

## **‘A more sure word of prophecy’ Lessons for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2010**

### **General Introduction**

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:16.

“The apostle [Peter] was well qualified to speak of the purposes of God concerning the human race; for during the earthly ministry of Christ he had seen and heard much that pertained to the kingdom of God. “We have not followed cunningly devised fables,” he reminded the believers, “when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.”

“Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers’ hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all must be confirmed and securely anchored. “We have also,” Peter declared, “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: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

“While exalting the “sure word of prophecy” as a safe guide in times of peril, the apostle solemnly warned the church against the torch of false prophecy, which would be uplifted by “false teachers,” who would privily bring in “damnable heresies, even denying the Lord” (2 Peter 2:1). These false teachers, arising in the church and accounted true by many of their brethren in the faith, the apostle compared to “wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.” “The latter end is worse with them,” he declared, “than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

“Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end. “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” *Reflecting Christ*, page 221.

## **Lesson 1: December 27-January 2 ‘As they were moved by the Holy Ghost’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ 2 Peter 1:21.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 233-235.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:16-21.

LESSON AIM: To show that the prophecies of the Bible were given by divine inspiration, and not simply manmade productions.

### **Introduction**

“The unbelieving and godless do not discern the importance of the signs of the times, foretold in the prophetic word. In ignorance they may refuse to accept the inspired record. But when professed Christians speak sneeringly of the ways and means employed by the great I AM to make His purposes known, they show themselves to be ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. The Creator knows just what elements He has to deal with in human nature. He knows what means to employ to obtain the desired results. Man’s word fails. He who makes the assertions of men his dependence, may well tremble; for he will some day be as a shipwrecked vessel. God’s word is infallible, and endures forever.’ *Youth’s Instructor*, December 1, 1903.

### **‘The Spirit of prophecy’**

#### **1. From where did the Bible prophets receive their message? 2 Peter 1:21.**

NOTE: ‘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.’ *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 114.

**2. How did the angel describe the source of prophecy? Revelation 19:10.**

NOTE: 'It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 366.

**'Not unto themselves'**

**3. Did the prophets simply write for their own times and contemporaries? 1 Peter 1:10-12.**

NOTE: It is commonly taught today that the meaning of the prophets' messages is to be found in a study of the events during which the prophet wrote. Thus their prophecies are dismissed as merely a commentary on events current to the prophet himself. While it undoubtedly is true in some instances, for example, the prophecies of Haggai, that prophets wrote for people of their own times, the majority of the prophets looked far beyond their own day. And even those who wrote primarily for their contemporaries, had things of importance to say to all generations.

'Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). "Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:12).' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 338.

**4. How was Daniel shown that his prophecies were not primarily for his own time? Daniel 12:9.**

NOTE: 'It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. "Shut up the words, and seal the book," he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed "even to the time of the end." "Go thy way, Daniel," the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; "for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Daniel 12:4, 9, 13. As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 547.

**'The word of the Lord came unto me'**

**5. How did the prophets make clear that the messages they proclaimed were not their own? Isaiah 38:4, Jeremiah 1:1-2, Ezekiel 1:3.**

NOTE: 'The work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is shrouded in mystery. It can no more be explained than can the operation of the winds. The Lord has never explained to humanity how the soul is impressed by the Spirit of God, affecting the mind and heart of the believer, or how the Spirit puts words into the mouth of the Lord's messengers to give to His people. The prophets, who were especially enlightened by the Spirit of God, often could not understand the meaning of the words they wrote upon the paper, or explain the significance of what they uttered when the Spirit caused them to speak, but the word of the Lord accomplished the very work which He designed that it should, and the fruits of the work testified to its divine character.' *Sabbath School Worker*, August 1, 1892.

**6. How is the word of the Lord communicated to His prophets? Numbers 12:6-8.**

NOTE: 'God has spoken to the fallen race through chosen human agencies, to whom He has communicated a knowledge of His purpose in visions and dreams. These messengers of His will have been known as holy men, or prophets, set apart by the Lord Himself for the special work of receiving and communicating truth from heaven to mankind. "If there be a prophet among you," God declares, "I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." Numbers 12:6. The Holy Scriptures were compiled from the writings of men thus signally honoured. To the people living in their days these men bore messages from God; and they also taught spiritual truths and gave counsels and warnings for the Church in future times. To "the prophets" "it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you." 1 Peter 1:10-12.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 237.

**'Holy men of God'**

**7. What sort of person did God choose to be His prophet? Amos 7:14-15, 1 Kings 19:16-19, Acts 21:8-9.**

NOTE: The Bible tells us little about most of the prophets; often we know little more than the prophet's name. Isaiah and Jeremiah were priests; Daniel was of the aristocracy of Judah. But men like Amos and Elisha were clearly farmers. Nor was the prophetic office limited to men; apart from Philip's four daughters, we hear of Deborah and Huldah in the Old Testament, and Anna in the New.

'The Lord will call men of high and low degree to do His bidding. The prophet Daniel was a man of royal birth and noble heritage. Not many mighty, not many noble, are called. Yet we know that the Lord has chosen men from the highest ranks. On them the light of heaven has shone, and they have adorned by their practice the truth of Jehovah. Isaiah and Daniel were of royal birth. David was called from the sheepfold to the throne of Israel; Amos was a herdsman; Zechariah, a captive from

Babylon; Elisha, a ploughman. So the Lord calls men from all ranks to enter His service.' *The Remnant Church; Its Organisation, Authority, Unity, and Triumph*, page 311.

**8. What particular quality does God seek in those He calls to be prophets? 2 Peter 1:21. Compare Luke 1:70.**

NOTE: '[Christ] said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." God's will is expressed in His holy law. This is the only correct standard of righteousness, and if a man's character stands in harmony with the Lord's standard, his testimony may be received and relied upon.' *Review & Herald*, July 24, 1888.

'None of the prophets or apostles made proud boasts of holiness. The nearer they came to perfection of character, the less worthy and righteous they viewed themselves. But those who have the least sense of the perfection of Jesus, those whose eyes are least directed to Him, are the ones who make the strongest claim to perfection.' *Faith & Works*, page 54.

### 'Misused His prophets'

**9. How was the message of the prophets often received? Ezekiel 33:31, Jeremiah 36:22-23, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16.**

NOTE: 'The Saviour speaks to His people, "Be zealous and repent." It is not ministers whom you have slighted; it is not the warnings of men that you have rejected; it is not my delegated prophets that you have refused to hear, but your Redeemer, your only hope. If ye are destroyed, it is yourselves alone that are responsible. Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life. "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." I desired to save you, but ye would not be doers of My word. The arm strong to save is also strong to punish. Jesus is now looking from heaven above with yearning pity upon thee, even thee in this thy day, O thoughtless, careless soul. But unless there is in our churches a general arousing, unless there is an individual work of confessing and putting away sin, unless all shall give earnest heed to the things that belong to their peace, the words of Christ may at any moment be applicable to them: "Now they are hid from thine eyes." I entrusted thee with a solemn, sacred message of truth to be made known to others, but thou hast been unfaithful to thy holy trust. Souls have not been enlightened, warned, and urged to repentance. Their blood will I require at thy hand. Will our churches humble themselves before the Lord in this Day of Atonement? Will they put away the sins which defile their garments of character, and separate them from God? The present is our day of visitation. Look not to a future, more convenient season, when the cross to be lifted will be less heavy, when the inclinations of the carnal heart will be subdued with less effort. "Today," saith the Spirit of God, "if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart."' *Review & Herald*, November 2, 1886.

**10. How were some of the prophets treated because of their testimony? Matthew 23:37, Hebrews 11:36-38.**

NOTE: "'Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.'" 2 Kings 21:16. One of the first to fall was Isaiah, who for over half a century had stood before Judah as the appointed messenger of Jehovah. "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Hebrews 11:36-38. Some of those who suffered persecution during Manasseh's reign were commissioned to bear special messages of reproof and of judgment. The king of Judah, the prophets declared, "hath done wickedly above all . . . which were before him." Because of this wickedness, his kingdom was nearing a crisis; soon the inhabitants of the land were to be carried captive to Babylon, there to become "a prey and a spoil to all their enemies." 2 Kings 21:11, 14. But the Lord would not utterly forsake those who in a strange land should acknowledge Him as their Ruler; they might suffer great tribulation, yet He would bring deliverance to them in His appointed time and way. Those who should put their trust wholly in Him would find a sure refuge. Faithfully the prophets continued their warnings and their exhortations; fearlessly they spoke to Manasseh and to his people; but the messages were scorned; backsliding Judah would not heed.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 381-382.

### 'Upon the foundation of the prophets'

**11. How did Paul emphasise the fundamental importance of the messages of the prophets? Ephesians 2:20.**

NOTE: 'We must understand the doctrines that have been studied out carefully and prayerfully. It has been revealed to me that there is among our people a great lack of knowledge in regard to the rise and progress of the third angel's message. 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 light given me has been very forcible that many would go out from us, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. 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. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken. 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.' *Evangelism*, page 363.

**12. What great truth did Jehoshaphat proclaim to his people? 2 Chronicles 20:20.**

NOTE: 'The light of prophecy still burns for the guidance of souls, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." It shines on the pathway of the just to commend, and on the way of the unjust to lead to repentance and conversion. Through its agency sin will be rebuked and iniquity unmasked. It is progressive in the performance of its duty to reflect light on the past, the present, and the future. If those who have received the light will appreciate and respect the testimonies of the Lord, they will see the

religious life in a new light. They will be convicted. They will see the key that unlocks the mysteries that they have never understood. They will lay hold of the precious things that God has given them to profit withal and will be translated from the kingdom of darkness into God's marvellous light. Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived. But those who heed it, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear Saviour may come in and dwell with them. He [God] has made provision that all may be holy and happy if they choose. Sufficient light has been given to this generation, that we may learn what our duties and privileges are and enjoy the precious and solemn truths in their simplicity and power. We are accountable only for the light that shines upon us. The commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus are testing us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His own chosen, peculiar people. When perfect faith and perfect love and obedience abound, working in the hearts of those who are Christ's followers, they will have a powerful influence.' *My Life Today*, page 42.

## **Lesson 2: January 3-9**

### **'A light that shineth in a dark place'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.' John 14:29.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 345.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 22:6-21.

LESSON AIM: To study what is the purpose of prophecy.

#### **Introduction**

'In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God. So far as it was of divine institution, the entire system of Judaism was a compacted prophecy of the gospel. To Christ "give all the prophets witness." Acts 10:43. From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven's glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the Star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice Christ's death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt.' *Desire of Ages*, page 211.

#### **'They are they that testify of Me'**

##### **1. How did Jesus expound the prophecies? Luke 24:27.**

NOTE: 'The prophecies are to be studied, and the life of Christ compared with the writings of the prophets. He identifies Himself with the prophecies, stating over and over again, They wrote of Me; they testify of Me. The Bible is the only book giving a positive description of Christ Jesus; and if every human being would study it as his lesson book, and obey it, not a soul would be lost. All the rays of light shining in the Scriptures point to Jesus Christ, and testify of Him, linking together the Old and New Testament Scriptures.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pages 382-383.

##### **2. How did Peter explain the major theme of the prophecies? 1 Peter 1:9-11.**

NOTE: 'It is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of Him.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 362.

#### **'Michael and His angels fought against the dragon'**

##### **3. What great conflict does Bible prophecy reveal? Revelation 12:7-9, 12.**

NOTE: 'The great controversy will war stronger and stronger, and will become more and more determined. Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which, if possible, will deceive the very elect.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 361.

##### **4. How does prophecy picture the outcome of this great controversy? Hebrews 2:14-15.**

NOTE: 'Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. . . It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." Deuteronomy 30:15. The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced

upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is “the second death” that is placed in contrast with everlasting life. Thus will be made an end of sin, with all the woe and ruin which have resulted from it. Says the psalmist: “Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name forever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.” Psalm 9:5, 6. John, in the Revelation, looking forward to the eternal state, hears a universal anthem of praise undisturbed by one note of discord. Every creature in heaven and earth was heard ascribing glory to God. Revelation 5:13. There will then be no lost souls to blaspheme God as they writhe in never-ending torment; no wretched beings in hell will mingle their shrieks with the songs of the saved.’ *Heaven*, page 130.

### **‘I will reprove thee’**

#### **5. How does God intend that prophecy shall speak to His people? Psalm 50:21.**

NOTE: ‘From the time that the first innocent blood was shed, when righteous Abel fell by the hand of his brother, iniquity had increased upon the earth. From generation to generation the priests and rulers had slighted the warnings of the prophets whom God had raised up and qualified to reprove the sins of the people. There had been great need of these men, who, in every age, had lifted their voices against the sins of kings, rulers, and subjects, speaking the words God gave them to utter, and obeying the divine will at the peril of their lives.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, page 66.

#### **6. From whom is the word of reproof to come? John 16:8.**

NOTE: ‘In seeking to correct or reform others we should be careful of our words. They will be a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. In giving reproof or counsel, many indulge in sharp, severe speech, words not adapted to heal the wounded soul. By these ill-advised expressions the spirit is chafed, and often the erring ones are stirred to rebellion. All who would advocate the principles of truth need to receive the heavenly oil of love. Under all circumstances reproof should be spoken in love. Then our words will reform but not exasperate. Christ by His Holy Spirit will supply the force and the power. This is His work.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 337.

### **‘Exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine’**

#### **7. What word is used to describe the prophetic ministry of John the Baptist? Luke 3:18.**

NOTE: To exhort is to admonish earnestly, to urge, to encourage, to stimulate.

‘We must have a knowledge of the Scriptures, that we may trace down the lines of prophecy, and understand the specifications given by the prophets, and by Christ and the apostles; that we may not be ignorant; but be able to see that the day is approaching, so that with increased zeal and effort, we may exhort one another to faithfulness, piety, and holiness.’ *Review & Herald*, July 31, 1888.

#### **8. What work of exhortation was given to the prophet Haggai? Haggai 1:5, 7.**

NOTE: ‘After their return from the captivity in Babylon, the Jews undertook to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but meeting determined opposition from their enemies, they discontinued the work; and a severe drought, by which they were reduced to actual want, convinced them that it was impossible to complete the building of the temple. “The time is not come,” they said, “the time that the Lord’s house should be built.” But a message was sent them by the Lord’s prophet: “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways.”’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 527.

### **‘Comfort ye my people, saith your God’**

#### **9. What is an important aspect of the prophet’s work? Isaiah 40:1.**

NOTE: ‘During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 293.

#### **10. How did Paul describe the purpose of the Scriptures? Romans 15:4.**

NOTE: ‘A portion of Ezekiel’s prophecy also was a source of strength and comfort to believers: “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God. . . . The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. . . . I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged.” “They of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; There shall none of My words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done.” Ezekiel 12:21-25, 27, 28. The waiting ones rejoiced, believing that He who knows the end from the beginning had looked down through the ages and, foreseeing their disappointment, had given them words of courage and hope. Had it not been for such portions of Scripture, admonishing them to wait with patience and to hold fast their confidence in God’s word, their faith would have failed in that trying hour.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 392-393.

### **‘He that keepeth the saying of the prophecy of this book’**

**11. What blessing is pronounced upon those who study the New Testament's largest prophecy? Revelation 1:3.**

NOTE: 'When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realise the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart. The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those "that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation, that the connection between God and His people is close and decided.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 345.

**12. What supreme lesson are we to learn from studying the book of Revelation? Revelation 1:17-18.**

NOTE: 'When God was about to open to the beloved John the history of the church for future ages, He gave him an assurance of the Saviour's interest and care for His people by revealing to him "One like unto the Son of man," walking among the candlesticks, which symbolised the seven churches. While John was shown the last great struggles of the church with earthly powers, he was also permitted to behold the final victory and deliverance of the faithful. He saw the church brought into deadly conflict with the beast and his image, and the worship of that beast enforced on pain of death. But looking beyond the smoke and din of the battle, he beheld a company upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having, instead of the mark of the beast, the "Father's name written in their foreheads." And again he saw "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 752.

### **Lesson 3: January 10-16 'Beware of false prophets'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.' Matthew 24:24-25.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 350.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:15-20.

LESSON AIM: To study the dangers posed by false prophets.

#### **Introduction**

'The light given me has been very forcible that many would go out from us, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. 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. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken. 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. My soul is made very sad to see how quickly some who have had light and truth will accept the deceptions of Satan, and be charmed with a spurious holiness. 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*, pages 363-364.

#### **'Behold I have told you before'**

**1. What warnings did Christ give to those living in the last days? Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24-25.**

NOTE: 'Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much. "If thou hadst known," said Christ, "even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."' *Special Testimonies, series A, No. 11*, page 8.

**2. How did Peter emphasise His Master's warning? 2 Peter 2:1-3.**

NOTE: 'While exalting the "sure word of prophecy" as a safe guide in times of peril, the apostle solemnly warned the church against the torch of false prophecy, which would be uplifted by "false teachers," who would privily bring in "damnable heresies, even denying the Lord." These false teachers, arising in the church and accounted true by many of their brethren in the faith, the apostle compared to "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." "The latter end is worse with them," he declared, "than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."' *Peter's Counsel to Parents*, page 60.

'Deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving . . . Do not think that Satan is not doing anything. Do not think that his army is passive. He and his agencies are on the ground today. We are to put on the whole armour of God. Having done all, we

are to stand, meeting principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. And if we have on the heavenly armour, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us.' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 239.

### **'Damnable heresies'**

#### **3. What are some of the dangers that heeding false prophecy will bring? Lamentations 2:14.**

NOTE: 'Many of these teachers who bring in heresies, and thus undermine the faith of some, are regarded as men of God, who walk in the light, and are seeking to deliver the church from wrong practices. But they are the servants of sin.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 1*, page 64.

'How shall we know that they have not the truth unless we bring everything to the Scriptures? Christ has warned us to beware of false prophets who will come to us in His name, saying that they are Christ. Now, if you should take the position that it is not important for you to understand the Scriptures for yourselves, you will be in danger of being led away with these doctrines. Christ has said that there will be a company who in the day of retributive judgment will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" But Christ will say, "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). Now, we want to understand what sin is, that it is the transgression of God's law. This is the only definition given in the Scriptures. Therefore we see that those who claim to be led of God, and go right away from Him and His law do not search the Scriptures. But the Lord will lead His people; for He says that His sheep will follow if they hear His voice, but a stranger will they not follow. Then it becomes us to thoroughly understand the Scriptures. And we will not have to inquire whether others have the truth, for it will be seen in their characters.' *Faith & Works*, pages 55-56.

#### **4. What techniques may be employed by some of these false prophets? Matthew 24:24.**

NOTE: 'Just before us is "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10. All whose faith is not firmly established upon the word of God will be deceived and overcome. Satan works "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" to gain control of the children of men, and his deceptions will continually increase. But he can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defence. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee" (verse 10), is the Saviour's promise. He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.' *Maranatha*, page 207.

### **'By their fruits'**

#### **5. In what way can the false prophet be detected? Matthew 7:16.**

NOTE: 'All who join themselves to the church but not to the Lord will in time develop their true character. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16. The precious fruit of godliness, temperance, patience, kindness, love, and charity, does not appear in their lives. They bear only thorns and briers. God is dishonoured before the world by all such professors. They are, Satan knows, his best working agents while they are unchanged in heart and life, and their works are in such marked contrast to their profession that they are a stumbling block to unbelievers and a great trial to believers.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 92.

'Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed. A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church. Here is to be found the secret of the lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time. It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 326.

#### **6. What does the Lord say of those who claim to be prophets but are not sent by Him? Jeremiah 14:14.**

NOTE: 'To the end of time, men will arise to create confusion and rebellion among those who claim to be representatives of the true God. Those who prophesy lies will encourage men to look upon sin as a light thing. When the terrible results of their evil deeds are made manifest, they will seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes. But as surely as the words of Jehovah through His prophet were vindicated anciently, so surely will the certainty of His messages be established today.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 442.

### **'The thing which the LORD hath not spoken'**

#### **7. What test did Moses give concerning those who claim to foretell the future? Deuteronomy 18:20-22. Read Jeremiah 28.**

NOTE: 'Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as in the case of Ahab and Zedekiah. [See Jeremiah 29:21-22] These false prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet, who delivered the simple message of the Lord.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 174.

**8. What further, and more important, test did Moses give? Deuteronomy 13:1-4.**

NOTE: 'Here, then, is a vital test: Does the one with prophetic claims teach us to disobey the law of God? Does he make little of God's requirements? Does he set aside the commandment of God and substitute something based merely on tradition? If so, we are counselled not to follow him, even though he may perform many outstanding and imposing wonders. The divine counsel is: Do not believe, and do not follow him.' Walter Edwin, *The Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Church*, page 132.

**'That spirit of antichrist'**

**9. What false teaching is characteristic of false prophets? 1 John 4:2-3. Compare 2 John v.7.**

NOTE: Perhaps one of the most pervasive errors to afflict Christianity has been the denial of Christ's nature, either as truly God or as truly man. In the time of the apostles, the Gnostics denied that Christ was truly man and variations of this denial continue today. The Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is a denial of the genuineness of Christ's humanity, as is the Protestant variation of this teaching, which teaches the immaculate conception of Christ. This denial of Christ's humanity is sometimes stated in different terms, for example that Christ came with the nature of Adam before his fall, a nature which could not have been transmitted through Adam, and which therefore denies that Christ was of the seed of Adam according to the flesh. Other groups, while admitting the genuine humanity of Christ, deny His deity. Such groups include, among others, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, Unitarians and other Arian groups. Whether the humanity or the deity of Christ is denied, it is really the efficacy of Christ's work for man's salvation that is denied.

**10. How does the Bible teach the genuine humanity of Christ? Romans 8:3, Romans 1:3, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 2:16-17, John 1:14.**

NOTE: 'It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.' *Desire of Ages*, page 48.

**'Have we not prophesied in Thy name?'**

**11. What is the ultimate test of anyone who claims to speak for God? Isaiah 8:20.**

NOTE: 'In these days of peril we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth. As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully: How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that "false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). But we need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). From this statement it is evident that it becomes us to be diligent Bible students, that we may know what is according to the law and the testimony. We are safe in no other course of action.' *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 99.

**12. In what words does Christ express His rejection of false prophets? Matthew 7:22-23.**

NOTE: 'Here is the greatest deception that can affect the human mind; these persons believe that they are right when they are wrong. They think that they are doing a great work in their religious life, but Jesus finally tears off their self-righteous covering and vividly presents before them the true picture of themselves in all their wrongs and deformity of religious character. They are found wanting when it is forever too late to have their wants supplied. God has provided means to correct the erring: yet if those who err, choose to follow their own judgment, and despise the means which He has ordained to correct them and unite them upon the truth, they will be brought into the position described by the words of our Lord quoted above.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 417.

**Lesson 4: January 17-23**  
**'Knowing this first'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.' 2 Peter 1:20.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 584-585.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 2:1-14.

LESSON AIM: To study how to interpret Bible prophecy.

**Introduction**

"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: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:19-21 . . . Our text tells us that we have something sure, and that is the Scriptures that are

revealed to us, and this is the voice of God that is speaking to us. One may come and say that he has truth, and such teachers will multiply, but we must not take their word in the matter. We must go directly to the Word. Feelings should not be our guide. The plain declaration of the Word is what is required. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 3, pages 88-89.*

### **'No prophecy of any private interpretation'**

#### **1. What warning does Peter give to those desiring to understand Bible prophecy? 2 Peter 1:20.**

NOTE: 'You could not make a greater mistake than to take the voice of man. Those who will not hear truth, when it crosses their pet theories, will often place themselves out of the reach of hearing when they should be the very ones to hear. The same thing is acted over today as it was in the days of Christ.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 3, page 89.*

Consider the danger of using the news media as a means of interpreting prophecy. How often have people said: Where is Hitler [Soviet Communism, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, etc.] in Bible prophecy? The Bible is not today's newspaper written in advance. To interpret in this way is to misunderstand fundamentally the purpose of Bible prophecy.

#### **2. How did Jesus set about answering the questions of His doubting disciples? Luke 24:25-27.**

NOTE: 'We are so thankful that we have a sure word of prophecy, so that none of us need be deceived. We know that there are heresies and fables in our world at the present time, and we want to know what is truth. It becomes us to search carefully for ourselves that we may gain this knowledge. We cannot do this with a mere reading of the Scriptures, but we must compare scripture with scripture. We must search the Scriptures for ourselves, so that we shall not be led astray; and while many may be led astray because there are all kinds of doctrines in our world, there is one truth. Many may come to you and tell you that they have the truth, but it is your privilege to search the Scriptures for yourself. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We must be acquainted with the Scriptures ourselves, that we may understand the true reason of the hope that is within us.' *Lift Him Up, page 114.*

### **'Line upon line'**

#### **3. What sound principle does the Bible give for those studying its pages? Isaiah 28:10.**

NOTE: 'Endeavouring to lay aside all preconceived opinions, and dispensing with commentaries, [William Miller] compared scripture with scripture by the aid of the marginal references and the concordance. He pursued his study in a regular and methodical manner; beginning with Genesis, and reading verse by verse, he proceeded no faster than the meaning of the several passages so unfolded as to leave him free from all embarrassment. When he found anything obscure, it was his custom to compare it with every other text which seemed to have any reference to the matter under consideration. Every word was permitted to have its proper bearing upon the subject of the text, and if his view of it harmonised with every collateral passage, it ceased to be a difficulty. Thus whenever he met with a passage hard to be understood he found an explanation in some other portion of the Scriptures. As he studied with earnest prayer for divine enlightenment, that which had before appeared dark to his understanding was made clear. He experienced the truth of the psalmist's words: "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Psalm 119:130.' *Great Controversy, page 320.*

#### **4. What was it about the Jews in Berea that brought commendation upon them? Acts 17:11.**

NOTE: Notice that their Bible study was not simply regular, but purposeful and systematic. These were not mere Bible readers; they had been presented with matters that raised questions in their minds. Their study was frequent and determined, as they sought, and found, answers to the questions which Paul's preaching had raised.

'If, in the closing scenes of this earth's history, those to whom testing truths are proclaimed would follow the example of the Bereans, searching the Scriptures daily, and comparing with God's word the messages brought them, there would today be a large number loyal to the precepts of God's law, where now there are comparatively few. But when unpopular Bible truths are presented, many refuse to make this investigation. Though unable to controvert the plain teachings of Scripture, they yet manifest the utmost reluctance to study the evidences offered. Some assume that even if these doctrines are indeed true, it matters little whether or not they accept the new light, and they cling to pleasing fables which the enemy uses to lead souls astray. Thus their minds are blinded by error, and they become separated from heaven.' *Acts of the Apostles, page 232.*

### **'They seeing see not; and hearing they hear not'**

#### **5. Why does the Lord sometimes use parables and symbolic language? Matthew 13:11-13. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:13-14.**

NOTE: 'Some who heard the parables of Christ came to Him privately, and asked for an explanation. This was the desire that Christ wished to arouse, that He might give them more definite instruction. Those who study His word, with hearts open to receive the impressions made by the Holy Spirit, will not complain that they cannot see clearly the meaning of His word. All who come to Christ and inquire for a clearer knowledge of truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a candle on a dark path.' *Review & Herald, September 26, 1899.*

‘God Himself employed pictures and symbols to represent to His prophets lessons which He would have them give to the people, and which could thus be better understood than if given in any other way. He appealed to the understanding through the sense of sight. Prophetic history was presented to Daniel and John in symbols, and these were to be represented plainly upon tables, that he who reads might understand.’ *Selected Messages, book 2, page 319.*

**6. To whom will God give understanding of these things? Matthew 13:16-17. Compare Matthew 11:25, 1 John 2:27.**

NOTE: ‘It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge of the truth. There must be an entrance of the Word into the heart. It must be set home by the power of the Holy Spirit. The will must be brought into harmony with its requirements. Not only the intellect but the heart and conscience must concur in the acceptance of the truth. The entrance of God’s Word gives understanding to the simple, those who are untaught in the wisdom of the world. The Holy Spirit brings the saving truths of the Scriptures within the comprehension of all who desire to know and do the will of God. Uneducated minds are enabled to grasp the most sublime and soul-stirring themes that can engage the attention of men, themes that will be the study and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. It is the knowledge which God’s Word supplies, and which can be found nowhere else, that we need above every other. We want to know what to do in this our day to escape the snares of Satan and to win the crown of glory.’ *That I May Know Him, page 192.*

### ‘Dark sayings of old’

**7. What light does the Bible shed upon the following prophetic symbols:**

- **Wild beasts. See Daniel 7:17, 23.**
- **Horns. See Daniel 8:20.**
- **Waters. See Revelation 17:15.**
- **Winds. See Jeremiah 25:31-33.**

NOTE: ‘With intense interest [William Miller] studied the books of Daniel and the Revelation, employing the same principles of interpretation as in the other scriptures, and found, to his great joy, that the prophetic symbols could be understood. He saw that the prophecies, so far as they had been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc., were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other scriptures, and when thus explained, were to be literally understood. “I was thus satisfied,” he says, “that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.” Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller, page 70.* Link after link of the chain of truth rewarded his efforts, as step by step he traced down the great lines of prophecy. Angels of heaven were guiding his mind and opening the Scriptures to his understanding.’ *Great Controversy, page 320.*

**8. How are we shown that God uses a day to represent a year in Bible time prophecies? Ezekiel 4:4-6. Compare Numbers 14:34.**

NOTE: ‘The time of the first advent and of some of the chief events clustering about the Saviour’s lifework was made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. “Seventy weeks,” said the angel, “are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.” Daniel 9:24. A day in prophecy stands for a year. See Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6. The seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety days, represent four hundred and ninety years. A starting point for this period is given: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” (Daniel 9:25), sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus, went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C. See Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9. From this time four hundred and eighty-three years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. According to the prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A.D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed, “The time is fulfilled.” Mark 1:15.’ *Prophets & Kings, page 698.*

### ‘That day and hour’

**9. What warning are we given concerning the time for Christ to come? Matthew 24:36.**

NOTE: ‘Time after time has been set for Christ to come, but repeated failures have been the result. The definite time of our Lord’s coming is declared to be beyond the ken of mortals. Even the angels who minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation know not the day nor the hour. “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” Because the times repeatedly set have passed, the world is in a more decided state of unbelief than before in regard to the near advent of Christ. They look upon the failures of the time setters with disgust; and because men have been so deceived, they turn from the truth substantiated by the word of God that the end of all things is at hand. Those who so presumptuously preach definite time, in so doing gratify the adversary of souls; for they are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity. They produce Scripture and by false interpretation show a chain of argument which apparently proves their position. But their failures show that they are false prophets, that they do not rightly interpret the language of inspiration. The word of God is truth and verity, but men have perverted its meaning. These errors have brought the truth of God for these last days into disrepute.’ *Testimonies, volume 4, page 307.*

**10. What sad words revealed that the disciples had been led astray by false interpretations of prophecy? Luke 24:21. Compare Acts 1:6-7.**

NOTE: 'The minds of the disciples were to a great degree influenced by the traditions and maxims of the Pharisees, who placed the commandments of God on a level with their own inventions and doctrines. The scribes and Pharisees did not receive or teach the Scriptures in their original purity, but interpreted the language of the Bible in such a way as to make it express sentiments and injunctions that God had never given. They put a mystical construction upon the writing of the Old Testament, and made indistinct that which the infinite God had made clear and plain. These learned men placed before the people their own ideas, and made patriarchs and prophets responsible for things they never uttered. These false teachers buried up the precious jewels of truth beneath the rubbish of their own interpretations and maxims, and covered up the plainest specifications of prophecy regarding Christ.' *Signs of the Times*, September 11, 1893.

'Like the first disciples, William Miller and his associates did not themselves fully comprehend the import of the message which they bore. Errors that had been long established in the church prevented them from arriving at a correct interpretation of an important point in the prophecy. Therefore, though they proclaimed the message which God had committed to them to be given to the world, yet through a misapprehension of its meaning they suffered disappointment.' *Maranatha*, page 16.

**'He revealeth His secret'**

**11. What assurance are we given that the prophecies of God's Word are meant to be understood? Amos 3:7. Compare Deuteronomy 29:29.**

NOTE: "'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.'" Amos 3:7. In His providence the Lord has seen fit to teach and warn His people in various ways. By direct command, by the sacred writings, and by the spirit of prophecy has He made known unto them His will. In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the Testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue. Of special value to God's church on earth today, the keepers of His vineyard, are the messages of counsel and admonition given through the prophets who have made plain His eternal purpose in behalf of mankind. In the teachings of the prophets His love for the lost race and His plan for their salvation are clearly revealed.' *My Life Today*, page 40.

**12. What blessing is for those who are willing to persevere in their study of prophecy? Revelation 1:3.**

NOTE: 'We are not now able to describe with accuracy the scenes to be enacted in our world in the future, but this we do know, that this is a time when we must watch unto prayer, for the great day of the Lord is at hand.' *Last Day Event*, page 17.

'The day is at hand when the destiny of every soul will be fixed forever. This day of the Lord hastens on apace. The false watchmen are raising the cry, "All is well"; but the day of God is rapidly approaching. Its footsteps are so muffled that it does not arouse the world from the deathlike slumber into which it has fallen. While the watchmen cry, "Peace and safety," "sudden destruction cometh upon them," "and they shall not escape"; "for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." [1 Thessalonians 5:3, Luke 21:35.] It overtakes the pleasure-lover and the sinful man as a thief in the night. When all is apparently secure, and men retire to contented rest, then the prowling, stealthy, midnight thief steals upon his prey. When it is too late to prevent the evil, it is discovered that some door or window was not secured. "Be ye also ready: for in an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." People are now settling to rest, imagining themselves secure under the popular churches; but let all beware, lest there is a place left open for the enemy to gain an entrance. Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 335.

**Lesson 5: January 24-30**

**'What shall befall thy people in the latter days'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days.' Daniel 10:14.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages*, book 2, pages 380-382.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 14:6-12.

LESSON AIM: To study what Bible prophecy reveals about God's people in the last days.

**Introduction**

'Study the tenth chapter of Daniel, and mark particularly the fourteenth verse. "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days" (Daniel 10:14). When our brethren and ministers shall feel the burden that should rest upon them, they will not be content with a few surface truths. They will sink the shaft deep, and will have the spirit that Daniel possessed. There will be no frivolous spirit: no cheap, superficial sanctification, prated from unsanctified lips, and coming from hearts that are destitute of purity, of consecration and wholehearted surrender to God. There will be earnest prayer that the truth may be so indelibly stamped upon the heart, that the entire man may be

brought, with all his ways, into conformity to the truth. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).' *Manuscript Releases, volume 9, page 365.*

### **'Some shall depart from the faith'**

#### **1. What prophetic warning did Paul give concerning Christ's church in the last days? 1 Timothy 4:1.**

NOTE: 'Let the truths that are the foundation of our faith be kept before the people. Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They talk science, and the enemy comes in and gives them an abundance of science; but it is not the science of salvation. It is not the science of humility, of consecration, or of the sanctification of the Spirit. We are now to understand what the pillars of our faith are, the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step.' *Review and Herald, May 25, 1905.*

#### **2. In what particular ways did Paul prophesy that some will be led to abandon the faith? 1 Timothy 4:1, last part.**

NOTE: 'A great reformation is needed among the people of God. Many sapless and unfruitful branches are to be removed from the parent vine. Everything will be shaken that can be shaken, that that which can not be shaken may remain. The enemy has worked upon the minds of some, and has led them to do violence to our past experience by mingling with the truth erroneous and false theories. He has led ministers and teachers to weave into their doctrines some pleasing figures of his own invention. Every deviation from the truth as we have advocated it in the past is a departure from truth that has been witnessed by the Holy Spirit, and upon which God has placed His seal. Truth must stand in its own order, linked only with truth. Unbelief disturbs the balance of the system of truth, and tends to destroy the whole. The mind that cherishes sentiments that tend to destroy the foundation of the faith that has made us what we are becomes confused, and can not discern between truth and error. The truths that have been substantiated by the manifest working of God are to stand fast. Let no one presume to move a pin or foundation-stone from the structure. Those who attempt to undermine the pillars of our faith are among those of whom the Bible says that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." One step from the path in which God has ordained us to walk, places us where we are subject to the temptations of Satan. This is represented in the case of Adam and Eve. Outside of God's way, we may be led to believe a lie. But angels of God will commune with those who obey His laws. Let mind and heart be united in following in the light that God has given. Keep soul and body pure and clean and holy. When we do those things that God has commanded in His word, angels of God will act as our teachers. Our happiness is dependent upon our living a righteous life.' *Bible Training School, March 1, 1915.*

### **'The hour of His judgement is come'**

#### **3. According to Bible prophecy, what momentous event is to be proclaimed by those who preach the everlasting Gospel? Revelation 14:6-7.**

NOTE: 'The announcement, "The hour of His judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease, and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself.' *The Faith I Live By, page 283.*

'In the typical system, which was a shadow of the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, the cleansing of the sanctuary was the last service performed by the high priest in the yearly round of ministration. It was the closing work of the atonement, a removal or putting away of sin from Israel. It prefigured the closing work in the ministration of our High Priest in heaven, in the removal or blotting out of the sins of His people, which are registered in the heavenly records. This service involves a work of investigation, a work of judgment; and it immediately precedes the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; for when He comes, every case has been decided. Says Jesus: "My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. It is this work of judgment, immediately preceding the Second Advent, that is announced in the first angel's message of Revelation 14:7: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."' *Great Controversy, page 352.*

#### **4. How does this differ from the message preached by Christians in former days? Acts 24:25.**

NOTE: While Paul preached to Felix of 'judgement to come', those who proclaim the final message of warning must warn the world that the time for God to judge the world **is now come.**

'No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.' *Great Controversy, page 356.* 'Those who flatter themselves that they can be Christians, and yet not be sharers of Christ's labour and sacrifice, are under a deception that if not broken, will prove fatal to the soul. The Lord has given many warnings to arouse them to see their danger. The words of the prophet Malachi concerning the matter of giving have a special reference to our own time: "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. But 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." The coming of Christ which is here referred to is not His second advent to this earth, but His coming to the investigative judgment in the most holy place of the sanctuary in heaven. [See Daniel 7:13-14.] Thus the message is especially to us, who are living in the time of the judgment.' *Review & Herald, May 9, 1893.*

### **'Come out of her, My people'**

**5. What message is prophesied to be proclaimed first by those who preach the everlasting Gospel? Revelation 14:7.**

NOTE: 'By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to Him" and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9. The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power.' *Great Controversy*, page 436.

**6. What further warnings are prophesied to accompany the preaching of the everlasting Gospel? Revelation 14:8-12. Compare Revelation 18:1-5 and consider 1 John 2:4.**

NOTE: 'In the issue of the great conflict, there will be only two classes in the world, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive the mark of the beast; yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beheld them "that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God," and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. But of those who trample on God's law, and oppress His faithful people, the terrible prediction is uttered: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." On which side are we standing? Have we placed ourselves fully under the direction and protection of the Holy Spirit, and are we giving the message for this time? Does every effort we put forth tend to advance the proclamation of the message? So far as his opportunities extend, every one who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet of Israel, to whom came the word: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Are we to wait until the fulfilment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until the judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see the things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing that the great day of the Lord is at hand, "even at the door." Let us read and understand, before it is too late.' *Review & Herald*, July 28, 1904.

**'Here are they'**

**7. In the final conflict with the powers of evil, how does the prophecy identify God's faithful remnant? Revelation 12:17. Consider Revelation 19:10.**

NOTE: 'Those only who have clean hands and pure hearts will stand in that trying time. Now is the time for the law of God to be in our minds, foreheads, and written in our hearts. What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day. Let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares. When you lie down and when you rise up, let them be your meditation. Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man. The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 339.

**8. How does the prophecy describe those who refuse to accept the mark of the beast? Revelation 14:12.**

NOTE: 'After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image the prophecy declares: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Since those who keep God's commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshippers of God and the worshippers of the beast.' *Great Controversy*, page 445.

'Faith is essential in order to the keeping of the law of God; for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." And "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23).' *Lift Him Up*, page 342.

'When our earthly labours are ended, and Christ shall come for His faithful children, we shall then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. But before that time shall come, everything that is imperfect in us will have been seen and put away. All envy and jealousy and evil surmising and every selfish plan will have been banished from the life.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 427.

**'He will finish the work'**

**9. How did Jesus prophesy the completion of the Gospel work? Matthew 24:14.**

NOTE: 'Before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6, 14. God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world." Acts 17:31. Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." By giving the

gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.' *Maranatha*, page 19.

**10. What assurance are we given that this work will be finished by power from on high? Romans 9:28.**

NOTE: 'Though the prince of darkness will work to cover the earth with darkness, and with gross darkness the people, the Lord will manifest His converting power. A work is to be accomplished in the earth similar to that which took place at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the early disciples, when they preached Jesus and Him crucified. Many will be converted in a day, for the message will go with power. It can then be said: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul. Any person who looks to Christ in simple, childlike faith is made a partaker of the divine nature through the agency of the Holy Spirit. When led by the Spirit of God, Christians may know that they are made complete in Him who is the head of all things. As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the gospel, when He shall prepare a people to stand the final test in the closing conflict of the great controversy.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 365.

**'They are without fault'**

**11. How is the character of those who come through the Great Tribulation described? Revelation 14:5. Compare Zephaniah 3:13.**

NOTE: 'Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City. The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character. As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ. Many will not receive the seal of God because they do not keep His commandments or bear the fruits of righteousness. The great mass of professing Christians will meet with bitter disappointment in the day of God. They have not upon their foreheads the seal of the living God. Lukewarm and half-hearted, they dishonour God far more than the avowed unbeliever. They grope in darkness, when they might be walking in the noonday light of the Word, under the guidance of One who never errs. Those whom the Lamb shall lead by the fountains of living waters, and from whose eyes He shall wipe away all tears, will be those now receiving the knowledge and understanding revealed in the Bible, the Word of God. We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory. Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.' *Maranatha*, page 241.

**12. What does John say of those who see Jesus face to face at His return? 1 John 3:2-3. Compare Psalm 17:15.**

NOTE: 'The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armour, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish. We need not wait till we are translated to follow Christ. God's people may do this here below. We shall follow the Lamb of God in the courts above only if we follow Him here. We are not to follow Christ fitfully or capriciously, only when it is for our advantage. We must choose to follow Him. In daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd. We are to follow Him by suffering for His sake, saying at every step, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). His life practice must be our life practice. And as we thus seek to be like Him and to bring our wills into conformity to His will we shall reveal Him.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 298.

**Lesson 6: January 31-February 6**  
**'The things concerning Himself'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Luke 24:27.

STUDY HELP: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 126-128.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:3-13.

LESSON AIM: To understand that all prophecy comes from Christ and is ultimately about Christ.

**Introduction**

'The time of Christ's coming, His anointing by the Holy Spirit, His death, and the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles, were definitely pointed out. It was the privilege of the Jewish people to understand these prophecies, and to recognise their fulfilment in the mission of Jesus. Christ urged upon His disciples the importance of prophetic study. Referring to the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to their time, He said, "Whoso readeth, let him understand." Matthew 24:15. After His resurrection He explained to the disciples in "all the prophets" "the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. "The Spirit of Christ which was in them" "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11.' *Desire of Ages*, page 234.

### **'They which testify of Me'**

#### **1. What was the theme of the Bible's very first prophecy? Genesis 3:15. Compare Genesis 22:18.**

NOTE: 'Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 222.

#### **2. How did Jesus explain that He is the central theme of the Scriptures? John 5:39-40.**

NOTE: 'The Old Testament is as verily the gospel in types and shadows as the New Testament is in its unfolding power. The New Testament does not present a new religion; the Old Testament does not present a religion to be superseded by the New. The New Testament is only the advancement and unfolding of the Old. Abel was a believer in Christ and was as verily saved by His power as was Peter or Paul. Enoch was a representative of Christ as surely as was the beloved disciple John. That God who walked with Enoch was our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He was the light of the world then, just as He is now.' *That I May Know Him*, page 208.

### **'The Spirit of Christ which was in them'**

#### **3. How did Peter explain that Christ is both the Source and the central theme of Bible prophecy? 1 Peter 1:10-11.**

NOTE: 'Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face. Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness, the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host, but it was He who gave the law to Israel. Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father's law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone. It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 366.

#### **4. How are we shown both the Source and central theme of the book of Revelation? Revelation 1:1.**

NOTE: 'Christ knew just where to find John; and there, on the lonely island, He gave him a view of the closing scenes of this earth's history. This has been recorded for us. The record is "the revelation of Jesus Christ." **The Revealer is the Revealed.** The living God is shown, superintending, day by day, the events connected with His church. John was shown the slain Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Conqueror, standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which are the seven churches.' *Review & Herald*, May 16, 1899. (Emphasis added.)

### **'Behold My Servant'**

#### **5. What did the Lord reveal about His first coming?**

There are nearly 200 prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the coming of Jesus. They include the following:

- His birthplace: Micah 5:2. (Matthew 2:1.)
- His virgin birth: Isaiah 7:14. (Matthew 1:18-23.)
- His triumphal entry into Jerusalem: Zechariah 9:9. (Matthew 21:1-5.)
- His treatment by men: Isaiah 53:3. (John 1:10-11.)
- The price paid for betraying Him: Zechariah 11:12. (Matthew 26:14-15.)
- The use this money was put to: Zechariah 11:13. (Matthew 27:3-8,.)
- The way Jesus behaved at His trial: Isaiah 53:7 (Mark 14:60-61, 15:1-5.)
- Vinegar offered Him to drink: Psalm 69:21 (Matthew 27:34)
- Criminals executed with Him: Isaiah 53:12 (Luke 23:32-33)

- He would have a rich man's grave: Isaiah 53:9 (John 19:38-42.)
- He would remain in the grave only a brief time: Psalm 16:10 (Acts 2:27-31.)

NOTE: 'At the time of Christ's first advent the priests and scribes of the Holy City, to whom were entrusted the oracles of God, might have discerned the signs of the times and proclaimed the coming of the Promised One. The prophecy of Micah designated His birthplace; Daniel specified the time of His advent. Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25. God committed these prophecies to the Jewish leaders; they were without excuse if they did not know and declare to the people that the Messiah's coming was at hand. Their ignorance was the result of sinful neglect.' *Great Controversy*, page 313.

**6. What specific prophecy revealed the time when Christ would be anointed and commence His ministry? Daniel 9:25, Read verses 24-27 and compare Mark 1:14-15.**

NOTE: 'The time of Christ's coming, His anointing by the Holy Spirit, His death, and the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles, were definitely pointed out. It was the privilege of the Jewish people to understand these prophecies, and to recognise their fulfilment in the mission of Jesus. Christ urged upon His disciples the importance of prophetic study. Referring to the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to their time, He said, "Whoso readeth, let him understand." Matthew 24:15. After His resurrection He explained to the disciples in "all the prophets" "the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. "The Spirit of Christ which was in them" "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:11.' *Desire of Ages*, page 234.

### 'The sufferings of Christ'

**7. How did Isaiah graphically portray Christ's sufferings and death? Isaiah 53:3-9. Compare Acts 8:30-35.**

NOTE: '[Christ] told [the disciples] that they were to regard this fulfilment of prophecy as an assurance of the power that would attend them in their future labours. "Then opened He their understanding," we read, "that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And He added, "Ye are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:45-48.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 26.

**8. What specific details of Christ's sufferings did David prophesy? Psalm 22:7-8, 16, 18. Compare Matthew 27:41-43, Luke 23:33, Matthew 27:35.**

NOTE: 'In the sufferings of Christ upon the cross prophecy was fulfilled. Centuries before the crucifixion, the Saviour had foretold the treatment He was to receive. He said, "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Psalm 22:16-18. The prophecy concerning His garments was carried out without counsel or interference from the friends or the enemies of the Crucified One. To the soldiers who had placed Him upon the cross, His clothing was given. Christ heard the men's contention as they parted the garments among them. His tunic was woven throughout without seam, and they said, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be." In another prophecy the Saviour declared, "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:20, 21. To those who suffered death by the cross, it was permitted to give a stupefying potion, to deaden the sense of pain. This was offered to Jesus; but when He had tasted it, He refused it.' *Desire of Ages*, page 746.

### 'With power and great glory'

**9. What has Christ revealed in prophecy about His Second Coming?**

- **YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE IT. Revelation 1:7, Acts 1:11, Matthew 24:30.**

It will be as the lightning. There will be glory and brightness. Every eye shall see Him. He will be accompanied by myriads of angels, and come in the clouds of heaven.

- **YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HEAR IT. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Matthew 24:31.**

There will be trumpets, and a shout to wake the dead. At the same time, there will be the roar of a mighty earthquake, and the hammering of hail.

- **YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FEEL IT. Revelation 16:18-20.**

Jesus feet will not touch the earth but His people will be caught up to Him and taken home to His Father's house.

- **IF YOU KNOW AND REMEMBER THESE THINGS, YOU WILL NOT BE DECEIVED.**

Read Matthew 24:23-27 for Jesus' explicit warnings of Satan's deceptions.

NOTE: 'Our Saviour is coming again. Before parting with His disciples on the earth, He Himself gave them the promise of His return. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said. "In My Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. He did not leave them in doubt as to the manner of His coming. "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations." Matthew 25:31, 32.' *The Story of Jesus*, page 173.

**10. What prophetic warnings are we given concerning our Lord's Second Coming? 2 Peter 3:10-14. Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4.**

NOTE: 'The world is no more ready to credit the message for this time than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem. Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life is going on in its

unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security, then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly, "and they shall not escape." Verse 3.' *Great Controversy*, page 38.

## **'The testimony of Jesus Christ'**

### **11. How did the angel explain to John what is meant by 'the testimony of Jesus'? Revelation 19:10.**

NOTE: 'God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth. In His Word God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonise with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind, a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life. Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings. And since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the Word.' *My Life Today*, page 41.

### **12. How are we shown that God's remnant church may be identified by the fact that it has 'the testimony of Jesus Christ'? Revelation 12:17.**

NOTE: 'In the book of the Revelation, under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, [Revelation 12 & 13] are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God's law and persecuting His people. Their war is carried forward to the close of time. The people of God, symbolised by a holy woman and her children, are greatly in the minority. In the last days only a remnant exists. John speaks of them as those that "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." [Revelation 12:17.]' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 276.

'The law of God and the Spirit of Prophecy go hand in hand to guide and counsel the church, and whenever the church has recognized this by obeying His law, the spirit of prophecy has been sent to guide her in the way of truth. 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." This prophecy points out clearly that the remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.' *Loma Linda Messages* page 33.

## **Lesson 7: February 7-13 'Four kings which shall arise'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.' Daniel 7:27.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 112-115.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Daniel 2:31-45, Daniel 7:2-27, Daniel 8:3-26.

LESSON AIM: To study how prophecy portrays four great enemies of God's people.

### **Introduction**

'Persecuting powers will be brought to judgment; for all the resources of heaven and earth are to be called at God's command to do His work. God sees and knows those who are proud and self-sufficient, and He will bring them into judgment.' *Paulson Collection*, page 123.

## **'The beginning of his kingdom was Babel'**

### **1. How does the Bible portray the beginning of idolatrous rebellion against God? Genesis 11:1-4, 9. Compare Genesis 10:8-10.**

NOTE: 'The whole undertaking was designed to exalt still further the pride of its projectors and to turn the minds of future generations away from God and lead them into idolatry. When the tower had been partially completed, a portion of it was occupied as a dwelling place for the builders; other apartments, splendidly furnished and adorned, were devoted to their idols.

The people rejoiced in their success, and praised the gods of silver and gold, and set themselves against the Ruler of heaven and earth.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 119.

'The term "Babylon" is derived from "Babel," and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion.' *Great Controversy*, page 381.

## **2. How did God frustrate their plan for a one-world government and religion? Genesis 11:6-9.**

NOTE: 'In mercy to the world [God] defeated the purpose of the tower builders and overthrew the memorial of their daring. In mercy He confounded their speech, thus putting a check on their purposes of rebellion. God bears long with the perversity of men, giving them ample opportunity for repentance; but He marks all their devices to resist the authority of His just and holy law. From time to time the unseen hand that holds the sceptre of government is stretched out to restrain iniquity. Unmistakable evidence is given that the Creator of the universe, the One infinite in wisdom and love and truth, is the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, and that none can with impunity defy His power. The schemes of the Babel builders ended in shame and defeat. The monument to their pride became the memorial of their folly. Yet men are continually pursuing the same course, depending upon self, and rejecting God's law. It is the principle that Satan tried to carry out in heaven; the same that governed Cain in presenting his offering. There are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of sciences, and reject the revealed word of God. They presume to pass sentence upon God's moral government; they despise His law and boast of the sufficiency of human reason. Then, "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 123.

### **'Thou art this head of gold'**

## **3. How did Babylon come to oppress the people of God? Daniel 1:1-2. Compare 2 Chronicles 36:17-20. Consider Daniel 3.**

NOTE: 'Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had been, from their first existence as a nation, the special objects of Satan's enmity, and he had determined to cause their destruction. He could do them no harm while they were obedient to God; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to enticing them into sin. Ensnared by his temptations, they had transgressed the law of God, and thus separated from the Source of their strength, and had been left to become the prey of their heathen enemies. They were carried into captivity to Babylon, and there remained for many years.' *Review & Herald*, January 2, 1908.

## **4. How did God portray Babylon in prophecy? Daniel 2:37-38, Compare Daniel 7:4.**

NOTE: 'Under King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was the richest and most powerful kingdom on the earth. Its riches and splendour have been faintly portrayed by Inspiration. But it did not fulfil God's purpose; and when his time had come, this kingdom of pride and power, ruled by men of the highest intellect, was broken, shattered, helpless.' *Youth's Instructor*, September 29, 1903.

### **'Another kingdom inferior to thee'**

## **5. How did God portray in prophecy the power that superseded Babylon? Daniel 2:39, first part. Compare Daniel 7:5, Daniel 8:3-4, 20.**

NOTE: 'Daniel was transported to the river Ulai, by the side of which stood a ram having two horns, one higher than the other, and the higher came up last. In his previous vision the second kingdom had been represented by a bear which raised itself on one side and had three ribs in its mouth. Both symbols apply to the double nature of the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, but the uneven horns of the ram give a more specific description; for while the Median kingdom was the older of the two, the Persian excelled it in strength, and its position in history must be attributed to the line of Persian kings which began with Cyrus the Great. The definiteness with which this symbol is interpreted is an illustration of the fact that the Scriptures are their own best commentaries. Said the angel, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.'" Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, page 105.

## **6. How are we shown Medo-Persia persecuting the people of God? Daniel 6. Compare Esther 3:13.**

NOTE: 'In the conspiracy thus formed, Satan had played an important part. The prophet was high in command in the kingdom, and evil angels feared that his influence would weaken their control over its rulers. It was these satanic agencies who had stirred the princes to envy and jealousy; it was they who had inspired the plan for Daniel's destruction; and the princes, yielding themselves as instruments of evil, carried it into effect.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 540.

'A certain day was appointed on which the Jews were to be destroyed and their property confiscated. Little did the king realise the far-reaching results that would have accompanied the complete carrying out of this decree. Satan himself, the hidden instigator of the scheme, was trying to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God. . . . The decree of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked; apparently there was no hope; all the Israelites were doomed to destruction.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 244.

## **7. How did prophecy reveal the overthrow of the Medo-Persian Empire? Daniel 8:5-7.**

NOTE: 'The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and

corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 501.

'So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 548.

### **'The king of Grecia'**

#### **8. How is the kingdom that overthrew the Medo-Persian Empire portrayed in prophecy? Daniel 2:39, last part. Compare Daniel 7:6, Daniel 8:5-8, 21.**

NOTE: 'The ram and the goat met on a river. The first successful battle fought by the Grecians against the Medes was on the banks of the Granicus, a stream of Asia Minor. This was in the year 334 B. C. Already the victory of Greece was recorded in the books of heaven. The battle at Granicus was soon followed by the defeat of the Medo-Persian force at the pass of Issus, and the third and overwhelming defeat was on the plains of Arbela. None could deliver the sinking cause of the Medo-Persian Empire from the hands of the victorious Alexander. Alexander stands without a rival for the rapidity of his conquests. He was but a young man of twenty when, by the death of his father, Philip of Macedon, he fell heir to a small dominion. He united the Greek states, placed himself at the head of affairs, and led her armies in a series of wonderful victories. In the space of a few short years he was the recognised master of the world.' Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, page 107.

#### **9. How is the break-up of Alexander's empire portrayed in prophecy? Daniel 8:8, 22. Compare Daniel 7:6.**

NOTE: 'He who rose to the highest position the world could offer, fell equally as suddenly. He had conquered kingdoms, but was not master of his own passions. His love of praise led him to have himself proclaimed Son of Jupiter-Ammon in Egypt, and his love of drink caused his death at the age of thirty-two years, after a universal reign of only two years. Such was the fate of one who feared neither God nor man. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men."' Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, page 107.

'Alexander left no heir capable of ruling the kingdom, and in less than twenty years of strife, his four leading generals succeeded in dividing the empire among themselves. Ptolemy had Egypt to the south; Seleucus took Syria and the eastern division; Lysimachus had Asia Minor and territory to the north; while Cassander had Greece or the western division. These four had not the power of Alexander. The history of these four divisions is given in the eleventh chapter of Daniel.' Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, page 109.

### **'The robbers of thy people'**

#### **10. How is the kingdom that superseded Greece portrayed in prophecy? Daniel 2:40. Compare Daniel 7:7, Daniel 8:9-12.**

NOTE: 'There is strangely a difference of opinion as to what kingdom is symbolised by the fourth division of the great image, the legs of iron. On this point we have only to inquire: What kingdom did succeed Grecia in the empire of the world? For the legs of iron denote the fourth kingdom in the series. The testimony of history is full and explicit on this point. One kingdom did this, and one only, and that was Rome. It conquered Grecia; it subdued all things; like iron, it broke in pieces and bruised. Gibbon, following the symbolic imagery of Daniel, thus describes this empire: "The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations or their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome."' Smith: *Daniel & The Revelation*, page 61.

'The eighth chapter of Daniel is a prophecy of wonderful interest; for it gives the prophetic history of the world from the rise of the Persian Empire till the final destruction of all earthly kingdoms by the God of Heaven. The succession of earthly empires was presented to the prophet under the symbols of a ram, a goat, and a little horn that became exceeding great. And when these had been shown to him, he was told by the angel Gabriel that the ram represented the kingdom of Media and Persia; and that the goat was the kingdom of Grecia; and the horn which became exceeding great, though not called by name, was identified by several decisive facts, among which are these: That it should be the great destroyer of the people of God, and that it should put to death the Prince of princes. These facts show that the Roman power is intended.' Andrews: *The Sanctuary of the Bible*, page 1.

#### **11. How is Rome's work of persecution described in prophecy? Daniel 7:21, 25, Daniel 8:24.**

NOTE: 'The chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion.' *Great Controversy*, page 438.

'The history of God's people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome's supremacy is written in heaven, but they have little place in human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavoured also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favourable for preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romanists from carrying out their purpose.' *Great Controversy*, page 61.

### **'A kingdom which shall never be destroyed'**

**12. How does Bible prophecy portray the final defeat and destruction of those powers that persecuted God's people? Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45. Compare Daniel 7:11-12, 26 and consider Daniel 8:13-14.**

NOTE: 'All earthly kingdoms are to be destroyed utterly, to make room for the everlasting kingdom of God. This smiting is many times referred to in the Bible. God, speaking through the prophet David, says to Christ: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Psalm 2:8, 9.' E. J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, December 17, 1885.

**13. What will replace the persecuting powers of earth? Daniel 2:44, Daniel 7:14, 27.**

NOTE: 'Read the book of Daniel. Call up, point by point, the history of the kingdoms there represented. Behold statesmen, councils, powerful armies, and see how God wrought to abase the pride of men, and lay human glory in the dust. God alone is represented as great. In the vision of the prophet He is seen casting down one mighty ruler, and setting up another. He is revealed as the monarch of the universe, about to set up His everlasting kingdom, the Ancient of days, the living God, the Source of all wisdom, the Ruler of the present, the Revealer of the future. Read, and understand how poor, how frail, how short-lived, how erring, how guilty is man in lifting up his soul unto vanity.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 4*, page 1166.

## **Lesson 8: February 14-20** **'The man of sin, the son of perdition'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.' Daniel 7:25.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 49-60.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Daniel 7:24-26, Daniel 8:25, Daniel 11:36-39, Revelation 13:1-10, Revelation 17:1-6.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible reveals concerning the greatest opponent of God's people.

### **Introduction**

'Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, "the mystery of iniquity" carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of "the man of sin" foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.' *Great Controversy*, pages 49-50.

### **'A mouth speaking great things'**

**1. What power did Daniel see coming to power as the Roman Empire fragmented? Daniel 7:8.**

NOTE: 'This little horn is the next focus of the prophecy. This little horn power, arising out of the fourth beast, was worse than the beast itself. Most of the prophecy is about it. Because God wants us to be sure to understand who this power is, He gives us many identifying marks in order that we may accurately identify it. A few of them are listed here:

- It was to be a "horn" power, that is a "kingdom" (7:8).
- It was to be a *little* horn, a small one when it came up (7:8).
- It was to arise among the ten horns – in the territory that had been the Western Roman Empire (7:8).
- It was to arise to dominance after the ten horns (after AD 476, 7:8, 24).
- As it rose to dominance, although it was small when it came up, its appearance became greater than that of the other horns (7:20).
- In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man (7:8).' Grossboll, *God Predicts Your Future*, page 24.

**2. What activities did this power engage in? Daniel 7:25. Compare verse 8, last part, & verses 20 & 21.**

NOTE: 'A characteristic of the little horn power is that it was to speak great or "boastful" words against the Most High God (vv. 8, 11, 20, 25). In addition to taking some of the titles previously carried by the Caesars, the bishop of Rome assumed religious titles and prerogatives that can only be described as "boastful words". What were some of these titles and functions

assumed by the bishop of Rome? He took the title, “Vicar of the Son of God,” meaning that he stood in place of the Son of God to represent Him here on earth. Compare also the title of “Holy Father” with Jesus’ comments about the use of that title in a religious setting (see Matthew 23:9). Note, too, the claim to be able to forgive sins through the rites of the confessional, whereas the Jews in Jesus’ time considered His claim to forgive sins to be blasphemy (see Matthew 9:2-6).’ Shea, *Daniel 1-7, (Bible Amplifier Series)*, page 169.

### **‘Showing himself that he is God’**

#### **3. In what words did Paul describe these ‘great words against the Most High’? 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. Compare Daniel 11:36-37.**

NOTE: ‘Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, points out the power that has attempted to break down the law of God. He warns the believers concerning the great apostasy and the blasphemous antichristian power that would be developed and perform its work before Christ should come the second time. He says: “That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. . . . The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” The prophet Daniel, describing the same power, says, “He shall speak great words against the Most High.” *Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1893.

#### **4. How was John shown the nature of these ‘great words’? Revelation 13:5-6.**

NOTE: ‘In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, “like unto a leopard,” to which the dragon gave “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire. Of the leopardlike beast it is declared: “There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy.’ *Great Controversy*, page 439.

### **‘There shall be great tribulation’**

#### **5. What was Daniel later shown the ways this power would persecute God’s faithful witnesses? Daniel 11:33.**

NOTE: ‘The doctrine of the Catholic Church, as formulated by the great theologian Thomas Aquinas, as that all baptised Christians, whether professed Catholics or not, are subjects of the Mother Church, and she has the full right to punish them, even to the death penalty. Many Huguenots in France in the seventeenth century were dealt with on this basis. The historian Lecky, recalling the 31,000 burned at the instigation of the Spanish Inquisition, the 50,000 who died in the Netherlands when Charles V, then the Holy Roman Emperor, attempted to stamp out the Protestant heresy, the papal instigation of the massacre of a million Waldenses, and the papal celebration of the massacre of 80,000 Huguenots on the eve of St Bartholomew, declared that the Church of Rome had shed more innocent blood than any other institution that had ever existed among mankind.’ *Marter: A Plain Man’s Guide to Daniel and the Revelation*, page 28.

#### **6. How was John shown this long period of persecution by this power? Revelation 13:7. Compare Revelation 17:6.**

NOTE: ‘The one character which ever appears the same in all these scenes, and whose history is the leading theme through all the prophecy, is the church of God. The other characters are her persecutors, and are introduced simply because they are such. And here, as an introductory inquiry, we raise the question: Who or what is it that persecutes the true church? It is a false or apostate church. What is it that is ever warring against true religion? It is a false and counterfeit religion. Who ever heard of the civil power, merely, of any nation, persecuting the people of God? Governments may war against other governments, to avenge some wrong, real or imaginary, or to acquire territory and extend their power, as nations have often warred against the Jews; but governments do not persecute (mark the word - do not persecute) people on account of their religion, unless under the control of some opposite and hostile system of religion. But the powers introduced in this prophecy, the dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast, are all persecuting powers. They are actuated by rage and enmity against the people and the church of God. And this fact is of itself sufficiently conclusive evidence that in each of these powers the ecclesiastical or religious element is the controlling power.’ U. Smith, *Daniel & the Revelation*, page 560.

#### **7. With what words did Jesus picture this time of persecution? Matthew 24:21-22.**

NOTE: ‘Other powers have caused the death of thousands and hundreds of thousands of man, but the remarkable thing about this little horn is that it “shall wear out the saints of the Most High.” “The same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.” . . . For hundreds of years any who were unwilling to accept the Word of God as interpreted by popes and councils, or the traditions of the church in the place of the Word of God, were anathematised as heretics, and their lives and their property were forfeited. “The duty of putting heretics to death is among the infallible and irrevocable decrees of its general councils, like those of the mass and purgatory; and when Luther dared to say that it was against the will of the Holy Spirit, to burn with fire men convicted of error, the court of Rome, in its bull ‘Exsurge’, placed this declaration among the number of the forty-one propositions for which it condemned Luther, and ordered, under severe penalties, that he should be seized and sent to the pope.”’ W. W. Prescott, *Present Truth*, May 31, 1900.

## **‘And shall think to change times and laws’**

### **8. What attack on God’s law has this power committed? Daniel 7:25. Consider Daniel 11:36-37.**

NOTE: ‘That the law which was spoken by God’s own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world. He needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained. For “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan’s power. By substituting human law for God’s law, Satan will seek to control the world. This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand.” Daniel 7:25.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 763.

### **9. What changes does this power claim to have the right to make in God’s law?**

NOTE: ‘Only by changing God’s law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honour to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God. The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorise the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is brought to view: “He shall think to change times and laws.” The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfils the prophecy. For this change the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God.’ *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4, page 279.

## **‘They shall be given into his hand’**

### **10. In what words does the Bible give the length of time during which this power held sway? Daniel 7:25. Compare Daniel 12:7, Revelation 11:2-3, Revelation 12:6, Revelation 12:14, Revelation 13:5.**

NOTE: “‘They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.’ This can only mean that he shall seem to have accomplished his purpose of changing the law of God during this period. A time is one year (the ancient year of 360 days); times (plural), twice as much, 720; a dividing of time, half as much, 180; making in all 1260 prophetic, or symbolic, days, each day representing a year. Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34. He received his power from Justinian, AD. 538, and retained it until 1798, a period of just 1260 years, when the French Republic captured Rome, and carried the pope into France, where he died in exile. The papacy then received a terrible blow, from which it has not yet fully recovered.’ George I, Butler, *The Change of the Sabbath*, page 170.

### **11. What was to bring this time of power to a close? Revelation 13:3, first part, Revelation 13:10.**

NOTE: ‘The forty and two months are the same as the “time and times and the dividing of time,” three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7, the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.”’ *Great Controversy*, page 439.

## **‘His deadly wound was healed’**

### **12. How was John shown the recovery of the papacy from its deadly wound? Revelation 13:3, last part.**

NOTE: ‘The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion, is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power. “I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” Revelation 13:3. The infliction of the deadly wound points to the downfall of the Papacy in 1798. After this, says the prophet, “His deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” Paul states plainly that the man of sin will continue until the Second Advent. In both the Old and the New World, the Papacy will receive homage in the honour paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church. God’s Word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 329.

### **13. What activities will the papacy be engaged in after the healing of its wound? Revelation 13:8. Compare verses 15-17.**

NOTE: ‘The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion, is still far from being destroyed. In the last conflict the Sabbath will be the special point of controversy throughout all Christendom. Secular rulers and religious leaders will unite to enforce the observance of the Sunday; and as milder measures fail, the most oppressive laws will be enacted. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the land ought not to be tolerated. Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honour the divine precepts. The so-called Christian world is to be the theatre of great and decisive actions. Men in

authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the Papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved. The warning of the third angel of Revelation 14 is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world. In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" (Revelation 13:16), to receive "the mark of the beast," yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.' *Maranatha*, page 188.

## **Lesson 9: February 21-27**

### **'A thousand two hundred and three score days'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.' Daniel 7:20-21.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 446-450.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Daniel 7:8-27.

LESSON AIM: To study the Bible's most mentioned time prophecy.

### **Introduction**

'The opening of the sixth century witnessed the development of the great apostasy to such an extent that the man of sin might be plainly seen sitting in the temple of God. The western Roman Empire had been broken up into ten kingdoms, and the way was now prepared for the work of the little horn. In the early part of this century, the bishop of Rome was made head over the entire church by the emperor of the east, Justinian. The dragon gave unto the beast his power, and his seat, and great authority. From this accession to supremacy by the Roman pontiff, date the "time, times, and dividing of time," or twelve hundred and sixty years of the prophecies of Daniel and John.' Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, page 369.

### **'Before whom three fell'**

#### **1. What was to mark the rise to power of the 'little horn' power? Daniel 7:8. Compare verse 20**

NOTE: 'The Church of Rome arose to power among the ten tribes who took over the Latin west [of the Roman Empire]. Three of these, the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths, were early converted by the missionary bishop, Ulfilas. But his Arian doctrine of the nature of Christ was not acceptable to Rome. When the Heruli tried to control the election of the bishop of Rome, he appealed to the emperor Zeno in Constantinople. Zeno suggested to the Ostrogoths that they deal with the Heruli. They displaced them in 493, but as Theodoric, the leader of the Ostrogoths, also insisted on having a controlling word about who should become bishop of Rome, another appeal went to Constantinople, to emperor Justinian. They were forced to leave Rome in 538 and, later, they were completely destroyed. In the meantime the same general Belisarius, who was sent to deal with the Ostrogoths, had also destroyed the Vandals in 534. Thus the three horns disappeared.' Marter, *A Plain Man's Guide to Daniel and the Revelation*, page 27.

#### **2. What was Daniel told about the little horn and its rise to power? Daniel 7:24.**

NOTE: 'Justinian (527-565) . . . was anxious to establish in the West the form of Christianity which he espoused. In 533 he decided to proclaim the bishop of Rome "the head of all the holy churches." At a stroke of his pen the emperor made him the most powerful political and religious leader in the western world.' Hardinge, *Jesus Is My Judge*, page 148.

'As the various European tribes struggled for supremacy, the wars that were fought were both political and theological in nature, often combining territorial disputes with controverted points of religious doctrine. To a degree never before employed in Christianity, the power of the state came to be used to root out heretics. Justinian, the reigning Roman emperor in Constantinople, was happy to support the bishop of Rome in these struggles, both for his own political gain, and for the gain of the Roman-centred church.' Shea, *Daniel 1-7, Bible Amplifier series*, page 167.

### **'He shall speak great words against the Most High'**

#### **3. What particular characteristic of this 'little horn' power did Daniel notice? Daniel 7:8, last part. Compare v. 11, v. 20, last part & v. 25, first part.**

NOTE: "He shall speak great words against the Most High." Here are pretensions seen nowhere else. He either calls himself, or is called by his votaries, "Lord God the Pope," "Christ's Vicar or Vicegerent on earth," "A very God on earth," "with power to open and shut heaven at his pleasure," and "ability to forgive sins," "even to grant indulgences." Butler, *The Change of the Sabbath*, page 169.

‘The little horn utters its great words against the Most High. Have we not heard them, and that, too, within a few years? Look at the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870. What can be more blasphemous than to attribute infallibility to a mortal man? Yet in that year the world beheld the spectacle of an Ecumenical Council assembled for the purpose of deliberately decreeing that the occupant of the papal throne, the man of sin, possesses this prerogative of God, and can not err. Can anything be more presumptuous and blasphemous? Is not this the voice of the great words which the horn spake?’ Smith, *Daniel & the Revelation*, page 137.

**4. How did John likewise prophesy about this characteristic of the enemy of God’s people? Revelation 13:5-6.**

NOTE: ‘The mouth given to the beast speaking great words and blasphemies, evidently signifies the same as the mouth of the little horn of Daniel 7, which should speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws. It is the Papacy, claiming infallibility and to be the Vicar of God upon earth. That this prophecy has been fulfilled in the most wonderful manner, and that the 1260 years of Papal triumph expired about the close of the last [i.e. the 18<sup>th</sup>] century, cannot be denied. The Papal power was then subverted, and the seat of the dragon wrested from him.’ Andrews, *The Three Angels of Revelation 14:6-12*, page 76.

**‘And shall wear out the saints of the Most High’**

**5. What further activity did the little horn engage in? Daniel 7:21. Compare v. 25, middle part and Daniel 11:33.**

NOTE: ‘He “shall wear out the saints of the Most High.” Behold the millions of martyrs whose blood has been shed in crusades, in massacres, in horrible dungeons, torn upon racks, and burned at the stake. This power has caused the death of more people for conscience’ sake than all other political powers together which have ever existed on this earth. Surely this power fulfils the statements of the angel to the prophet. The best-informed Protestant historians have estimated his victims at upwards of fifty million. . . , put to death for religious opinion!’ Butler, *The Change of the Sabbath*, page 169.

**6. How did John describe the persecutions of this power? Revelation 13:7. Compare Revelation 17:6.**

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

**‘And shall think to change times and laws.’**

**7. What surpassing pretension to power did the ‘little horn’ power claim to possess? Daniel 7:25, third part.**

NOTE: A more accurate translation would be: ‘think to changes times and the law.’ Since the verse talks of blasphemy against the Most High, and persecution of the saints of the Most High, it follows that the ‘little horn’ power claims the right to change the times and law of the Most High. Man’s times and laws are frequently changed by human governments without any offence against God or His people.

‘Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy: “He shall think to change times and the law.” Daniel 7:25, R.V. . . . Only by changing God’s law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honour to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God. The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorise the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: “He shall think to change the times and the law.” The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfils the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God.’ *Great Controversy*, page 446.

**8. How did Paul picture the overweening pretensions of this power? 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.**

NOTE: ‘Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and declare that Protestants by observing the Sunday are recognising her power. In the Catholic *Catechism of Christian Religion*, in answer to a question as to the day to be observed in obedience to the fourth [third, according to Catholic reckoning] commandment, this statement is made: “During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but the church, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.” As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; . . . because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.” Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, page 58. What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church, “the mark of the beast”?’ *Great Controversy*, pages 447-448.

‘Sunday is our mark of authority. . . The [Catholic] Church is above the Bible, . . . and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.’ *Catholic Record*, September 1, 1923.

‘Perhaps the boldest, the most revolutionary change the [Catholic] Church ever did happened in the first century\*. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday. . . not from any direction noted in the Scriptures, but from the

[Catholic] Church's sense of its own power. . . people who think that the Scriptures should be the sole authority should logically become Seventh-Day [sic] Adventists, and keep Saturday holy.' *Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel*, May 21, 1995. \*n.b. there is no historical evidence that first-century Christians observed Sunday as the Sabbath or as a holy day.

### **'Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months'**

#### **9. How long did God permit the 'little horn' power to exercise its authority? Daniel 7:25, last part. Compare Daniel 12:7, Revelation 11:2-3, Revelation 12:6, 13-14, Revelation 13:5.**

NOTE: 'In prophecy one day stands for a year [see Ezekiel 4:6 and compare Numbers 14:34], and time is reckoned thirty days to the month. [See Genesis 7:11 and compare v 24 and Genesis 8:3-4.] Forty-two months is equivalent to twelve hundred and sixty days of prophetic time, or twelve hundred and sixty years of literal time. The "time and times, and the dividing of time," is the same period as the "forty and two months," or twelve hundred and sixty years. The power which trod the people of God under foot for twelve hundred and sixty years was the papacy. This power was established in Rome in 538 A. D. on the ruins of the Western Empire, and continued until 1798 A. D. This was the period known as the Dark Ages for Europe.' Haskell, *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, page 195.

#### **10. How was John shown the end of the 1260 years of papal supremacy? Revelation 13:3, first part. Compare v.10.**

NOTE: In 1798, after 1260 years of papal power, Napoleon decreed that the papacy must be brought to an end. He sent an army to Rome under the leadership of General Berthier to seize the pope. They arrived as the pope and his cardinals were holding a grand mass to celebrate the anniversary of the pope's coronation. Berthier decreed that the mass should go ahead but its purpose was now to celebrate the end of the papacy! Then the pope was then taken captive and over the succeeding months hustled from one place to another until he expired in a penal settlement in France. Napoleon planned that no successor should be elected. But the prophecy of God's Word had foretold that the deadly wound would be healed.

#### **11. How did the Bible picture the restoration of papal power? Revelation 13:3, last part.**

NOTE: "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Verse 3. The infliction of the deadly wound points to the downfall of the papacy in 1798. After this, says the prophet, "his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Paul states plainly that the "man of sin" will continue until the Second Advent. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. To the very close of time he will carry forward the work of deception. And the Revelator declares, also referring to the papacy: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." Revelation 13:8. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honour paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.' *Great Controversy*, page 578.

### **'To receive a mark'**

#### **12. How will the papacy's authority be enforced in the last days? Revelation 13:16.**

NOTE: 'This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.' *Maranatha*, page 164.

#### **13. How will this command be enforced? Revelation 13:17, 15.**

NOTE: 'The decree is to go forth that all who will not receive the mark of the beast shall neither buy nor sell, and, finally, that they shall be put to death. But the saints of God do not receive this mark. The prophet of Patmos beheld those that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Satan is putting forth his utmost efforts in the rage of a last despairing struggle against Christ and His followers. False teachers are employing every device possible to stimulate the hardened sinner in his rebellious daring, to confirm the questioning, the doubting, the unbelieving, and, by misrepresentation and falsehood, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Who are prepared to stand firmly under the banner on which is inscribed, "The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"?' *Signs of the Times*, November 8, 1899.

## **Lesson 10: February 28-March 6**

### **'Let no man deceive you by any means'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.' Matthew 24:4.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 518-530.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-26, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, Revelation 13:13-14.

LESSON AIM: To study what Bible prophecy reveals about some of the deceptions prevalent among Christians in the last days.

## Introduction

‘Especially solemn is the apostle’s statement regarding those who should refuse to receive “the love of the truth.” “For this cause,” he declared of all who should deliberately reject the messages of truth, “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Men cannot with impunity reject the warnings that God in mercy sends them. From those who persist in turning from these warnings, God withdraws His Spirit, leaving them to the deceptions that they love.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 266.

### ‘Which thing I hate’

#### 1. What deception plagued the early church? Revelation 2:6, 15.

NOTE: ‘The doctrine is now largely taught that the Gospel of Christ has made the Law of God of no effect; that by “believing” we are released from the necessity of being doers of the word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned.’ *Signs of the Times*, February 25, 1897.

#### 2. What did Christ Himself of those who profess to be His followers, but do not obey Him? Matthew 7:21-23.

NOTE: ‘Those who are teaching this doctrine today have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth, and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner’s credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfils the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that He has saved them. “I am saved,” they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah? No; for the garments of Christ’s righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception, and Christ becomes to these persons a stumbling-block as He did to the Jews, to the Jews because they would not receive Him as their personal Saviour; to these professed believers in Christ, because they separate Christ and the Law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience.’ *Signs of the Times*, February 25, 1897.

### ‘To turn from the holy commandment’

#### 3. What does the Bible say concerning the teaching of ‘once saved, always saved’? Hebrews 6:4-6.

NOTE: It is a fundamental doctrine of Calvinism that once a person has experienced the grace of God in his life, he can never be lost. Here the apostle speaks of those who have been enlightened, who have received the Holy Spirit and have ‘tasted’ spiritual gifts, the Word of God and the powers of the world to come. These are ones who at one time had a genuine experience of conversion, but have deliberately chosen to turn their backs on what they know to be the truth. Their former experience of receiving the Holy Spirit does not guarantee them eternal salvation.

#### 4. What does the apostle Peter say of those who forsake the right way? 2 Peter 2:20-21.

NOTE: ‘There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election, once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: “Which have forsaken the right way, . . . following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” 2 Peter 2:15. Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” 2 Peter 2:21. There is truth to be received if souls are saved. The keeping of the commandments of God is life eternal to the receiver. But the Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy, and being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God. All who seek to sustain the doctrine of election, once in grace, always in grace, do this against a plain, “Thus saith the Lord.”’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 157.

### ‘Great signs and wonders’

#### 5. What type of deception did Jesus warn against? Matthew 24:24. Consider John 4:48.

NOTE: ‘Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.’ *Great Controversy*, page 625.

#### 6. How was John shown the dangers of this type of deception? Revelation 13:13-14, Revelation 16:14. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10.

NOTE: 'When brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God. These persons overlook the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the wonders wrought by Satan and his agents. It was by satanic aid that Pharaoh's magicians were enabled to counterfeit the work of God. Paul testifies that before the second advent of Christ there will be similar manifestations of satanic power. The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9,10. And the apostle John, describing the miracle-working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." Revelation 13:13, 14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.' *Great Controversy*, page 553.

### **'An abomination unto the Lord'**

#### **7. Against which ancient deception should we be prepared? Consider 1 Samuel 28:7-20, Isaiah 8:19-20.**

NOTE: 'The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man's consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.' *Great Controversy*, page 551.

#### **8. How do we know that the spirit Saul communicated with was not that of God's prophet Samuel? 1 Samuel 28:6. Consider Deuteronomy 18:10-12, 1 Samuel 28:3.**

NOTE: 'When Saul inquired for Samuel, the Lord did not cause Samuel to appear to Saul. He saw nothing. Satan was not allowed to disturb the rest of Samuel in the grave, and bring him up in reality to the witch of Endor. God does not give Satan power to resurrect the dead. But Satan's angels assume the form of dead friends, and speak and act like them, that through professed dead friends he can the better carry on his work of deception. Satan knew Samuel well, and he knew how to represent him before the witch of Endor, and to utter correctly the fate of Saul and his sons.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 172.

#### **9. What are we told concerning those who have died? Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.**

NOTE: 'The ancient system of magic is, in reality, the same as what is now known as modern spiritualism. Satan is finding access to thousands of minds by presenting himself under the guise of departed friends. The Scriptures declare that "the dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. Their thoughts, their love, their hatred, have perished. The dead do not hold communion with the living. But true to his early cunning, Satan employs this device in order to gain control of minds. Through spiritualism many of the sick, the bereaved, the curious, are communicating with evil spirits. All who venture to do this are on dangerous ground. The word of truth declares how God regards them.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 289-290.

### **'An unknown tongue'**

#### **10. What counsel does Paul give to those who speak in unknown tongues? 1 Corinthians 14:19.**

NOTE: 'Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the Church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good.' *Maranatha*, page 154.

#### **11. How was the genuine gift of 'tongues' manifested in the early church? Acts 2:4, 6-8.**

NOTE: 'During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were labouring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

### **'That ye may know that I am the LORD your God'**

#### **12. What sign has God chosen to signify the link between Himself and His people? Exodus 31:13, Ezekiel 20:12, 20.**

NOTE: 'As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God's people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign

of a relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honour His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors. The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that recreates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience. To us as to Israel the Sabbath is given "for a perpetual covenant." To those who reverence His holy day the Sabbath is a sign that God recognises them as His chosen people. It is a pledge that He will fulfil to them His covenant. Every soul who accepts the sign of God's government places himself under the divine, everlasting covenant. He fastens himself to the golden chain of obedience, every link of which is a promise. The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Those who obey this commandment take upon themselves His name, and all the blessings it involves are theirs. The Sabbath has lost none of its meaning. It is still a sign between God and His people, and it will be so forever.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 156.

### **13. What warning are we given in prophecy concerning a claim to change God's times and law? Daniel 7:25.**

NOTE: 'Satan could not hinder the plan of salvation. Jesus was crucified, and arose again the third day. He [Satan] told his angels that he would make even the crucifixion and resurrection tell to his advantage. He was willing that those who professed faith in Jesus should believe that the laws regulating the Jewish sacrifices and offerings ceased at the death of Christ, if he could push them further, and make them believe that the law of Ten Commandments died also with Christ. He [Satan] told his angels that the Ten Commandments were so plain that many would believe that they were still binding; therefore he must seek to corrupt the fourth commandment, which brings to view the living God. He led on his representatives to attempt to change the Sabbath, and alter the only commandment of the Ten which brings to view the true God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. Satan presented before them the glorious resurrection of Jesus, and told them that by His rising on the first day of the week, He changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Thus Satan used the resurrection to serve his purpose. He and his angels rejoiced that the errors they had prepared took so well with the professed friends of Christ. Satan, working through unconsecrated leaders of the church, tampered with the fourth commandment and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:2, 3), and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as "the venerable day of the sun." The Lord has clearly defined the road to the city of God; but the great apostate has changed the signpost, setting up a false one, a spurious sabbath. The enemy of all good has turned the signpost round, so that it points to the path of disobedience as the path of happiness. He has thought to change times and laws.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 81.

## **Lesson 11: March 7-13**

### **'To every nation and kindred and tongue and people'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.' Romans 1:16.

STUDY HELP: *Last Day Events*, pages 198-204.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 14:6-12.

LESSON AIM: To study what prophecy reveals about God's final message to the world.

### **Introduction**

'Believing in Jesus as his personal Saviour, accepting of His righteousness by faith, the sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and escapes the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the Christian is enabled to resist temptation and to work righteousness. Without the divine nature, without the influence of the Spirit of God, man cannot work out his own salvation; for God must work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. Christ has said, "Without Me ye can do nothing.'" *The Messenger*, April 26, 1893.

### **'The everlasting Gospel'**

#### **1. What message is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people? Revelation 14:6. Compare Matthew 24:14.**

NOTE: 'The gospel message proclaimed by Christ's disciples was the announcement of His first advent to the world. It bore to men the good tidings of salvation through faith in Him. It pointed forward to His second coming in glory to redeem His people, and it set before men the hope, through faith and obedience, of sharing the inheritance of the saints in light. This message is given to men today, and at this time there is coupled with it the announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. The signs which He Himself gave of His coming have been fulfilled, and by the teaching of God's word we may know that the Lord is at the door.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 226.

#### **2. What is the Gospel of Christ? Romans 1:16.**

NOTE: 'We have now only a little time in which to prepare for eternity. May the Lord open the closed eyes of His people and quicken their dulled senses, that they may realise that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. May they see the importance of giving so pure and righteous a representation of God that the world shall see Him in His beauty. May they be so filled with the Spirit that dwells in Him that the world will have no power to divert them from the work of presenting to men the wonderful possibilities before every soul who receives Christ.' *Testimonies, volume 7, page 11*

### **'The hour of His judgement is come'**

#### **3. What momentous event, affecting everyone on earth, gives the preaching of the everlasting Gospel special urgency? Revelation 14:7.**

NOTE: 'We are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." With the earnestness that characterised Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ's Second Advent. The hour of God's judgment has come, and upon the members of His church on earth rests the solemn responsibility of giving warning to those who are standing as it were on the very brink of eternal ruin. All can do something in the work. None will be pronounced guiltless before God unless they have worked earnestly and unselfishly for the salvation of souls. Your duty cannot be shifted upon another. No one but yourself can do your work. If you withhold your light, someone must be left in darkness through your neglect.' *The Faith I Live By, page 290*

#### **4. What verdict marks the end of God's judgement and what event quickly follows it? Revelation 22:11=12.**

NOTE: 'We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honour, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.' *Maranatha, page 221.*

### **'Fear God and give glory to Him'**

#### **5. In view of the fact that God's judgement has begun, what threefold call is made to the inhabitants of earth? Revelation 14:7.**

NOTE: 'That men may be prepared to stand in the judgment, the message commands them to "fear God, and give glory to Him," "and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." [Revelation 14:12] In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment. The apostle Paul declares: "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law, . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." And he says that "the doers of the law shall be justified." Romans 2:12-16. Faith is essential in order to the keeping of the law of God; for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." And "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23. By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to Him" and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.' *Great Controversy, pages 435-436.*

'To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God.' *Signs of the Times, October 17, 1892.*

#### **6. What way did God provide for mankind to worship Him as their Creator? Exodus 20:8-11. Compare Genesis 2:1-3.**

NOTE: 'In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11. Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is "a sign, . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20. And the reason given is: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17. "The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God," because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. "The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten." J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial.' *Great Controversy, page 437.*

## ‘Babylon is fallen’

### 7. What further warning is to be presented to the world? Revelation 14:8. Compare Revelation 17:3-6.

NOTE: ‘In Revelation 14 the first angel is followed by a second proclaiming: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 14:8. The term “Babylon” is derived from “Babel,” and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion. In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman, a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.’ *Great Controversy*, page 381.

### 8. What additional warning will be added to this second message? Revelation 18:1-5.

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

‘As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches. Of Babylon, at the time brought to view in this prophecy, it is declared: “Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:5. She has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and “receive not of her plagues.” Hence the movement symbolised by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: “Come out of her, My people.” These announcements, uniting with the third angel’s message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 603-604.

## ‘The wine of the wrath of God’

### 9. What fearful warning accompanies the third message of Revelation 14? Revelation 14:9-11.

NOTE: ‘When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel, were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgements which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s people. Says the Revelator, in describing those terrific scourges: “There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” The sea “became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.” And “the rivers and fountains of waters . . . became blood.” Revelation 16:2-4. Terrible as these afflictions are, God’s justice stands fully vindicated. These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmingled with mercy.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 340

### 10. How does the Bible picture the wrath of God, poured out undiluted? Revelation 15:1. Read Revelation 16.

NOTE: ‘A Book has been given us to guide our feet through the perils of this dark world to heaven. It tells us how we can escape the wrath of God, and also tells of the sufferings of Christ for us, the great sacrifice that has been made that we might be saved and enjoy the presence of God forever. And if any come short at last, having heard the truth as they have in this land of light, it will be their own fault; they will be without excuse. The Word of God tells us how we may become perfect Christians and escape the seven last plagues.’ *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 126.

## ‘Here are they’

### 11. How are the saints of God, the ones who do not worship the beast or his image, described? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: ‘As he [John] looked with intense interest, he beheld the company of God’s commandment-keeping people. They had upon their foreheads the seal of the living God, and he exclaimed, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.”’ *Australasian Union Conference Record*, January 1, 1901.

### 12. How does Christ describe those whom He claims as His own? Matthew 7:21.

NOTE: ‘Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power, which works in the children of men unto obedience to God, or unto disobedience. You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire, but you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you will be hid with Christ in God, and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to His strength; and a new light, even the light of living faith, will be possible to you. But your will must co-

operate with God's will, not with the will of associates through whom Satan is constantly working to ensnare and destroy you. By steadfastly keeping the will on the Lord's side, you will bring every emotion into captivity to the will of Jesus. You will then find your feet on solid rock. It will take, at times, every particle of willpower that you possess, but it is God that is working for you, and you will come forth from the moulding process a vessel unto honour.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 294  
'Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

## **Lesson 12: March 14-20**

### **'Come out of her, My people'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' Revelation 18:4.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 603-605.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 18.

LESSON AIM: To study why God's people must come out of Babylon.

### **Introduction**

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

### **'Babylon is fallen'**

#### **1. What does the book of Revelation mean by 'Babylon'? Revelation 17:3-6.**

NOTE: A woman is a Bible symbol for the professed people of God, a pure woman a pure church, a corrupt woman a corrupt church. A beast is a symbol of a persecuting power. The woman riding the beast symbolises a church controlling the power of the state. This woman wears the purple of government, and displays great riches, but she drinks of abominations. Communication with the dead is described as an abomination. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) and this woman encourages her followers to pray to dead 'saints' and ask for their aid. This woman is a blasphemer; three specific blasphemies are mentioned in Scripture, the claim to forgive sins (Luke 5:21), the claim by a mere man to be God (John 10:33), and the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Mark 3:28-29). The papacy claims that its priests have the right to forgive sins. The pope is asserted to be 'God on earth,' while the claim of the pope to be vicar [representative] of Christ is usurping the role of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18).

#### **2. What characteristics does Babylon have? Revelation 17:3-6. Compare Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:6-8, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.**

NOTE: 'The purple and scarlet colour, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared "drunken with the blood of the saints" as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with "the kings of the earth." It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. Babylon is said to be "the mother of harlots." By her daughters must be symbolised churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt.' *Great Controversy*, page 382.

### **'The wine of the wrath of her fornication'**

#### **3. Why has Babylon fallen? Revelation 14:8. Compare Revelation 18:3.**

NOTE: 'The great sin charged against Babylon is that she "made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ.' *Great Controversy*, page 388.

#### **4. How does God regard the false teachings of Babylon? Revelation 18:5-8.**

NOTE: 'The whole chapter shows that Babylon that has fallen is the churches who will not receive the messages of warning the Lord has given in the first, second, and third angels' messages. They refused the truth and accepted a lie. They refused the messages of truth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. The message in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is plain and clearly defined. "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (verse 3). Anyone who reads this chapter need not be deceived. . . The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also it is the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon.' *Selected Messages, book 2, page 68.*

### **'God hath remembered her iniquities'**

#### **5. What warning are we given concerning Babylon? Revelation 18:5.**

NOTE: 'Of Babylon, at the time brought to view in this prophecy, it is declared: "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Revelation 18:5. She has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and "receive not of her plagues." Hence the movement symbolised by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: "Come out of her, My people." These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.' *Great Controversy, page 604.*

#### **6. What plagues will fall on Babylon and those who worship her? Revelation 18:8. See Revelation 16. Note especially verses 2, 10-11.**

NOTE: 'When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great game of life. While probation continued, they were blinded by Satan's deceptions, and they justified their course of sin. . . The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow-men, but because God has conquered. They lament that the result is what it is; but they do not repent of their wickedness. They would leave no means untried to conquer if they could. The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through tempest and earthquake and pestilence. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion. The minister who has sacrificed truth to gain the favour of men, now discerns the character and influence of his teachings. It is apparent that an omniscient eye was following him as he stood in the desk, as he walked the streets, as he mingled with men in the various scenes of life. Every emotion of the soul, every line written, every word uttered, every act that led men to rest in a refuge of falsehood, has been scattering seed; and now, in the wretched, lost souls around him, he beholds the harvest.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4, page 471.*

### **'Come out of her'**

#### **7. What are God's people commanded to do? Revelation 18:4.**

NOTE: 'There are many who have been preparing themselves for moral inefficiency in the great crisis. They are wavering and undecided. Others who have not had so great light, who have never identified themselves with the truth, will, under the influence of the Spirit, respond to the light when it shines upon them. Truth that has lost its power upon those who have long slighted its precious teaching appears beautiful and attractive to those who are ready to walk in the light. The Spirit sets home the truth in such a manner as to arouse the conscience to discern and acknowledge the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Men see themselves as transgressors of the law of God. By faith they behold the infinite love of God in the gift of Jesus to our world. By faith they see the sentence of condemnation erased, and their names recorded in the book of life. They see the robe of Christ's righteousness presented to them, preparing them for the mansions above, that they may stand spotless before the Father. These are the things of Christ which the mind grasps, and which are food to the soul. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth. He silences every other voice than that which comes from Him who is the truth and the life. God gives to every soul opportunity to hear the voice of the True Shepherd, to receive the knowledge of God and our Saviour. When the heart receives this truth as a precious treasure, Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, while the whole heavenly universe exclaims, Amen and amen.' *1888 Materials, page 1016.*

#### **8. What Bible story reveals the importance of heeding the warning to come out? Genesis 19:12-17.**

NOTE: 'The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean" (2 Corinthians 6:17). Those who obey this warning will find a refuge.' *Conflict & Courage, page 53.*

### **'Say ye not, A confederacy'**

**9. What does it mean to come out of Babylon? 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.**

NOTE: 'Not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolising the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians! Those who claim to be Christians and will confess Christ should come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing, and be separate.' *Christian Service*, page 41.

**10. What warning are we given against entering into confederacies with those who do not accept the truth? Isaiah 8:9-12.**

NOTE: 'Those employed in any department of the work whereby the world may be transformed must not enter into alliance with those who know not the truth. The world know not the Father or the Son, and they have no spiritual discernment as to the character of our work, as to what we shall do or shall not do. We must obey the orders that come from above. We are not to hear the counsel or follow the plans suggested by unbelievers. Suggestions made by those who know not the work that God is doing for this time will be such as to weaken the power of the instrumentalities of God. By accepting such suggestions, the counsel of Christ is set at nought.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 463.

**'Thou shalt not be afraid'**

**11. With what comforting words does God express His care for His people while Babylon receives her punishment? Isaiah 26:20-21.**

NOTE: 'In the time of trial before us God's pledge of security will be placed upon those who have kept the word of His patience. Christ will say to His faithful ones: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast" (Isaiah 26:20). The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejecters of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of cloud which speaks wrath and terror to the transgressor of God's law is light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 91.

**12. What promises may be claimed by those who come out of Babylon? Psalm 91:4-8.**

NOTE: 'The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17.' *Darkness before Dawn*, page 44.

**Lesson 13: March 21-27**

**'A kingdom which shall never be destroyed'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.' Daniel 7:18.

STUDY HELP: *Maranatha*, page 372.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:1-22:7.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible reveals about the outcome of the war between the people of God and their persecutors.

**Introduction**

'Soon the Lord God of heaven will set up His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. Now is the time for us to develop a pure, heavenly character. The work will increase more and more in earnestness and intensity until the end. We need an increase of faith. We must watch unto prayer.' *This Day With God*, page 198.

**'The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom'**

**1. What was the final stage of Nebuchadnezzar's great dream? Daniel 2:34-35.**

NOTE: 'The prophet, in the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, foretold the rise and fall of the great universal empires that should succeed the kingdom of Babylon, with the division of Rome, the last one, into smaller kingdoms, as represented by the iron and clay of the feet of the "great image," and said: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven

set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Daniel 2:44. This kingdom was seen in the dream as "a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces;" and they "became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Verses 34, 35.' A. T. Jones, *American Sentinel*, October 24, 1895.

**2. How was Nebuchadnezzar shown the outcome of the rise and fall of persecuting kingdoms? Daniel 2:44.**

NOTE: 'This is God's plan for making Christ the King of this earth. It is the gospel plan. And any attempt to make Christ the King of this world, by any of those means through which earthly power is gained and exercised, is only the wildest folly. The motive may be worthy enough, but the effort is absolutely without knowledge. When Christ's kingdom comes, then, as He has taught us, God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This means that the earth will then be perfect, without sin or sinner. And that will be the new earth; for the present one is "reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7. It is the preaching of the gospel, and that alone, which can hasten the kingdom of Christ.' A. T. Jones, *American Sentinel*, October 24, 1895.

**'Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom'**

**3. In Daniel's vision, what great event followed the rise and fall of the various persecuting powers? Daniel 7:9-10.**

NOTE: '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. Says the psalmist: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalm 90:2. It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," attend this great tribunal.' *Great Controversy*, page 479.

**4. What will be the outcome of the judgement? Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 21-22, 26-27.**

NOTE: 'The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favour. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years, Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. "The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Daniel 7:18).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 370.

**'Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed'**

**5. How long were the rebellion against God and the persecution of His people to continue before the judgement began? Daniel 8:13-14.**

NOTE: 'Who were these heavenly conversationalists? Called "a certain holy one," the questioner was identified as Gabriel [verse 16]. The Other, designated "one holy Palmoni" [see marginal reading] ordered, "Gabriel, make Daniel understand". . . The Person was called Palmoni. . . This name is formed from two words, *pele* and *mene*. *Pele* indicates things that are extraordinary and miraculous. . . It is a name of God. [Isaiah 9:6]. The mysterious hand twice wrote *mene* on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet hall to record how thoroughly numbered and sealed up was Babylon's fate. . . The meticulous accuracy of the "seventy weeks of years" and "the cleansing of the sanctuary day 2300" and other time lines in Daniel display the precision of the Divine Chronologer. *Pele* added to *mene* forms Palmoni, Wonderful Numberer. He is the Scorekeeper, Judge and Time-keeper of eternity.' Hardinge, *Jesus Is My Judge*, page 173.

**6. What event was to begin this period of 2300 days? Daniel 9:25.**

NOTE: 'The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time, "unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." After bidding Daniel "understand the matter, and consider the vision," the very first words of the angel are: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City." The word here translated "determined" literally signifies "cut off." Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained. In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. Verses 12-26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built "according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years.' *Great Controversy*, page 326.

**7. How did Ezra report the issuing of this commandment and the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy? Ezra 6:14. Read Ezra 7:11-26.**

NOTE: 'A starting point for this period is given: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. Daniel 9:25. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (see Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9, margin), went into effect in the autumn of B. C. 457.' *Desire of Ages*, page 233.

### **'The great Prince that standeth for the children of thy people'**

#### **8. How was the eventual victory of God's people revealed to Daniel? Daniel 12:1-3.**

NOTE: "'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, everyone that shall be found written in the book.'" Daniel 12:1. When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done;" and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. *Great Controversy*, page 613.

#### **9. How was God's great love and care for Daniel expressed? Daniel 10:11-12, 19.**

NOTE: 'When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realise the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart. The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those "that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation, that the connection between God and His people is close and decided.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 345.

### **'In righteousness He doth judge and make war'**

#### **10. How is the defeat of the enemies of God's people described in prophecy? Revelation 19:11-16, 19-20.**

NOTE: "'The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.'" Isaiah 26:21. In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth, priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low. "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried." Jeremiah 25:33.' *Maranatha*, page 296.

#### **11. What is the name of this battle? Revelation 16:16.**

NOTE: 'In the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage. The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But Providence has a part to act in the battle of Armageddon. The Captain of the Lord's host will stand at the head of the angels of heaven to direct the battle. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings and Lord of lords, leads forth the armies of heaven on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white.' *Maranatha*, page 297.

### **'Wherein dwelleth righteousness'**

#### **12. How is the everlasting kingdom of God described? 2 Peter 3:13. Compare Revelation 21:27.**

NOTE: 'The meek "shall inherit the earth." It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when "the meek shall inherit the earth." Psalm 37:11. The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. "We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him." 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 22:3. There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there. There "they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Isaiah 49:10.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 17.

#### **13. What kind of people will dwell in God's everlasting kingdom? 2 Peter 3:14. Compare 1 John 3:3.**

NOTE: 'There is a heaven of bliss, free from all dissension, free from all selfishness, free from poverty, sickness, oppression. Then I entreat you who have a heaven to gain and a hell to shun, do not be presumptuous. Link up in the closest relationship

with Christ, and depart from every species of iniquity. That character which expresses the glory, the character of Christ, will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race will walk with Christ in white, for they are worthy. The likeness of Christ's character is revealed in every soul. There is a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. O shall we not here form characters after the divine similitude? Shall we not become transformed into the likeness of God?' 1888 *Materials*, page 1429.