If they remain true to God in the confusion and temptation of the last days, they must seek the Lord in humility of heart for wisdom to resist the deceptions of the enemy....

"Ever are we to keep in mind the solemn thought of the Lord's soon return, and in view of this to recognize the individual work to be done. Through the aid of the Holy Spirit we are to resist natural inclinations and tendencies to wrong, and weed out of the life every un-Christlike element. Thus we shall prepare our hearts for the reception of God's blessing, which will impart to us grace and bring us into harmony with the faith of Jesus. For this work of preparation great advantages have been granted to this people in light bestowed, in messages of warning and instruction, sent through the agency of the Spirit of God." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 347.

These Sabbath School Lessons, "God's People in the Last Days," have been prepared in view of what is happening now and what lies just ahead. It is the desire and sincere prayer of the writer as well as of all the brethren of the General Conference and the Ministerial Department that the students will consider these matters with the great earnestness that these times deserve. May every week's lesson be a great blessing to all our brothers and sisters, young people, and interested souls.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

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Sabbath, July 2, 2016

The Books of Daniel and the Revelation

“The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John—‘The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.’ Revelation 1:1. None should become discouraged in the study of the Revelation because of its apparently mystical symbols. ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.’ James 1:5.” —*Education*, p. 191.

PROPHECY, THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

1. What is the importance of prophecy for those who live at the end of time?

AMOS 3:7 *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14:22 *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

2 PETER 1:19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.*

“Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’

“The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is presented to me again and again as something that is to be brought to the attention of all. We are today living in the time when the predictions of this chapter are fulfilling. Let our ministers and teachers explain these prophecies to those whom they instruct. Let them leave out of their discourses matters of minor consequence, and present the truths that will decide the destiny of souls.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 148 (1915).

ASSURANCE OF PROPHECY

2. How can we be sure that the prophecies given for the last days will be fulfilled?

HABAKKUK 2:3 *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

HEBREWS 10:36, 37 *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. ³⁷For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

“All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come in its order will be. Daniel, God’s prophet, stands in his place. John stands in his place. In the Revelation the Lion of the tribe of Judah has opened to the students of prophecy the book of Daniel, and thus is Daniel standing in his place. He bears his testimony, that which the Lord revealed to him in vision of the great and solemn events which we must know as we stand on the very threshold of their fulfillment.

“In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress. Those things which have been, will be repeated. Old controversies will be revived, and new theories will be continually arising. But God’s people, who in their belief and fulfillment of prophecy have acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages, know where they stand. They have an experience that is more precious than fine gold. They are to stand firm as a rock, holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.” —*Select-ed Messages*, book 2, p. 109.

THE DANGER OF IGNORING PAST HISTORY

3. Can we be satisfied with the knowledge of prophecy that we already have? Will a simple knowledge of prophecy be sufficient to pass safely through the final dangers?

REVELATION 1:3 *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

“All genuine experience in religious doctrines will bear the impress of Jehovah. All should see the necessity of understanding the truth for themselves individually. We must understand the doctrines that have been studied out carefully and prayerfully.... There is great need to search the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, and learn the texts thoroughly, that we may know what is written....

“The Lord desires that every soul who claims to believe the truth shall have an intelligent knowledge of what is truth. False prophets will arise and will deceive many.... Then does it not become everyone to understand the reasons for our faith? In place of having so many sermons, there should be a more close searching of the Word of God, opening the Scriptures text by text, and searching for the strong evidences that sustain the fundamental doctrines that have brought us where we now are, upon the platform of eternal truth....

“When men turn away from the landmarks the Lord has established that we may understand our position as marked out in prophecy, they are going they know not whither.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 363, 364.

4. In facing the danger of false christs and false prophets, what is particularly important?

EPHESIANS 4:13-15 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

¹⁴*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;* ¹⁵*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

“Times that will try men’s souls are just before us, and those who are weak in the faith will not stand the test of those days of peril. The great truths of revelation are to be carefully studied, for we shall all want an intelligent knowledge of the word of God. By Bible study and daily communion with Jesus we shall gain clear, well-defined views of individual responsibility and strength to stand in the day of trial and temptation. He whose life is united to Christ by hidden links will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation....

“The Christian is required to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, to read over and over again the truths of God’s word. Willful ignorance on this subject endangers the Christian life and character. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the noblest powers. It is this that brings confusion into our lives. Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine.

“Great changes are soon to take place in the world, and everyone will need an experimental knowledge of the things of God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 273.

5. What will the faithful have to face—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?

ACTS 14:22 *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

“Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God’s immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

THE PROPHETIC BOOK OF DANIEL

6. Is the book of Daniel still sealed? Was the little book that the angel of Revelation 10 had in his hand closed or open?

DANIEL 12:4 *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*

REVELATION 10:2 *And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.*

“After these seven thunders uttered their voices, the injunction comes to John as to Daniel in regard to the little book: ‘Seal up those things which the seven thunders

uttered.' These relate to future events which will be disclosed in their order. Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels' messages to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the message in relation to time." –(Manuscript 59, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971.

"When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, 'Time shall be no longer.' See Revelation 10:6. The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days." –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 105.

REVELATION IS AN OPEN BOOK

7. Since the book of Revelation is for our time, how should we study it? Who will be specially blessed by studying it?

REVELATION 22:10, 6, 7 *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.... ⁶And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. ⁷Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

"The book of Revelation opens to the world what has been, what is, and what is to come; it is for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come. It should be studied with reverential awe. We are privileged in knowing what is for our learning....

"The Lord Himself revealed to His servant John the mysteries of the book of Revelation, and He designs that they shall be open to the study of all. In this book are depicted scenes that are now in the past, and some of eternal interest that are taking place around us; other of its prophecies will not receive their complete fulfillment until the close of time, when the last great conflict between the powers of darkness and the Prince of heaven will take place." –(*Review and Herald*, August 31, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 954.

FOR MEDITATION

"Prophecy has been fulfilling, line upon line. The more firmly we stand under the banner of the third angel's message, the more clearly shall we understand the prophecy of Daniel; for the Revelation is the supplement of Daniel. The more fully we accept the light presented by the Holy Spirit through the consecrated servants of God, the deeper and surer, even as the eternal throne, will appear the truths of ancient prophecy; we shall be assured that men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Men must themselves be under the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Spirit's utterances through the prophets. These messages were given, not for those that uttered the prophecies, but for us who are living amid the scenes of their fulfillment." –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 114.

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

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The Three Angels' Messages

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.” –(Letter 79, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

A MESSAGE FOR MANKIND

1. What vision was given to the apostle John for the end time? What type of message does it contain?

REVELATION 14:6-10 *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, ⁷Saying 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. ⁸And 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. ⁹And 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, ¹⁰The 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.*

“The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old...”

“The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel’s message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.” –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 104.

2. Why do the three angels’ messages need to be given? Who is commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel contained in these messages?

PSALM 14:2 *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

REVELATION 1:1-3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his*

angel unto his servant John: ²Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

PSALM 51:13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

“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.’...

“This message is declared to be a part of ‘the everlasting gospel.’ The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 311, 312.

A GREAT WORK

3. Why is the proclamation of the three angels’ messages so important?

MATTHEW 24:12-14 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

“A great work is to be accomplished in setting before men the saving truths of the gospel. This is the means ordained by God to stem the tide of moral corruption. This is His means of restoring His moral image in man. It is His remedy for universal disorganization. It is the power that draws men together in unity. To present these truths is the work of the third angel’s message. The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in the world at this time.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 11.

4. What is therefore the most solemn, urgent responsibility of God’s people?

ISAIAH 58:1 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

ACTS 17:30, 31 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed

to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God's messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declares to His followers: 'Ye are the light of the world.' To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: 'Behold the worth of the soul: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 455.

5. How far-reaching are the three angels' messages that must be proclaimed?

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.*

MATTHEW 24:14 *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.*

"From town to town, from city to city, from country to country, the warning message is to be proclaimed, not with outward display, but in the power of the Spirit, by men of faith.

"And it is necessary that the best kind of labor be given. The time has come, the important time, when, through God's messengers, the scroll is being unrolled to the world. The truth comprised in the first, second, and third angels' messages must go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; it must lighten the darkness of every continent and extend to the islands of the sea...." –*Evangelism*, p. 19.

ATTEMPTS TO OPPOSE THE WORK

6. What will the three messages cause the dragon and his followers to do? Is this a reason to minimize the messages given by the Lord?

REVELATION 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.*

EPHESIANS 6:11-13 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

"The three angels of Revelation 14 are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels' messages. All are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to the church, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place; but they live and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 17.

"Our work now is to rouse the people. Satan with all his angels has come down with great power, to work with every conceivable deception to counterwork the work of God.

The Lord has a message for His people. This message will be borne, whether men will accept or reject it. As in the days of Christ, there will be the deep plottings of the powers of darkness, but the message must not be muffled with smooth words or fair speeches, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace, to those who are turning away from God. 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' Isaiah 57:21." –(Manuscript 36, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1149.

7. Who will especially be the target of those who oppose the divine warning messages?

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.*

"God has presented to me the dangers that are threatening those who have been given the sacred work of proclaiming the third angel's message. They are to remember that this message is of the utmost consequence to the whole world. They need to search the Scriptures diligently, that they may learn how to guard against the mystery of iniquity, which plays so large a part in the closing scenes of this earth's history.

"There will be more and still more external parade by worldly powers. Under different symbols, God presented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of His people. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation speaks of mystic Babylon, fallen from her high estate to become a persecuting power. Those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus are the object of the wrath of this power. [Revelation 18:1-8 quoted.]" –(Manuscript 135, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

FOR MEDITATION

"Truth, passing by those who despise and reject it, will triumph. Although at times apparently retarded, its progress had never been checked. When the message of God meets with opposition, He gives it additional force, that it may exert greater influence. Endowed with divine energy, it will cut its way through the strongest barriers, and triumph over every obstacle." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 601 (1911).

* * *

The People of God and the Sanctuary Doctrine

“All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

THE SANCTUARY AND THE JUDGMENT

1. What place does the truth about the sanctuary occupy in the faith of God’s people?

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

HEBREWS 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

“The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.” —(Letter 208, 1906) *Evangelism*, p. 221.

“The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

2. Why is it so important to know what is going on today in the heavenly sanctuary?

HEBREWS 8:1, 2; 9:27 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: ²We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.... ^{9:27}And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

“The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be

opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.”
—*Evangelism*, p. 221.

CHRIST’S INTERCESSION

3. What ministry is Jesus performing for man in the heavenly sanctuary today? While He is pleading in heaven for every repentant sinner, what should we do?

1 JOHN 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

HEBREWS 7:25 *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.*

“... Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 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.

“In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood in the sinner’s behalf.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 415.

“While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshipers on earth should carefully review their life, and compare their character with the standard of righteousness.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 8, 1890) *Evangelism*, p. 224.

4. How is this work being done? What will thus be removed forever?

JOB 31:14, *Basic English Bible* *What then will I do when God comes as my judge? and what answer may I give to his questions?*

ISAIAH 43:25; 44:22 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins....^{44:22} I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

“And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

HUMBLING ONESELF AND TURNING AWAY FROM SIN

5. What was important for God’s people during the typical day of atonement and still is today, as the close of probation nears and Jesus completes the investigative judgment?

1 JOHN 3:3 *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

ACTS 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

“The whole ceremony was designed to impress the Israelites with the holiness of God and His abhorrence of sin; and, further, to show them that they could not come in contact with sin without becoming polluted. Every man was required to afflict his soul while this work of atonement was going forward. All business was to be laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel were to spend the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart....

“While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 419, 425.

6. What should be the special concern of those whose names were written in the book of life at their baptism?

REVELATION 3:5; 21:26, 27 *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels....^{21:26}And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*

“Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance....

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

THE ADVERSARY’S ERRONEOUS THEORIES

7. What warning is given as Satan tries to unsettle the faith of God’s people in the sanctuary message? How will the faithful ones fight for the crown of life?

COLOSSIANS 2:8, 9, 6, 7 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.... ⁶As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: ⁷Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

“Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel’s message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work.” –(*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 17 [1905]) *Evangelism*, p. 225.

“You are fighting for the crown of life.... Live to please Him who thought you of such value that He gave Jesus, His only begotten Son, to save you from your sins.... Ever keep

before you the thought that what is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Depend upon God for wisdom, that you may not discourage one soul in right doing. Work with Christ in drawing souls to Him.... Do your very best in everything you undertake. Jesus is your Saviour, and rely upon Him to help you day by day, that you may not sow tares, but the good seed of the kingdom...." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 283.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

The Great Controversy, chapters 23, 24, 28.

Selected Messages, book 1, p. 344.

Evangelism, pp. 222, 223.

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4

Sabbath, July 23, 2016

The Investigative Judgment

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

JUDGED ACCORDING TO ONE'S WORKS

1. When will the judgment take place and in accordance with what standard?

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

REVELATION 20:12, LAST PART; 2:23, LAST PART ... *And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....^{2:23} I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

"At the time appointed for the judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged 'out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 486.

"At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart? What can be of any worth to us now except to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there of any real value in this world when we are on the very borders of the eternal world?" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 526.

2. With whom does the investigative judgment in the heavenly courts begin? Not knowing when our names will pass into judgment, what should be our attitude?

1 PETER 4:17, 18 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

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.*

“... In the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. ‘Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?’ 1 Peter 4:17.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

“What is our condition in this fearful and solemn time? Alas, what pride is prevailing in the church, what hypocrisy, what deception, what love of dress, frivolity, and amusement, what desire for the supremacy! All these sins have clouded the mind, so that eternal things have not been discerned.... If we have any regard for our souls’ salvation, we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out.

“We must no longer remain upon the enchanted ground. We are fast approaching the close of our probation. Let every soul inquire, How do I stand before God? We know not how soon our names may be taken into the lips of Christ, and our cases be finally decided. What, oh, what will these decisions be! Shall we be counted with the righteous, or shall we be numbered with the wicked?” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 125.

THE COURT OF JUDGMENT

3. Who is the presiding Judge in this court, and who is the Advocate? What will the adversary continue to do?

DANIEL 7:9, 10 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. ¹⁰A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

1 JOHN 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

REVELATION 12:10 *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

ZECARIAH 3:1 *And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*

“Thus was presented to the prophet’s vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered ‘according to his works.’ The Ancient of Days is God the Father....

“Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God....

“While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 479, 482, 484.

4. What is the standard in the heavenly judgment?

ECCLESIASTES 12:13, 14 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

JAMES 2:12 *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

ROMANS 3:19 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

“In His teachings, Christ showed how far reaching are the principles of the law spoken from Sinai. He made a living application of that law whose principles remain forever the great standard of righteousness—the standard by which all shall be judged in that great day when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened...”

“When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every man shall be judged according to the things written in the books, then the tables of stone, hidden by God until that day, will be presented before the world as the standard of righteousness. Then men and women will see that the prerequisite of their salvation is obedience to the perfect law of God. None will find excuse for sin. By the righteous principles of that law, men will receive their sentence of life or of death.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 211, 225.

5. What books provide evidence in the judgment?

DANIEL 12:1 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

REVELATION 20:11, 12 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

MALACHI 3:16 *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

“The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God...”

“A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.’ Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven.... There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake, is recorded....

“There is a record also of the sins of men. ‘For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.’ Says the

Saviour: 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37. The secret purposes and motives appear in the unerring register...." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 480, 481.

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGMENT

6. Knowing that sins that remain unconfessed and unforgiven are not erased and that then the record of good works is erased from the book of remembrance, of what should God's people make sure?

PSALM 32:1 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

1 JOHN 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

"Another book was opened, wherein were recorded the *sins* of those who profess the truth. Under the general heading of selfishness came every other sin. There were also headings over every column, and underneath these, opposite each name, were recorded, in their respective columns, the lesser sins.

"Under covetousness came falsehood, theft, robbery, fraud, and avarice; under ambition came pride and extravagance; jealousy stood at the head of malice, envy, and hatred; and intemperance headed a long list of fearful crimes, such as lasciviousness, adultery, indulgence of animal passions, etc. As I beheld I was filled with inexpressible anguish and exclaimed: 'Who can be saved? who will stand justified before God? whose robes are spotless? who are faultless in the sight of a pure and holy God?' " –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 384, 385.

"Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 482.

7. When the investigative judgment is finished and the destiny of everyone has been decided for life or for death, what will be the overcomers' reward?

REVELATION 3:5, 21 *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels....* ²¹*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

"The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to 'the first dominion.' Micah 4:8." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"'Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' Malachi 3:2, 3. Those who are living upon the

earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, pp. 384-387.

The Great Controversy, chapter 28.

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5

Sabbath, July 30, 2016

Laodicea—Judgment of the People

"The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 66.

"The message to the church of the Laodiceans applies especially to the people of God today. It is a message to professing Christians who have become so much like the world that no difference can be seen. [Vs. 14-18 quoted]." —(*Review and Herald*, August 20, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 959.

MESSAGE TO THE LAST CHURCH

1. What earnest message is given to the church of Laodicea?

REVELATION 3:14-17 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

"The Lord here [Revelation 3:14-17] shows us that the message to be borne to His people by ministers whom He has called to warn the people is not a peace-and-safety message. It is not merely theoretical, but practical in every particular. The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments. 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252.

2. If a person does not compare himself with his Redeemer, how will he consider himself? Would he then be conscious of his lukewarm state?

LUKE 18:11 *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

MATTHEW 5:20 *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

“What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252.

3. Why is there such a condition of lukewarmness in the church? Can the Lord and the world be followed simultaneously?

HOSEA 10:2, FIRST PART *Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty:...*

MATTHEW 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

1 JOHN 2:15, 16 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

“It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, and who believe themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’ I was shown that many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians, who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 253.

“The danger of God’s people for a few years past has been the love of the world. Out of this have sprung the sins of selfishness and covetousness....

“The strong love of the world overcomes, or swallows up, the love of the truth. The kingdoms of the world are offered them, and they eagerly grasp their treasure and think they are wonderfully prospered. Satan triumphs because his plan has succeeded. They have given up the love of God for the love of the world.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 141, 142.

DESIRE AND PRAYER FOR CLEANSING

4. What does God say He will do to those who refuse His counsel and reproofs?

PROVERBS 1:23-26 *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. ²⁴Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ²⁵But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.*

“Many inquire: Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the *Testimonies* continually charge us with backsliding and with grievous sins? We love the truth; we are prospering; we are in no need of these testimonies of warning and reproof. But let these murmurers see their hearts and compare their lives with the practical teachings of the Bible, let them humble their souls before God, let the grace of God illuminate the darkness, and the scales will fall from their eyes, and they will realize their true spiritual poverty and wretchedness....

“Very many feel impatient and jealous because they are frequently disturbed with warnings and reproofs which keep their sins before them....

“They cannot endure to be told of their neglect of duty and of their wrongs, their selfishness, their pride and love of the world.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 254, 256, 258.

5. When one is concerned about this message, what great longing will he have?

PSALM 139:23, 24; 51:2, 7 *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.... ^{51:2}Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.... ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

“... Sin is deceptive, and tends to deaden the moral perceptions. But through self-examination, searching of the Scriptures, and humble prayer, they will, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, be enabled to see their mistake. If they then confess their sins and turn from them, the tempter will not appear to them as an angel of light, but as a deceiver, an accuser of those whom God desires to use to his glory. Those who acknowledge reproof and correction as from God, and are thus enabled to see and correct their errors, are learning precious lessons, even from their mistakes. Their apparent defeat is turned into victory. They stand trusting not to their own strength, but to the strength of God. They have earnestness, zeal, and affection, united with humility, and regulated by the precepts of God’s word. Thus they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The Lord can teach them his will, and they shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God. They walk not stumblingly, but safely, in a path where the light of heaven shines.” –*Review and Herald*, December 16, 1890.

PRAYING FOR INCREASED FAITH

6. What is lacking among God’s people? Like the disciples, what should be every sincere soul’s desire and constant request to God?

LUKE 18:8, SECOND PART; 17:5, 6 *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?... ^{17:5}And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. ⁶And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

“Faith and love are golden treasures, elements that are greatly wanting among God’s people....

“Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning. ‘My Lord delayeth His coming’ is not only said in the heart, but expressed in words and most decidedly in works. Stupidity in this watching time is sealing the senses of God’s people as to the signs of the times... Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree, and it is only by exercise that it can increase.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 255.

“Faith should be cultivated. If it has become weak it is like a sickly plant that should be placed in the sunshine and carefully watered and tended. The Lord would have every one who has had light and evidence cherish that light and walk in its brightness. God has blessed us with reasoning powers so that we may trace from cause to effect. If we would have light we must come to the light. We must individually lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel.... How foolish it would be to go into a cellar, and mourn because we were in the dark. If we want light we must come up into a higher room. It is our privilege to come into the light, to come into the presence of God....” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 230.

7. What exhortation do the Lord and the Spirit of prophecy address to everyone while the door of grace is still open?

JOEL 2:12, 13 *Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

“I would make my brethren alarmed if I could. I would urge upon them with pen and voice, Live in the Lord, walk with God, if you would die in the Lord, and enter by and by where the Lord abideth forever. Be not disobedient to the heavenly warnings; grasp the neglected appeals, the entreaties, the warnings, the rebukes, the threatenings of God, and let them correct your wayward, sinful heart. Let the transforming grace of Christ make you pure, true, holy, and lovely as the pure white lily which opens its blossom on the bosom of the lake. Transfer your love and affections to Him who died for you on Calvary’s cross. Train your lips to speak forth His praises, and to offer up your prayers as holy incense.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 430.

“Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. The plain message of rebuke to the Laodiceans is not received. Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing.... Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge. They lack almost

every qualification necessary to perfect Christian character. They have not a practical knowledge of Bible truth, which leads to lowliness of life and a conformity of their will to the will of Christ. They are not living in obedience to all God's requirements....

"We are living in a most solemn, important time of this earth's history. We are amid the perils of the last days. Important and fearful events are before us. How necessary that all who do fear God and love His law should humble themselves before Him, and be afflicted and mourn, and confess the sins that have separated God from His people. That which should excite the greatest alarm, is that we do not feel or understand our condition, our low estate, and that we are satisfied to remain as we are. We should flee to the word of God and to prayer, individually seeking the Lord earnestly, that we may find Him. We should make this our first business." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 254, 53.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 252-258.

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6

Sabbath, August 6, 2016

Show the People Their Transgressions

"Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. The world is a workshop in which, through the cooperation of human and divine agencies, Jesus is making experiments by His grace and divine mercy upon human hearts." –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 49.

"We have no discouraging message for the church. Although reproofs and cautions and corrections have been made, yet the church has stood as God's instrumentality to diffuse light...." –(Manuscript 96, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 967.

NEVER EXCUSE SIN

1. Why is it so important to reprove and be reproved for sin? What are the terrible consequences of sin?

ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

EZEKIEL 18:4, 20 *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. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

"In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who rebukes evil the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 675.

2. What does God instruct His people to do when they become aware of sin?

ISAIAH 58:1 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

TITUS 2:15, FIRST PART *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

"If there is given to the angel of any church a commission like unto that given to the angel of the church of Ephesus, let the message be heard through human agents rebuking carelessness, backsliding, and sin, that the people may be brought to repentance and confession of sin. Never seek to cover sin; for in the message of rebuke, Christ is to be proclaimed as the first and the last, He who is all in all to the soul.

"His power awaits the demand of those who would overcome. The reprover is to animate his hearers so that they shall strive for the mastery. He is to encourage them to struggle for deliverance from every sinful practice, to be free from every corrupt habit, even if this denial of self is like taking the right eye, or separating the right arm from the body. No concession or compromise is to be made to evil habits or sinful practices." — *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 380.

CONSEQUENCES OF TRYING TO HIDE SIN

3. What happens when one tries to hide sin? What attitude do some church members exhibit when they are reproved?

PSALMS 31:10; 32:3 *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed....^{32:3}When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

NUMBERS 17:10 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.*

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

"Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and who murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 266, 267.

4. How did God manifest His displeasure with sin among the people of Israel as well as in the early days of the Christian church?

NUMBERS 16:30-35 *But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. ³¹And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: ³²And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. ³³They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. ³⁴And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. ³⁵And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*

JOSHUA 7:19-21, 25 *And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. ²⁰And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: ²¹When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.... ²⁵And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*

ACTS 5:5, 9, 10 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.... ⁹Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. ¹⁰Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God’s word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 147.

ACT WITH LOVE

5. What course of action do the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy provide for dealing with such matters?

2 TIMOTHY 4:1, 2 *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

"We are authorized to hold in the same estimation as did the beloved disciple those who claim to abide in Christ while living in transgression of God's law. There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded. 'You must have charity,' is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 554.

6. **Reproof should always be given in the love of Christ. What counsel does the apostle Paul stress?**

GALATIANS 6:1, 2 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. ²Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

"Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 462.

"To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from the right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 503.

7. **If reproof is given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what will be the result?**

JAMES 5:19, 20 *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

MATTHEW 18:15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

"It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. None should make the experience more bitter by needless censure. No one was ever reclaimed by reproach; but many have thus been repelled and have been led to steel their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins.

"The apostle Paul found it necessary to reprove wrong, but how carefully he sought to show that he was a friend to the erring! How anxiously he explained to them the reason of his action! He made them understand that it cost him pain to give them pain. He showed his confidence and sympathy toward the ones who were struggling to overcome." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 166.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, pp. 260-264.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 358-362, 265-269.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 210, 211.

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Sabbath, August 13, 2016

“Be Zealous Therefore, and Repent!”

“... The Lord has shown me in vision some things concerning the church in its present lukewarm state, which I will relate to you. The church was presented before me in vision. Said the angel to the church: ‘Jesus speaks to thee, “Be zealous and repent.”’ This work, I saw, should be taken hold of in earnest. There is something to repent of. Worldly-mindedness, selfishness, and covetousness have been eating out the spirituality and life of God’s people.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 141.

COUNSEL OF THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

- 1. Being conscious of our perilous condition and of the investigative judgment, what counsel of the Faithful Witness should be earnestly heeded?**

REVELATION 3:18 *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

“Heed the counsel of the True Witness.... Make some effort. These precious treasures will not drop upon us without some exertion on our part. We must buy—‘be zealous and repent’ of our lukewarm state. We must be awake to see our wrongs, to search for our sins, and to zealously repent of them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 142.

“The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His church eyes which He requires them to anoint with wisdom, that they may see clearly; but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could; for they would not have their deeds come to the light, lest they should be reproved. The divine eyesalve will impart clearness to the understanding.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 88.

2. Knowing that sin will have no place in the eternal kingdom and that the sinner will perish along with sin at the coming of the Lord, what should we do while there are still a few moments left?

ROMANS 6:13 *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

1 CORINTHIANS 9:25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

HEBREWS 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:12, FIRST PART *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called...."*

"Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves.

"No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white.... By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 472.

A TERRIBLE RISK

3. What risk is there in delaying even a moment to turn away from sin?

HEBREWS 3:7-13 *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) ¹²Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

"Beware of procrastination. Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God's Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 32.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

4. After one becomes aware of his sin through application of the eyesalve, what is a person invited to do by the Faithful Witness? What does true repentance consist of?

REVELATION 3:19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

JAMES 4:7-10 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. ⁹Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

PROVERBS 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

“Who is desirous of becoming truly repentant? What must he do? He must come to Jesus, just as he is, without delay. He must believe that the word of Christ is true, and, believing the promise, ask, that he may receive. When sincere desire prompts men to pray, they will not pray in vain. The Lord will fulfill His word, and will give the Holy Spirit to lead to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He will pray and watch, and put away his sins, making manifest his sincerity by the vigor of his endeavor to obey the commandments of God. With prayer he will mingle faith, and not only believe in but obey the precepts of the law. He will announce himself as on Christ’s side of the question. He will renounce all habits and associations that tend to draw the heart from God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 393.

5. What does Jesus desire from every sinner for whom He gave His life?

REVELATION 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

“I saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove. Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness, to remove before they can open the door. Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door. All this rubbish must be taken away, and then they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in.

“After all our lukewarmness and sins He says: ‘Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.’ This was repeated by the angel a number of times. ‘Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 143.

“How willing is Christ to take possession of the soul temple if we will let Him! He is represented as waiting and knocking at the door of the heart. Then why does He not enter? It is because the love of sin has closed the door of the heart. As soon as we consent to give sin up, to acknowledge our guilt, the barrier is removed between the soul and the Saviour.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 325.

TWO POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO THE LAODICEAN MESSAGE

6. What will happen to all who will not repent?

REVELATION 3:16 *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

“Some, I saw, would gladly return. Others will not let this message to the Laodicean church have its weight upon them. They will glide along, much after the same manner as before, and will be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Those only who zealously repent will have favor with God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144.

“There are those who, though professedly serving God, are witnessing against Him. To them the message to the Laodicean church is given. Christ says to them, ‘I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.’ When the avenging angel shall pass through the land, Christ cannot say of them, ‘Touch them not. I have graven them upon the palms of my hands.’ No; of these halfhearted ones He says, ‘I will spew them out of my mouth. They are offensive to Me.’” –(Letter 44, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 963.

7. What will be the happy future of every overcomer who heeds the Faithful Witness’ counsel?

REVELATION 3:21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

“We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144.

“Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. How? By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.” –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 409.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

The Upward Look, p. 283.

“All who have a true sense of the sacrifice made by Christ in leaving His home in heaven to come to this world that He might by His own life show man how to resist temptation will cheerfully deny self and choose to be partakers with Christ of His sufferings.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 491.

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The Tares and the Good Seed

“Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord’s great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, ‘Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?’ The master answered, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ Matthew 13:27, 28. All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 288.

THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT

1. What do the tares and the wheat represent? According to the Spirit of prophecy, where are both found?

MATTHEW 13:37, 38 *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; ³⁸The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.*

“Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. We are sorry that there are defective members, that there are tares amid the wheat....

“... There are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world...” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 45, 49 (1893).

“The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 70.

“God has precious ones in His church; there are also men and women who are as tares among the wheat. But the Lord does not give you or anyone else the office of saying who are tares and who are wheat.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 333.

2. What is Satan’s method? Especially when is he able to work?

MATTHEW 13:25 *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

“... It is from enmity to Christ that Satan scatters his evil seed among the good grain of the kingdom. The fruit of his sowing he attributes to the Son of God. By bringing into the church those who bear Christ’s name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 71.

3. What are we responsible for if we let Satan scatter tares?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

"It is not by force that Satan takes possession of the human mind. While men sleep, the enemy sows tares in the church. While men are spiritually sleeping, the enemy accomplishes his work of iniquity. It is when his subject 'understandeth it not' (Matthew 13:19) that he catcheth away the good seed sown in the heart. When men and women are in this condition, when their spiritual life is not being constantly fed by the Spirit of God, Satan can imbue them with his spirit, and lead them to work his works." –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 353.

"If faithfulness and vigilance had been preserved, if there had been no sleeping or negligence upon the part of any, the enemy would not have had so favorable an opportunity to sow tares among the wheat. Satan never sleeps. He is watching, and he improves every opportunity to set his agents to scatter error, which finds good soil in many unsanctified hearts." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 113.

THE TARES MUST NOT BE ROOTED UP NOW

4. What counsel is given in the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy about the tares? How do the wheat and the tares appear at first?

MATTHEW 13:28, SECOND PART, 29, 30 ... *The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

"In the East, men sometimes took revenge upon an enemy by strewing his newly sown fields with the seeds of some noxious weed that, while growing, closely resembled wheat. Springing up with the wheat, it injured the crop and brought trouble and loss to the owner of the field....

"Christ's servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. They long to do something to cleanse the church. Like the servants of the householder, they are ready to uproot the tares. But Christ says to them, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest....'

"There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 71, 72.

5. How is this parable to be applied when a person persists in open sin? What work has the Saviour not given to any human being?

MATTHEW 18:15-17 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.*

"Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive.

He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 71.

6. What do those represented by the tares do?

MATTHEW 15:8, 9 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. ⁹But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5 *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

"The growth of the tares among the wheat would draw special attention to it. The grain would be subjected to severe criticism. Indeed, the whole field might be set down as worthless by some superficial observer, or by one who delighted to discover evil. The sower might be condemned by him, as one who had mingled the bad seed with the good for his own wicked purpose. Just so the erring and hypocritical ones who profess to follow Jesus bring reproach upon the cause of Christianity, and cause the world to doubt concerning the truths of Christ. As the presence of the tares among the wheat counteracted to a great degree the work of the sower, so sin among the people of God frustrates, in a measure, the plan of Jesus to save fallen man from the power of Satan and render the barren ground of the human heart fruitful of good works." —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 248, 249.

"The world has no right to doubt the truth of Christianity because there are unworthy members in the church, nor should Christians become disheartened because of these false brethren." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 72.

AT THE HARVEST

7. When will the difference between the wheat and the tares be clearly seen?

MALACHI 3:18 *Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*

MATTHEW 13:39, 40 *The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*

"Not judgment and condemnation of others, but humility and distrust of self, is the teaching of Christ's parable. Not all that is sown in the field is good grain. The fact that men are in the church does not prove them Christians.

"The tares closely resembled the wheat while the blades were green; but when the field was white for the harvest, the worthless weeds bore no likeness to the wheat that bowed under the weight of its full, ripe heads,... But in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil. Then those who have joined the church, but who have not joined Christ, will be manifest." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 74.

8. What will be the fate of the tares, and what will happen to the wheat?

MATTHEW 13:41-43; 15:13 *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.... ^{15:13}But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

“Christ Himself will decide who are worthy to dwell with the family of heaven. He will judge every man according to his words and his works. Profession is as nothing in the scale. It is character that decides destiny.

“The Saviour does not point forward to a time when all the tares become wheat. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God.”
—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 74, 75.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 70-75.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 113-116.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 494.

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Read the Missionary Report from Mali on page 41

9

Sabbath, August 27, 2016

The Shaking

“There will be a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. It is the very time when the genuine will be the strongest.”—(Letter 46, 1887) *Last Day Events*, p. 173.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF THE FAITHFUL WITNESS’ MESSAGE

1. What must happen in the church before Jesus returns? Why?

MATTHEW 3:11, 12 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: ¹²Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

AMOS 9:9 *For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

“The Lord is soon to come. There must be a refining, winnowing process in every church, for there are among us wicked men who do not love the truth or honor God.” –(*Review and Herald*, March 19, 1895) *Last Day Events*, p. 173.

“We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 332 (1900).

2. What other prophecy tells of a great shaking? According to the Spirit of prophecy, when did the shaking begin?

HAGGAI 2:6, 7, FIRST PART *For thus saith the Lord of hosts; ⁷Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations,...*

HEBREWS 12:26, 27 *Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. ²⁷And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

“The Lord gave me a view, January 26, 1850, which I will relate....

“The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause. The angel said, ‘Think ye that any will be compelled to sacrifice? No, no. It must be a freewill offering. It will take all to buy the field.’” –*Early Writings*, p. 50.

3. Why does a shaking occur?

1 KINGS 18:21 *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

REVELATION 3:15, 16 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

“November 20, 1857, I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken....

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 181.

“One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan’s banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God’s Spirit.” –*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 84 (1903).

A PURE CHURCH

4. What is God’s purpose in the shaking?

ROMANS 12:2, 3 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect,*

will of God. ³For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; ¹⁰That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

DANIEL 12:10 *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*

"Where is the spirituality of the church? Where are men and women full of faith and the Holy Spirit? My prayer is: Purify Thy church, O God....

"God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church. We cannot read the heart of man. But the Lord has provided means to keep the church pure. A corrupt people has arisen who could not live with the people of God. They despised reproof, and would not be corrected. They had an opportunity to know that theirs was an unrighteous warfare. They had time to repent of their wrongs; but self was too dear to die. They nourished it, and it grew strong, and they separated from the trusting people of God, whom He is purifying unto Himself. We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church; for the wrath of God must have come upon us if these corrupt pretenders had remained with us....

"The sieve is moving. Let us not say: Stay Thy hand, O God. The church must be purged, and it will be." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 99, 100.

5. While God is testing His people, how is the shaking going forward?

1 PETER 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*

MALACHI 3:1-3 *Behold, I will send my messenger, 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. ²But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: ³And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*

JAMES 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

"I was pointed to the providence of God among His people and was shown that every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, many are offended." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 89.

"In the absence of the persecution there have drifted into our ranks men who appear sound and their Christianity unquestionable, but who, if persecution should arise, would go out from us." –*Evangelism*, p. 360 (1890).

THE FINAL TEST

6. With what test will the shaking end?

REVELATION 13:15-17 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81 (1882).

“When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 368 (1891).

7. Will many people be found faithful and pass successfully through the shaking time?

ROMANS 11:3-5 *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. ⁴But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. ⁵Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

ZEPHANIAH 3:12, 13 *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. ¹³The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*

“The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But, it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven, but do not see stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.” —*Christian Service*, p. 49.

“The time is not far distant, when the test will come to every soul.... In this time, the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 80, 81.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Last Day Events, chapter 12

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MISSIONARY REPORT from Mali

To be read on Sabbath, August 27, 2016

***The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, September 3, 2016***

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

The Republic of Mali is a relatively large landlocked country in northwest Africa bordering Algeria on the north, Mauritania on the west, Niger on the east, and Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso on the south. The country covers 1.24 million square kilometers (480,000 square miles) and has a population of about 14.5 million. In addition to local languages such as Bambara, the official national language is French.

Mali was once part of three West African empires that controlled the trans-Saharan trade. At its peak in the 1300’s, the Malian Empire covered an area about twice the size of modern-day France and stretched to the west coast of Africa. In the late nineteenth century, France seized control of Mali, making it a part of French Sudan. However, in 1960, Mali declared itself an independent republic. After a long period of one-party rule, a coup in 1991 led to the writing of a new constitution.

The country’s economy centers on agriculture, fishing, and mining; it is the third largest producer of gold and salt. About half of the population lives below the international poverty level of US \$1.25 per day. Almost 90 percent of the people are Muslims (mostly Sunni and Ahmaddiya), approximately 5 percent are Christians (about two-thirds of whom are Roman Catholic), and the remaining 5 percent adhere to indigenous or traditional animist beliefs. The 1991 constitution established Mali as a democratic, multi-party state and provided for freedom of religion, which the government generally respects.

A few years ago, the present truth entered Mali under the International Missionary Society, S.D.A. Church, Reform Movement, through the private visit of Brother Christian Gadoxor from Ghana. Later, missionary activities in Mali were intensified when the General Conference requested Pastor Mohammed Inusah, from Benin, to follow up on the interest. In April 2014, he baptized the first two souls in Mali, and more individuals have become believers and joined the church. The work is still very young in this new missionary field and therefore needs both your prayers and your financial support. One of the great needs is a place for worship and the field headquarters. At present a house is being rented for services; but since people in Mali do not appreciate home churches, a suitable building is very necessary for the growth of God’s cause.

Furthermore, since Mali is dominated by the Muslim religion, the General Conference would like to push forward a concentrated effort through the use of focused materials and public outreach to Muslims. Therefore, your cooperation is very important here. Not everyone can travel to such countries to work, but everyone can support with their gifts those who have the ability and opportunity to do so. The Special Sabbath School offering to be gathered next week provides the perfect opportunity for that. As you consider how you will join with your fellow believers to meet the needs of the gospel work in Mali, remember these inspired words: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns." Matthew 24:14, 45, 46, *New International Version*.

"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." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 529.

May God's rich blessing attend your sacrifice for His cause.

—*Parmenas N. Shirima*
African Division Leader

Special Sabbath School Offering for
MALI

God bless your generous gift for the salvation of precious souls!

10

Sabbath, September 3, 2016

One Head, One Body

THE HEAD AND THE MEMBERS

1. Who is the head of the spiritual body?

COLOSSIANS 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

EPHESIANS 4:15 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

“... Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 215.

“‘The head of every man is Christ.’ God, who put all things under the Saviour’s feet, ‘gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.’ 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22, 23. The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.

2. Who are the members of the body?

EPHESIANS 1:22, 23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

ROMANS 12:4, 5 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

“We are members of His mystical body. He is the head, controlling all the members of the body.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 731.

“The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 95.

“Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out. All who will, may be reconciled to God, and receive everlasting life. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to Israel first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. It is to be given to Jews and Gentiles. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 821.

DEPENDENCE

3. What relationship exists among the members of the human body? Can one member exist without the other or function independently of the rest of the body?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-21 *For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

“By a comparison of the church with the human body, the apostle aptly illustrated the close and harmonious relationship that should exist among all members of the church of Christ.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317.

“No organ of the body could live should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its lifeblood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. As our lifeblood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 417.

4. As each member of the physical human body has a specific role, how do the church members function as parts of the church body?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-13 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. ¹²For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

“The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. All the branches obtain their nourishment from one source. This is an illustration of the unity that is to exist among Christ’s followers. In their different lines of work they all have but one Head. The same Spirit, in different ways, works through them. There is harmonious action, though the gifts differ. Study this chapter. You will see from it that the man who is truly united with Christ will never act as though he were a complete whole in himself...”

“The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability which has been given him.” –(Letter 19, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090.

CONNECTED TO THE VINE

5. What is absolutely necessary for one to bear fruit? How alone can God’s people escape the perversion and wickedness of the last days?

JOHN 15:4-6 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

“The most licentious and corrupt are highly flattered by these satanic spirits, which they believe to be the spirits of their dead friends, and they are vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds. Colossians 2:19: ‘And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,’ they deny Him who ministers strength to the body, that every member may increase with the increase of God...”

“Vain philosophy. The members of the body are controlled by the head. Spiritualists lay aside the Head and believe that all the members of the body must act themselves and that fixed laws will lead them on in a state of progression to perfection without a head....

“Christ is the source of our strength. He is the Vine, we are the branches. We must receive nourishment from the living Vine. Deprived of the strength and nourishment of that Vine, we are as members of the body without a head and are in the very position which Satan wishes us to be in, that he may control us as pleases himself....” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 300, 301.

SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

6. What kind of spirit does Satan convey to those who do not have solid faith in Jesus?

HEBREWS 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

PROVERBS 11:14 *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

“By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous—as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man’s say-so, that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan’s special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course independent of the counsel of their brethren....

“Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent.... And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together....

“If men wear the yoke of Christ, they can not pull apart; they will draw with Christ.”
–*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 257, 258.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

7. What ordinance unites the soul with God, Christ, and the members of the spiritual family?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16, 17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

“Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus...”

“As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

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11

Sabbath, September 10, 2016

God’s Remnant People

“God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.” –*Conflict and Courage*, p. 269.

A REMNANT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN JESUS’ TIME

1. What can we determine as to the number of people who were faithful to God in the time of the Old Testament?

2 KINGS 19:31 *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.*

ISAIAH 10:22 *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

“The story of Israel’s call, of their successes and failures, of their restoration to divine favor, of their rejection of the Master of the vineyard, and of the carrying out of the plan of the ages by a goodly remnant to whom are to be fulfilled all the covenant promises—this has been the theme of God’s messengers to His church throughout the centuries that have passed....

“His burden of soul in behalf of erring Judah was not to be borne in vain. His mission was not to be wholly fruitless.... The divine purpose finally accomplished, the full fruitage of his efforts, and of the labors of all God’s faithful messengers, would appear. A remnant should be saved. That this might be brought about, the messages of warning and entreaty were to be delivered to the rebellious nation,...” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 22, 308.

2. What was this remnant situation like in the days of Jesus?

JOHN 3:32 *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.*

LUKE 12:32 *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

“The disciples of John had declared that all men were coming to Christ; but with clearer insight, John said, ‘No man receiveth His witness;’ so few were ready to accept Him as the Saviour from sin....

“The Saviour knew that His days of personal ministry on earth were nearly ended, and that few would receive Him as their Redeemer.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 181, 379.

“Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, He who was equal with God, was in the world thirty-three years, and yet there were but few who acknowledged His divine character.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 69.

IN OUR DAY

3. Today, with billions of people living on the earth, how are God’s people considered?

ROMANS 9:27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*

“In comparison with the millions of the world, God’s people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority. When the sound of the last trump shall penetrate the prison house of the dead, and the righteous shall come forth with triumph, exclaiming, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ (1 Corinthians 15:55)—standing then with God, with Christ, with the angels, and with the loyal and true of all ages, the children of God will be far in the majority.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

4. What characterizes God’s remnant?

REVELATION 12:17; 14:12 *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.*

1 THESSALONIANS 1:9, 10 *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;¹⁰And*

to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

“‘In that day’ ‘the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob ... shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.’ Isaiah 10:20. From ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will ‘worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God’s mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept ‘the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:6, 7, 12.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 299.

A SMALL, FAITHFUL REMNANT UNTIL THE END

5. At the end of time, how will a small minority in the eyes of the world become an instrument to proclaim the three angels’ messages?

ZEPHANIAH 3:12, 13 *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. ¹³The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*

“A high position does not give us value in the sight of God. Man is measured by his consecration and faithfulness in working out the will of God. If the remnant people of God will walk before Him in humility and faith, He will carry out through them His eternal purpose, enabling them to work harmoniously in giving to the world the truth as it is in Jesus. He will use all—men, women, and children—in making the light shine forth to the world and calling out a people that will be true to His commandments. Through the faith that His people exercise in Him, God will make known to the world that He is the true God, the God of Israel.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 274.

6. How do the Scriptures explain the fact that there will always be a remnant, even though a large number of people are informed about the truth and are called out of Babylon?

ACTS 28:26, 27 *Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ²⁷For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

JOHN 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

REVELATION 2:7 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

“The subject of man’s personal responsibility is understood by but few; and yet it is a matter of the greatest importance. We may each obey and live, or we may transgress God’s law, defy His authority, and receive the punishment that is meet. Then to every soul

the question comes home with force, Shall I obey the voice from heaven, the ten words spoken from Sinai, or shall I go with the multitude who trample on that fiery law? To those who love God it will be the highest delight to keep His commandments, and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. But the natural heart hates the law of God, and wars against its holy claims. Men shut their souls from the divine light, refusing to walk in it as it shines upon them. They sacrifice purity of heart, the favor of God, and their hope of heaven, for selfish gratification or worldly gain." –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 216.

"Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 752.

7. What will be the reward of God's remnant—those who love God and keep His commandments, and who are faithful to the end?

MATTHEW 24:13 *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

REVELATION 3:10-12 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. ¹²Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

"Christ's true disciples follow Him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence. Partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church....

"In this world their minds were consecrated to God; they served Him with the intellect and with the heart; and now He can place His name 'in their foreheads.'" –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Isaiah 11:11; 49:6.

"A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls. Angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 298.

"I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end." –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 406 (1913).

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 255, 256.

Early Writings, p. 66.

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The History of Israel, a Warning for God's People Today

"In these last days God's people will be exposed to the very same dangers as were ancient Israel. Those who will not receive the warnings that God gives will fall into the same perils as did ancient Israel and come short of entering into rest through unbelief. Ancient Israel suffered calamities on account of their unsanctified hearts and unsubmitted wills. Their final rejection as a nation was a result of their own unbelief, self-confidence, impenitence, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. In their history we have a danger signal lifted before us." —*Last Day Events*, p. 60.

CROSSING THE RED SEA

1. At varying times, what command has God given His people, especially in the face of enormous difficulties?

EXODUS 14:10, 15 *And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord....¹⁵And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*

HEBREWS 11:29 *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

ISAIAH 30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

"The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, 'Go forward.' We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, 'Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;' but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290.

IN SIGHT OF THE HEAVENLY CANAAN

2. What warning does the apostle Paul sound?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat;*

⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

“The history of the wilderness life of Israel was chronicled for the benefit of the Israel of God to the close of time. The record of God’s dealings with the wanderers of the desert in all their marchings to and fro, in their exposure to hunger, thirst, and weariness, and in the striking manifestations of His power for their relief, is fraught with warning and instruction for His people in all ages. The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“The history of the children of Israel is written for our admonition and instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come. Those who would stand firm in the faith in these last days, and finally gain an entrance into the heavenly Canaan, must listen to the words of warning spoken by Jesus Christ to the Israelites. These lessons were given to the church in the wilderness to be studied and heeded by God’s people throughout their generations forever. The experience of the people of God in the wilderness will be the experience of His people in this age. Truth is a safeguard in all time to those who will hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints.” —(Manuscript 110, August 6, 1899, “The Unfaithful Husbandmen”) *The Upward Look*, p. 232.

MOSES’ SIN

3. What was the consequence of Moses’ sin in dishonoring God? Why does He continue to chasten His people today?

NUMBERS 20:12 *And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

HEBREWS 12:7, 11 *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?... ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

“‘The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes,’ said Moses. The eyes of all Israel were upon Moses, and his sin cast a reflection upon God, who had chosen him as the leader of His people. The transgression was known to the whole congregation; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been given that unbelief and impatience under great provocation might be excused in those in responsible positions. But when it was declared that because of that one sin Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will surely punish the transgressor.

“The history of Israel was to be placed on record for the instruction and warning of coming generations. Men of all future time must see the God of heaven as an impartial ruler, in no case justifying sin. But few realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor. But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God’s goodness and His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 420.

THE SERPENT OF BRASS

4. Of what experience of God's people in the wilderness did Jesus remind Nicodemus?

NUMBERS 21:9 *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

JOHN 3:14-17 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

"The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the fatal effect of the poison in their wounds. God alone was able to heal them. Yet they were required to show their faith in the provision which He had made. They must look in order to live. It was their faith that was acceptable with God, and by looking upon the serpent their faith was shown....

"The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God's word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice....

"While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. 'Him that cometh to Me,' says Christ, 'I will in no wise cast out.' John 6:37. But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 430, 431.

APOSTASY AT THE JORDAN

5. What grave sin did Israel commit in Shittim? What did God instruct His people not to do when they were at the border of the Jordan? Explain how this instruction is still applicable today.

NUMBERS 25:1 *And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.*

DEUTERONOMY 7:2, LAST PART, 3, 4 ... *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-16 *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.*

"It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 458.

ACHAN'S SIN

6. What experience of ancient Israel will be made by God's people today if they do not walk with integrity?

HEBREWS 3:12-14 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

"Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away. The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people.

"When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, instead of folding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members inquire if there is not an Achan in the camp. With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God's presence." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497.

FAITHFUL IN TRIAL

7. As the end approaches, what experiences made by Daniel and his companions will inspire God's people to meet the trials just ahead?

DANIEL 3:17, 18; 6:8, 22 *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.... ^{6:8}Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.... ²²My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*

"The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death.

"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for

the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a 'God of gods,' able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 512, 513.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 13:16, 17.

Colossians 2:6-8.

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

"The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to go forth to all the world. In a limited degree, it has already gone forth. In several places the civil power is speaking with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.

"Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false Sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power [of false religion] to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism." —(*Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 976.

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God's People in the World, but Not of the World

"By His own example the Saviour has shown that His followers can be in the world and yet not of the world. He came not to partake of its delusive pleasures, to be swayed by its customs, and to follow its practices, but to do His Father's will, to seek and save the lost. With this object before him the Christian may stand uncontaminated in any surroundings. Whatever his station or circumstances, exalted or humble, he will manifest the power of true religion in the faithful performance of duty." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 467.

SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

1. How does God characterize His people? What does He command?

DEUTERONOMY 14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*

EXODUS 20:2, 3 *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

MATTHEW 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

"Christians are to keep themselves distinct and separate from the world, its spirit, and its influences. God is fully able to keep us in the world, but we are not to be of the world. His love is not uncertain and fluctuating. Ever He watches over His children with a care that is measureless. But He requires undivided allegiance. 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'" Matthew 6:24." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 59.

2. What is one of Satan's primary ways to ensnare God's people? Why does this work so well for him?

JAMES 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

1 JOHN 2:15, 17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.... ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

"God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs

exists among the professed people of God. As they depart from the Lord they become ambitious for the gains and honors of the world. Christians are constantly seeking to imitate the practices of those who worship the god of this world. Many urge that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs they might exert a stronger influence over the ungodly. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are the enemies of God. For the sake of earthly distinction they sacrifice the unspeakable honor to which God has called them, of showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 607.

"Never does man show greater folly than when he seeks to secure acceptance and recognition in the world by sacrificing in any degree the allegiance and honor due to God. When we place ourselves where God cannot cooperate with us, our strength will be found weakness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 151.

GOD'S INSTRUCTION TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE FROM DANGER

3. What danger do those who unite with and imitate the world face?

MATTHEW 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

MARK 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

"There is constant danger that professing Christians will come to think that in order to have influence with worldlings, they must to a certain extent conform to the world. But though such a course may appear to afford great advantages, it always ends in spiritual loss. Against every subtle influence that seeks entrance by means of flattering inducements from the enemies of truth, God's people must strictly guard. They are pilgrims and strangers in this world, traveling a path beset with danger. To the ingenious subterfuges and alluring inducements held out to tempt from allegiance, they must give no heed.

"It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 570, 571.

4. What did the Lord instruct His people for their protection?

DEUTERONOMY 7:2-4 *And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee;... thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

ROMANS 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-16 *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.*

“The principles set forth in Deuteronomy for the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God’s people to the end of time. True prosperity is dependent on the continuance of our covenant relationship with God. Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering into alliance with those who do not fear Him.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 570.

“Never should God’s people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God....

“Those who profess the truth trample on the will of God in marrying unbelievers; they lose His favor and make bitter work for repentance. The unbelieving may possess an excellent moral character, but the fact that he or she has not answered to the claims of God and has neglected so great salvation is sufficient reason why such a union should not be consummated.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 63.

“Even in business relations we cannot, without involving principle, connect ourselves with those who are not loyal to God. What the one party feels that conscience forbids, the other allows. And this not merely in regard to religious matters, but in business transactions.” —*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, pp. 215, 216 [*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 181].

5. What firm counsel does the Lord give?

ISAIAH 52:11 *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.*

ACTS 2:40 *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17, 18 *Wherefore 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.*

“It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God’s law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.’ 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 458.

“The world is given up to self-indulgence. ‘The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’ control the masses of the people. But Christ’s followers have a holier calling. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.’ In the light of God’s word we are justified in declaring that sanctification cannot be genuine which does not work this utter renunciation of the sinful pursuits and gratifications of the world.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 475.

6. Why does God emphasize the importance of His people’s being separate from the world?

1 PETER 1:14-16 *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

LEVITICUS 20:24, 26 *But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God,*

which have separated you from other people.... ²⁶And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

NUMBERS 23:9 *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

“Christ calls upon every one to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ “—*Messages to Young People*, p. 130.

LABOR IN THE WORLD TO SAVE SOULS

7. However, while being separate from the world, what special privilege and responsibility do God’s people carry?

JOHN 17:16, 17 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

MATTHEW 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

“Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects—God and truth and eternity—their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony....

“But we are to beware of indulging a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. We are not to stand aside from others in a spirit that seems to say, ‘Come not near me; I am holier than thou.’ Do not shut yourselves away from your fellow men, but seek to impart to them the precious truth that has blessed your own heart. Let it be manifest that yours is the religion of love....

“But if we are Christians, having the Spirit of Him who died to save men from their sins, we shall love the souls of our fellow men too well to countenance their sinful pleasures by our presence or our influence. We cannot sanction their course by associating with them, partaking in their feasts and their councils, where God does not preside. Such a course, so far from benefiting them, would only cause them to doubt the reality of our religion. We should be false lights, by our example leading souls to ruin.”—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 127, 128.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“I appeal to the churches in every conference. Stand out separate and distinct from the world—in the world, but not of it, reflecting the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, being pure, holy, and undefiled, and in faith carrying light into all the highways and byways of the earth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 437.

Messages to Young People, pp. 129-131, 81, 82.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 535, 536, 209, 210.

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