

‘Be ye also ready’

General Introduction

‘Our God is a God of mercy. With long-sufferance and tender compassion He deals with the transgressors of His law. But there is a point beyond which divine patience is exhausted, and the judgments of God are sure to follow. The Lord bears long with men, and with cities, mercifully giving warnings to save them from divine wrath; but a time will come when pleadings for mercy will no longer be heard.

The time is at hand when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn. Disasters by sea and by land follow one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of disorganised, unregulated forces of nature, wholly beyond the control of man; but in them all, God’s purpose may be read. They are among the agencies by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.

God’s messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavouring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. God’s message for the inhabitants of earth today is, “Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:44). We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages.

The storm of God’s wrath is gathering; and those only will stand who respond to the invitations of mercy, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah, and become sanctified through obedience to the laws of the divine Ruler. The righteous alone shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation be overpast.’

Conflict & Courage, page 231.

‘We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God’s people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth.’

Testimonies to Ministers, page 116.

The reason for these lessons.

There is great interest in the way events are unfolding in the world today, especially among those who seek signs of Christ’s Second Coming. The Bible does indeed speak of many signs that show the coming of Christ is near. But our interest in the signs should not divert us from our task. The Bible’s emphasis is always on the need for God’s people to be ready. For those who are unready, the final events will come as an overwhelming surprise.

Lesson 1: December 28-January 3

‘These things saith the faithful and true Witness’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.’ Proverbs 13:7.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies*, volume 5, pages 99-105.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 3:14-17.

LESSON AIM: To study how Christ sees the present condition of His church.

Introduction

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly;” but where do we behold the true advent spirit? Who are preparing to stand in that time of temptation which is just before us? The people to whom God has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time are sleeping at their post. They say by their actions: We have the truth; we are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;” while the True Witness declares: Thou “knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: “Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 101.

‘I know thy works’

- 1. Of what important fact should every Christian be aware? Revelation 3:15, first part. Compare Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 3:1, 8.**

NOTE: 'The eye of the Lord is upon all the work, all the plans, all the imaginings of every mind; He sees beneath the surface of things, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is not a deed of darkness, not a plan, not an imagination of the heart, not a thought of the mind, but that He reads it as an open book. Every act, every word, every motive, is faithfully chronicled in the records of the great Heart-searcher, who said, "I know thy works."' *Life Sketches*, page 322.

2. How did David express his understanding of this truth? Psalm 139:1-4. Read the whole psalm.

NOTE: 'Every one should move so that he can say: "Thou, O Lord, knowest me: Thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward Thee." "Thou God seest me." The Lord weighs every motive. He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents and purposes of the heart.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 347.

'Who can know it?'

3. What does the faithful and true Witness say about the spiritual state of His church of the last days? Revelation 3:15.

NOTE: 'The time has come when a large portion of those who once rejoiced and shouted aloud for joy in view of the immediate coming of the Lord, are on the ground of the churches and the world who once derided them for believing that Jesus was coming, and circulated all manner of falsehoods to raise prejudice against them and destroy their influence. Now, if any one longs after the living God, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and God gives him to feel His power, and satisfies his longing soul by shedding abroad His love in his heart, and if he glorifies God by praising Him, he is, by these professed believers in the soon coming of the Lord, often considered deluded, and charged with being mesmerized or having some wicked spirit. Many of these professed Christians dress, talk, and act like the world, and the only thing by which they may be known is their profession. Though they profess to be looking for Christ, their conversation is not in heaven, but on worldly things. "What manner of persons" ought those to be "in all holy conversation and godliness," who profess to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." 2 Peter 3:11, 12. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3. But it is evident that many who bear the name of Adventist study more to decorate their bodies and to appear well in the eyes of the world than they do to learn from the Word of God how they may be approved of Him.' *Early Writings*, page 108.

4. How does Christ explain His response to the lukewarmness of His church? Revelation 3:16.

NOTE: 'What does He mean by that? Why, if the people have great light and knowledge and yet they are not striving to give that light and evidence to the world in their works, which are living principles that they shall present to the world, Christ is dishonoured, and He becomes so disgusted with them that He will not take their names into His mouth to present them to the Father.' *Sermons & Talks, volume 1*, page 114.

'Thou sayest'

5. What is Laodicea's opinion of itself? Revelation 3:17, first part.

NOTE: 'What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong? The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true situation of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake; for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.' *Review & Herald*, September 16, 1873.

6. What, in contrast, is Christ's judgement of the spiritual state of His church? Revelation 3:17, last part.

NOTE: 'The True Witness says of a cold, lifeless, Christless church, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15, 16). Mark the following words: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Here is represented a people who pride themselves in their possession of spiritual knowledge and advantages. But they have not responded to the unmerited blessings that God has bestowed upon them. They have been full of rebellion, ingratitude, and forgetfulness of God; and still He has dealt with them as a loving, forgiving father deals with an ungrateful, wayward son. They have resisted His grace, abused His privileges, slighted His opportunities, and have been satisfied to sink down in contentment, in lamentable ingratitude, hollow formalism, and hypocritical insincerity. With pharisaic pride they have vaunted themselves till it has been said of them, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (verse 17). Has not the Lord Jesus sent message after message of rebuke, of warning, of entreaty, to these self-satisfied ones? Have not His counsels been despised and rejected? Have not His delegated messengers been treated with scorn, and their words been received as idle tales? Christ sees that which man does not see. He sees the sins which, if not repented of, will exhaust the patience of a long-suffering God. Christ cannot take up the names of those who are satisfied in their own self-sufficiency. He cannot importune in behalf of a people who feel no need of His help, who claim to know and possess everything.' *Faith & Works*, page 83.

'The love of many shall wax cold'

7. What warning did Jesus give concerning the state of His church in the last days? Matthew 24:12.

NOTE: 'The Lord Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, plainly stated that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." He speaks of a class who have fallen from a high state of spirituality. Let such utterances as these come home with solemn, searching power to our hearts. Where is the fervour, the devotion to God, that corresponds to the greatness of the truth which we claim to believe? The love of the world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying. Is this torpor, this mournful deterioration, to be perpetuated? Is the lamp of truth to flicker and go out in darkness because it is not replenished by the oil of grace?' *Lift Him Up*, page 310.

8. What is the work that needs to be done in us? Galatians 2:20.

NOTE: 'What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image. What is regeneration? It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless.' *Manuscript Releases*, volume 20, page 117.

'I am a sinful man, O Lord'

9. How can we truly know ourselves? Consider Isaiah 6:5, Daniel 10:8, Luke 5:8.

NOTE: 'The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you. No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ. The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realising its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.' *Steps to Christ*, pages 64-65.

10. What danger may those who have had great light fall into? Job 12:2.

NOTE: 'We shall do well to examine ourselves, to see what manner of spirit we are cherishing. Let us learn to speak gently, quietly, even under circumstances the most trying. Let us control not only our words, but our thoughts and imagination. Let us be kind, courteous, in our words and deportment. There is a great neglect in this respect. We do not adorn the doctrines we profess. We are not what we might be, nor what God would have us to be. Those who hope to be the companions of holy angels should possess refined manners. If the principles of the Christian religion are carried out in the daily life, there will be a kind thoughtfulness for others, for this was characteristic of Christ. Then, although a man may be poor, he will have true dignity; for he is God's nobleman.' *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., page 431.

'Who can know it?'

11. What should we realise about the condition of the human heart? Jeremiah 17:9.

NOTE: 'It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, who are believing themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' *Review & Herald*, September 16, 1873.

'No man can of himself understand his errors. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9. The lips may express a poverty of soul that the heart does not acknowledge. While speaking to God of poverty of spirit, the heart may be swelling with the conceit of its own superior humility and exalted righteousness. In one way only can a true knowledge of self be obtained. We must behold Christ. It is ignorance of Him that makes men so uplifted in their own righteousness. When we contemplate His purity and excellence, we shall see our own weakness and poverty and defects as they really are. We shall see ourselves lost and hopeless, clad in garments of self-righteousness, like every other sinner. We shall see that if we are ever saved, it will not be through our own goodness, but through God's infinite grace.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 159.

12. What prayer should be ours as we seek to know ourselves? Psalm 139:23-24.

NOTE: 'Unless the mind of God becomes the mind of man, every effort to purify himself will be useless; for it is impossible to elevate man except through a knowledge of God. The outward gloss may be put on, and men may be as were the Pharisees whom Jesus describes as "whited sepulchres," full of corruption and dead men's bones. But all the deformity of the soul is open to Him who judgeth righteously, and unless the truth is planted in the heart, it cannot control the life. Cleansing the outside of the cup will never make the vessel pure within. A nominal acceptance of truth is good as far as it goes, and the ability to give a reason for our faith is a good accomplishment, but if the truth does not go deeper than this, the soul will never be saved. The heart must be purified from all moral defilement. "I know also my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness." 1 Chronicles 29: 17. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24.' *Our High Calling*, page 142.

Lesson 2: January 4-10

'I counsel thee'

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

STUDY HELP: *Our High Calling*, page 351.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 3:14-22.

LESSON AIM: To study Christ's remedy for the church's critical condition.

Introduction

'The counsel of the true Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm as in a hopeless case. There is yet a chance to remedy their state, and the Laodicean message is full of encouragement. Purity of heart, purity of motive, may yet characterise those who are half-hearted and who are striving to serve God and mammon. They may yet wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.' *Our High Calling*, page 351.

'Buy of me'

1. From whom alone can the church obtain the remedy for its critical problems? Revelation 3:18, first part. Consider Isaiah 55:6.

NOTE: 'Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom, should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart. Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul-temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. We are too easily satisfied with our attainments. We feel rich and increased with goods, and know not that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Revelation 3:17. Now is the time to heed the admonition of the True Witness: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Verse 18.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 189.

2. How are we shown that this buying does not require money? Isaiah 55:1.

NOTE: 'Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 116.

'Gold tried in the fire'

3. What is the first remedy for the church's condition? Revelation 3:18, first part. Compare Job 23:10, Zechariah 13:9.

NOTE: 'The gold tried in the fire is faith that works by love. Only this can bring us into harmony with God. We may be active, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 158.

'The gold tried in the fire represents love and faith. Many are nearly destitute of love. Self-sufficiency blinds their eyes to their great need. There is a positive necessity for a daily conversion to God, a new, deep, and daily experience in the religious life.' *Counsels on Health*, page 402.

4. How is the gold tried in the fire? 1 Peter 1:7.

NOTE: 'All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honour of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. They should look upon the work of God as sacred and holy, and should bring to Him, every day, offerings of joy and gratitude, in return for the power of His grace, by which they are enabled to make advancement in the divine life. It is not necessary that anyone should yield to the temptations of Satan and thus violate his conscience and grieve the Holy Spirit. Every provision has been made in the Word of God whereby all may have divine help in their endeavours to overcome. In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1

Peter 1:7). The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 81.

'White raiment'

5. What is also required by church members if they are not to be rejected by Christ? Revelation 3:18, middle part. Compare Revelation 3:5.

NOTE: 'Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Revelation 3:18.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 113.

'No man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mould me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul. It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely. The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves. Those whom heaven recognises as holy ones are the last to parade their own goodness.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 159-160.

6. What story did Jesus tell to explain the importance of the white raiment? Matthew 22:10-14.

NOTE: 'The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine. It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 312.

'Eyesalve'

7. What third gift from Christ is vital to heal the church's condition? Revelation 3:18, last part. Compare Jeremiah 5:21, Ezekiel 12:2.

NOTE: 'Let the heavenly eyesalve be applied to the eyes of your understanding, that you may distinguish between truth and error. Search the Word; and when you find a "Thus saith the Lord," take your stand.' *My Life Today*, page 73.

'In many minds principles have become so confused that it is difficult for them to grasp correct principles. So great is the dullness of conception that many know scarcely anything of what it means to be witnesses for Christ in these last days. If they only knew, if they only understood, if they could only see what might be in comparison with what is, there would be such an awakening, such a breaking down before God as we have never seen before.' *General Conference Bulletin*, April 16, 1901.

8. What wonderful example of spiritual discernment does the Bible give? 2 Kings 6:15-17, Consider Matthew 13:15-16.

NOTE: 'If we could only see the many dangers from which we are daily preserved by the holy angels, instead of complaining of our trials and misfortunes, we would talk continually of the mercies of God.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 116.

'If we could only see how the Lord is working for us day by day, we should see that He loves us, and that often trial is better for us than prosperity. A little with Heaven's blessing is better than large gains with forgetfulness of God. In the end we shall know surely that well-doing will succeed, and ill-doing will bring sorrow and woe. God is a sure pay-master; equity and justice are the unfailing attributes of His throne.' *Review & Herald*, October 14, 1884.

'As many as I love'

9. How does the faithful and true Witness advise us to regard His chastening? Revelation 3:19, first part. Compare Job 5:17, Proverbs 3:11-12.

NOTE: 'Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are living proof of the tender care of God, who makes the darkness as well as the light and chastens us for our good.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 122.

10. What response often follows chastening? Isaiah 26:16. Compare Hebrews 12:5-11.

NOTE: 'God knows what is for our best good. The peculiar discipline to which we are subject is discipline to bring out not the worst and most unlovely traits of character, but the meekness and loveliness of Christ, developing the precious graces of Christ. You need to learn in Christ's school to become Christlike. God adapts His grace to the peculiarities of each one's necessities. "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. As your burden grows heavier look up and by faith cling more firmly to the hand of Jesus, your mighty helper. As difficulties thicken about His people amid the perils of the last days, He sends His angels to walk all the way by our side, drawing us closer and still closer to the bleeding side of Jesus. And as the greater trials come, lesser trials are forgotten. You must remain pure and true and firm, remembering your character is being imprinted upon the books of heaven. There is no circumstance or place or difficulty or hardship, where we cannot live beautiful lives of Christian fidelity and approved conduct. Victory is not found in shunning trials, getting rid of them, but in meeting them heroically, enduring them patiently. Everyone will meet with trials. If you look to Jesus, if you believe in Him as your personal Saviour, you will be brought through every trial, and enduring these trials with patience, you will become stronger to endure the next test, the next trial. It is only the narrowness of our vision that prevents us from discerning God's loving-kindness in the discipline to which He subjects His church, as well as in the great blessings which He provides. In all times of distress and confusion, God is a sure refuge to His people. In the shadow of His protection they may safely keep His way. In the affliction designed to purify them, the power of the gospel is to be their consolation. In His sure word they have a fortress.' *Our High Calling*, page 317.

'Be zealous therefore and repent'

11. What response does Christ seek from those who heed His counsel? Revelation 3:19, last part.

NOTE: 'The same danger [as in ancient Israel] exists today among the people who profess to be the depositaries of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments will preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reprov'd for evil, and charge God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey His word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people today as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which He will no longer delay His judgments.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, pages 166, 167.

12. What does this repentance require? Isaiah 55:7.

NOTE: 'The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. Repentance includes sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 127.

Lesson 3: January 11-17

'I will shake'

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

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies, volume 1*, pages 179-184.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:4-14.

LESSON AIM: To study the means by which God will ensure that His church is purified.

Introduction

'The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to "science falsely so called" will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine lustre.' *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 80.

'A glorious church'

1. How does Christ describe the condition of His end-time church? Revelation 3:15-17.

NOTE: 'The people to whom God has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time are sleeping at their post. They say by their actions: We have the truth; we are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" while the True Witness declares: Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: "Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Messages of warning, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are borne by the servants of God, defects of character are presented before the erring; but they say: "That does not represent my case. I do not accept the message you bring. I am doing the best I can. I believe the truth.'" *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 101.

2. How does Christ desire His church to be? Ephesians 5:25-27.

NOTE: 'The glory of God is His character. While Moses was in the mount, earnestly interceding with God, he prayed, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." In answer God declared, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." The glory of God, His character, was then revealed: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7). This character was revealed in the life of Christ. That He might by His own example condemn sin in the flesh, He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Constantly He beheld the character of God; constantly He revealed this character to the world. Christ desires His followers to reveal in their lives this same character. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples He declared: "The glory [character] which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:22, 23). Today it is still His purpose to sanctify and cleanse His church "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:26, 27). No greater gift than the character that He revealed, can Christ ask His Father to bestow upon those who believe on Him. What largeness there is in His request! What fullness of grace every follower of Christ has the privilege of receiving! O that we might more fully appreciate the honour Christ confers upon us! By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 322.

'I will shake'

3. How will Christ cleanse His church? Hebrews 12:27.

NOTE: 'We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands. If we make no effort to win souls to Christ we shall be held responsible for the work we might have done, but did not do because of our spiritual indolence. Those who belong to the Lord's kingdom must work earnestly for the saving of souls.' *Colporteur Ministry*, page 12.

4. How will the shaking affect the church? Read again Revelation 3:14-22.

NOTE: In these verses, two outcomes are offered, depending on the response of each individual. Those who heed the counsel of the faithful and true Witness and open the heart's door to the Lord, by repentance and renewed zeal, will have Him abiding in the heart, giving grace to enable them to overcome in the warfare with temptation and sin. Those who choose to ignore or neglect the counsel will remain in their lukewarm state, thus proving offensive to the Lord who will have no choice but to spew them out.

'I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 176.

'Take heed that no man deceive you'

5. What will further reveal the difference between those standing firm and those who are easily shaken? Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24.

NOTE: 'Science, so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other because finite men do not comprehend the power and greatness of God. These words of Holy Writ were presented to me, "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" [Acts 20:30]. This will surely be seen among the people of God. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. They slide into any position to suit the tenor of their feelings of bitterness. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils and will depart from the faith. 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.' *Last Day Events*, pages 176-177.

6. What counsel are we given concerning our spiritual foundations? Colossians 2:6-8.

NOTE: 'Unless they are rooted and grounded in the truth of the Bible and have a living connection with God, many will be infatuated and deceived. Dangers unseen beset our path. Our only safety is in constant watchfulness and prayer. The nearer we live to Jesus, the more will we partake of His pure and holy character; and the more offensive sin appears to us, the more exalted and desirable will appear the purity and brightness of Christ.' *Counsels on Health*, page 623.

'Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the word as we should. The book of Revelation opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," God declares, "and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 113.

'Many shall be offended'

7. How will the outcome of the shaking be clearly shown? Matthew 24:9-13.

NOTE: 'Every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors [i.e. those who profess to be Christians]. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, many are offended.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 89.

8. What attitude will the true follower of Christ have towards persecution? Luke 6:22-23.

NOTE: 'The world loves sin, and hates righteousness, and this was the cause of its hostility to Jesus. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a disturbing element. The light of Christ sweeps away the darkness that covers their sins, and the need of reform is made manifest. While those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit begin war with themselves, those who cling to sin war against the truth and its representatives. Thus strife is created, and Christ's followers are accused as troublers of the people. But it is fellowship with God that brings them the world's enmity. They are bearing the reproach of Christ. They are treading the path that has been trodden by the noblest of the earth. Not with sorrow, but with rejoicing, should they meet persecution. Each fiery trial is God's agent for their refining. Each is fitting them for their work as co-labourers with Him. Each conflict has its place in the great battle for righteousness, and each will add to the joy of their final triumph. Having this in view, the test of their faith and patience will be cheerfully accepted rather than dreaded and avoided. Anxious to fulfil their obligation to the world, fixing their desire upon the approval of God, His servants are to fulfil every duty, irrespective of the fear or the favour of men.' *Desire of Ages*, page 306.

'They shall put you out'

9. Where will the fiercest persecution come from? Matthew 10:34-36, Matthew 10:17, John 16:2.

NOTE: 'The message of the third angel [Revelation 14:9-12] will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The labourers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power, all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, Are these things so? the ministers present fables, prophecy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord," the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it.' *Great Controversy*, page 606.

10. Who in particular will take a lead in the work of persecution? Matthew 24:10. Consider 3 John vv. 9-10, 2 Timothy 4:14-15.

NOTE: 'The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis, under most discouraging, forbidding, circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced, or withheld, must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith, and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren, and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.' *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 463.

11. What precious counsel and promise are we given if called upon to speak before tribunals and courts? Matthew 10:19-20.

NOTE: 'The servants of Christ are to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial for their faith. Their preparation is to be made day by day, in treasuring up in their hearts the precious truths of God's Word, in feeding upon the teaching of Christ, and through prayer strengthening their faith; then, when brought into trial, the Holy Spirit will bring to their remembrance the very truths that will reach the hearts of those who shall come to hear. God will flash the knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures, into their memory at the very time when it is needed. You are now to get ready for the

time of trial. Now you are to know whether your feet are planted on the Eternal Rock. You must have an individual experience, and not depend upon others for your light. When you are brought to the test, how do you know that you will not be alone, with no earthly friend at your side? Will you then be able to realise that Christ is your support? Will you be able to recall the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"? There will be invisible ones all about you bent upon your destruction. Satan and his agents will seek in every way to make you waver from your steadfastness to God and His truth. But if you have an eye single to His glory, you need not take thought as to how you shall witness for His truth.' *Maranatha*, page 255.

'Take heed'

12. What warning against self-confidence have we been given? 1 Corinthians 10:12. Compare John 15:5.

NOTE: 'When Christ on the eve of His betrayal forewarned His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night," Peter confidently declared, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark 14:27, 29). Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he denied his Lord. Peter had not designed that his real character should be known. In assuming an air of indifference he had placed himself on the enemy's ground, and he became an easy prey to temptation. If he had been called to fight for his Master, he would have been a courageous soldier; but when the finger of scorn was pointed at him, he proved himself a coward. Many who do not shrink from active warfare for their Lord are driven by ridicule to deny their faith. By associating with those whom they should avoid, they place themselves in the way of temptation. They invite the enemy to tempt them, and are led to say and do that of which under other circumstances they would never have been guilty. The disciple of Christ who in our day disguises his faith through dread of suffering or reproach denies his Lord as really as did Peter in the judgment hall.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 321.

13. What exceeding great and precious promise have we been given for this time? Romans 8:35-39.

NOTE: 'The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. Soon God's people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defence of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few, this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The church* may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out, the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition.' *Last Day Events*, page 180.

* n.b. 'From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 11. It is these faithful souls who will not fall.

Lesson 4: January 18-24

'Revive us again'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?' Psalm 85:6.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages, book 1*, pages 121-128.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 58.

LESSON AIM: To study the importance of revival, followed by reformation.

Introduction

'God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 127.

'Show My people their transgression'

1. What call must be made to God's people? Isaiah 58:1.

NOTE: 'The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of greater light, that they may unite harmoniously, with the messengers whom He shall send to accomplish the work that He designs they should. The Lord has raised up messengers and endued them with His Spirit, and has said, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between the people and the message of heaven. The message of God will come to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out. I call upon every minister to seek the Lord, to put away

pride, to put away strife after supremacy, and humble the heart before God. It is the coldness of heart, the unbelief of those who ought to have faith, that keeps the churches in feebleness.' *Counsels to Writers & Editors*, page 38.

2. What picture is revealed of a church going through the motions of formal religion? Isaiah 58:2-4.

NOTE: 'It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory and so little on practical godliness is that Christ is not abiding in their hearts. They do not have a living connection with God. Many souls decide in favour of the truth from the weight of evidence, without being converted. Practical discourses were not given in connection with the doctrinal, that as the hearers should see the beautiful chain of truth they might fall in love with its Author and be sanctified through obedience. The minister's work is not done until he has urged home upon his hearers the necessity of a change of character in accordance with the pure principles of the truth which they have received. A formal religion is to be dreaded, for in it is no Saviour.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, pages 395-396.

'Ye shall afflict your souls'

3. What work does God require of His people? Isaiah 58:5, first part. Compare Leviticus 16:29, 31, 23:27, 29, 32.

NOTE: 'Every man was required to afflict his soul while this work of atonement was going forward. All business was to be laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel were to spend the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart.' *Great Controversy*, page 419.

4. What is required in afflicting the soul? Psalm 139:23-24.

NOTE: 'We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.' *Great Controversy*, page 489.

'All with one accord'

5. What was the result of the work of preparation made by the disciples before the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:1. Compare Acts 4:32, Romans 15:5-6.

NOTE: 'The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realised what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them. These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realised that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 37.

6. What practical expression of this oneness was seen? Acts 2:42-47.

NOTE: 'As the disciples proclaimed the truths of the gospel in Jerusalem, God bore witness to their word, and a multitude believed. Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter. The record declares, "Neither was there any among them that lacked," and it tells how the need was filled. Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency. Selling their houses or their lands, they brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, "and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were "of one heart and of one soul." One common interest controlled them, the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth. Thus it will ever be when the Spirit of God takes possession of the life. Those whose hearts are filled with the love of Christ, will follow the example of Him who for our sake became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. Money, time, influence, all the gifts they have received from God's hand, they will value only as a means of advancing the work of the gospel. Thus it was in the early church; and when in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellow men may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 71.

'They were all filled with the Holy Ghost'

7. What was the Lord able to do because of this work of preparation? Acts 2:2-4, Acts 4:31.

NOTE: 'Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realise his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognise the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 507.

8. What must the church understand in carrying out its mission? John 15:4-5.

NOTE: 'At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labour of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, "Watch unto prayer," "Watch, . . . and pray always." A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 507.

'Ye make clean the outside'

9. What example are we given of reformation without revival? 2 Chronicles 24:2, 17-18.

NOTE: 'A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganisation, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.' *Last Day Events*, page 189.

10. How did Jesus picture reformation without revival? Matthew 23:25.

NOTE: 'There are many whose religion consists in activities. They want to be engaged in, and have the credit of doing, some great work, while the little graces that go to make up a lovely Christian character are entirely overlooked. The busy, bustling service, which gives the impression that one is doing some wonderful work, is not acceptable to God. It is a Jehu spirit, which says, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord." It is gratifying to self; it feeds a self-complacent feeling; but all the while the soul may be defiled with the plague-spot of unsubdued, uncontrolled selfishness.' *Pamphlet: Living by Principle*, page 46.

11. What work of cleansing did Jesus say must come first? Matthew 23:26.

NOTE: 'Unless the mind of God becomes the mind of man, every effort to purify himself will be useless; for it is impossible to elevate man except through a knowledge of God. The outward gloss may be put on, and men may be as were the Pharisees whom Jesus describes as "whited sepulchres," full of corruption and dead men's bones. But all the deformity of the soul is open to Him who judgeth righteously, and unless the truth is planted in the heart, it cannot control the life. Cleansing the outside of the cup will never make the vessel pure within. A nominal acceptance of truth is good as far as it goes, and the ability to give a reason for our faith is a good accomplishment, but if the truth does not go deeper than this, the soul will never be saved. The heart must be purified from all moral defilement. "I know also my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness." 1 Chronicles 29: 17. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23, 24.' *Our High Calling*, page 142.

'Ye shall know them by their fruits'

12. What evidence did Jesus tell us to look for in distinguishing between the true and the false? Matthew 7:15-20.

NOTE: 'The religion of Christ is not what many think it is, nor what their lives represent it to be. The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life, and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and sustained by His life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Every one who is sincerely striving for the victory over self, will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." [2 Corinthians 12:9.] Through personal effort, joined with the prayer of faith, the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows

into the likeness of Christ, and finally, instead of being the sport of circumstances, instead of indulging selfishness, and being carried away by light and trifling conversation, the man is master of his thoughts and words. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ. He invites us to learn of him. He would have us practice self-control, and be perfect in character, working that which is well-pleasing in His sight. "By their fruits ye shall know them," [Matthew 7:20.] is His own standard of judging character.' *Gospel Workers, 1982 ed.*, page 420.

13. What fruit is the evidence of the Spirit-filled life? Galatians 5:22-24.

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 briars. God is dishonoured before the world by all such professors [those who profess to be Christians]. 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. What an account will those have to give in the day of final reckoning, who profess to be keeping the commandments of God, while their lives contradict their profession, for they bear no precious fruit.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 92.

Lesson 5: January 25-31

'The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ'

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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Romans 1:16-17.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 52-56.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 7:24-8:14.

LESSON AIM: To study the importance of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Introduction

'God's people must have that faith which will lay hold of divine power: "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Not all will receive the light, forsake their sins, and believe the words of eternal life, and without drawing back, go on from one truth to another, until guided into all truth. Those who believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven their sins, should not, through temptation, fail to press on to fight the good fight of faith. Their faith should grow stronger until their Christian life, as well as their words, shall declare, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth me from all sin."' *Review & Herald*, September 3, 1889.

'All under sin'

1. What is the verdict of God's word on man's spiritual state? Romans 3:10.

NOTE: 'The Word of God declares, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3: 12). Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realise that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God. We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is: Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?' *Selected Messages, book 1*, pages 320-321.

2. How may people be brought back to peace with God? Romans 5:1.

NOTE: 'As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, "Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish." His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.' *Faith & Works*, page 99.

'We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand'

3. What was the teaching of the Pharisees about salvation? Luke 18:11-12. Compare Isaiah 1:11-15.

NOTE: The Pharisees placed high value on the performance of religious rituals as the means of winning salvation. Paul, who described himself as 'a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee', had attempted this way of salvation before realising that these 'works of the law' (compare Galatians 2:16) could bring no salvation.

'Oh! how Satan watches to see his bait taken so readily, and to see souls walking in the very path he has prepared. He does not want them to give up praying, and maintaining a form of religious duties, for he can thus make them more useful in his service. He unites his sophistry and deceptive snares with their experiences and professions, and thus advances his cause wonderfully. The hypocritical Pharisees prayed and fasted, observed the forms of godliness, while corrupt at heart. Satan stands by, taunting Christ and His angels with insults, "I have them! I have them! I have prepared my deception for them. Your blood is worthless here. Your intercessions and power and wonderful works may as well cease; I have them! They are mine! For all their high profession as subjects of Christ, for all they once enjoyed the illuminations of His presence, I will secure them to myself in the very face of Heaven, which they are talking about. It is such subjects as those that I can use to decoy others.'" *Pamphlet: Testimony for the church at Battle Creek*, page 55.

4. How does Paul describe the process of salvation? Philippians 2:12-13.

NOTE: 'Paul holds up the standard of perfection and shows how it may be reached. "Work out your own salvation," he says, "for it is God which worketh in you." The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness. God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are "willing to be made willing," the Saviour will accomplish this for us, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 482.

'Holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight'

5. What example does Paul give to explain how righteousness is imputed to the sinner? Romans 4:20-25.

NOTE: 'The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust. Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1, 2.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 112.

6. Is it sufficient for salvation if sinners only seek forgiveness of their sins? Romans 6:1-2.

NOTE: 'All self-righteousness must be given up, for we have no righteousness of ourselves. It is the gift of God; therefore we should not be exalted, or by any means pretentious, for it is an offence to God. What have we that we have not received? Man cannot rely upon himself for anything good or righteous. Christ, only Christ and His righteousness, will obtain for us a passport into heaven. . . . Righteousness means being good and doing good. He [Jesus] was just and right. As children of God are we developing a character that is Christlike? Are we individually working daily at the trade of being a Christian, and through the rich impartation of the gift of the Spirit of God, are we making straight paths for our feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way? The lame are those who are not firmly established in the truth, who are spiritually halting, having defects of character, and needing a correct example given them. If we make crooked paths they make our errors an excuse for deviating from the path of righteousness. It is not enough to believe sound doctrine; we must put it into practice. It is by overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil that any student comes into possession of that knowledge that gives him access to the tree of life. We must all learn that we must overcome as Christ overcame in our behalf. All pride is sin, and must be expelled from the soul. Christ came to cut us loose from the originator of sin. He came to give us a mastery over the power of the destroyer, and to save us from the sting of the serpent. Through His imparted righteousness He would place all human beings where they will be on vantage ground. He came to this earth and lived the law of God that man might stand in his God-given manhood, having complete mastery over his natural inclination to self-indulgence and to the selfish ideas and principles which tarnish the soul. The Physician of soul and body, He will give wisdom and complete victory over warring lusts. He will provide every facility, that man may perfect a completeness of character in every respect.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 7*, page 320.

'Take My yoke'

7. How does Jesus describe coming into co-operation with Him and the results of so doing? Matthew 11:28-29.

NOTE: 'Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself. In short, man must overcome as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory that it is his privilege to gain by the all-powerful name of Jesus, he may become an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. This could not be the case if Christ alone did all the overcoming. Man must do his part; he must be victor on his own account, through the strength and grace that

Christ gives him. Man must be a co-worker with Christ in the labour of overcoming, and then he will be partaker with Christ of His glory.' *Testimonies, volume 4, page 32.*

'How often do we come in contact with people who are never happy! They fail of enjoying the contentment and peace that Jesus can give. They profess to be Christians, but they do not comply with the conditions upon which the promise of God is fulfilled. Jesus has said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." The reason why many are in a state of unrest is that they are not learning in the school of the Master. The submissive, self-sacrificing child of God understands by experience what it is to have the peace of Christ. True followers of Christ know that they must take His yoke, share His trials, carry His burdens. But they do not feel like complaining; for the meekness and lowliness of Christ makes the yoke easy and the burden light. It is love of selfish ease, love of pleasure, your self-esteem, self-exaltation that prevents you from learning the precious life-lessons in the school of Christ. It is the Christian's duty not to permit surroundings and circumstances to mould him; but to live above surroundings, fashioning his character according to the divine Model. He is to be faithful in whatever place he is found. He is to do his duty with fidelity, improving the opportunities given him of God, making the most of his capabilities. With an eye single to the glory of God, he is to work for Jesus wherever he may be. We are to surrender the will, the heart, to God, and become acquainted with Christ. We must deny self, take up the cross, and follow Jesus. Not one of us can reach heaven, save by the narrow, cross-bearing way. But how many wear the cross as an ornament of the person, but fail to bear the cross in practical, every-day life.' *Review & Herald, September 22, 1891.*

8. What is the only source of the Christian's strength? Philippians 4:13.

NOTE: 'If you draw close to Jesus, and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God, and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.' *Gospel Workers, page 128.*

'The disciples of Christ had a deep sense of their own inefficiency, and with humiliation and prayer they joined their weakness to His strength, their ignorance to His wisdom, their unworthiness to His righteousness, their poverty to His exhaustless wealth. Thus strengthened and equipped, they hesitated not to press forward in the service of the Master. All that man has, God has given him, and he who improves his abilities to God's glory will be an instrument to do good; but we can no more live a religious life without constant prayer and the performance of religious duties than we can have physical strength without partaking of temporal food. We must daily sit down at God's table. We must receive strength from the living Vine, if we are nourished.' *God's Amazing Grace, page 113.*

'Partakers of the Divine nature'

9. What is Christ's ideal for His Church? Ephesians 5:26-27.

NOTE: 'God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.' *Desire of Ages, page 311.*

10. What assurance are Christians given concerning the power of God? Jude v.24.

NOTE: 'Salvation is secured by a mutual contract. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Will you, with all your heart and mind and soul, enter into this contract? Look to your Redeemer in faith and loving trust, for power and wisdom to do the work of character-building. He sits as a refiner, to purify the gold and silver from all dross. Then look continually unto Him, and no cheap or worthless material will be brought into the structure of your character building. By faith you may accept the merits of the blood of the Son of God, which He has shed that the sinner might not perish, but have everlasting life. God has laid upon Him all power, that He may impart help to every one who will break with Satan and acknowledge Christ as his only hope. When you are ready to co-operate with Him who can keep you from falling, your resolutions will be of some value. Christ, the chief Healer, will make you whole. He works mightily with every one who is in earnest. He will give strength and victory. All the mean and wicked traits of character can be taken away by the One who has purchased you as His property.' *In Heavenly Places, page 19.*

11. By what means has God made it possible for repentant sinners to become partakers of the divine nature? 2 Peter 1:3-4.

NOTE: 'God has called His people to glory and virtue, and these will be manifest in the lives of all who are truly connected with Him. Having become partakers of the heavenly gift, they are to go unto perfection, being "kept by the power of God through faith." 1 Peter 1:5. It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children. He desires to see men and women reaching the highest standard; and when by faith they lay hold of the power of Christ, when they plead His unfailing promises, and claim them as their own, when with an importunity that will not be denied they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be made complete in Him.' *Acts of the Apostles, page 530.*

‘Submit yourselves therefore to God’

12. What is required of the one who wishes to be saved from his sins? Matthew 16:24, Galatians 2:20.

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 desire to make your life such as will fit you for heaven at last. You are often discouraged at finding yourself weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits and customs of your old life in sin. Your promises are like ropes of sand. You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power, you will conquer. Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable. But you need not despair. It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ.’ *Our High Calling*, page 103.

13. How does James describe this principle? James 4:7.

NOTE: ‘It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him. 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, your life 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. Will you not say, “I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now,” and from this moment be wholly on the Lord’s side?’ *Our High Calling*, page 103.

Lesson 6: February 1-7

‘Till we have sealed the servants of our God’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.’ Isaiah 8:16.

STUDY HELP: *Early Writings*, pages 36-38.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 7. Revelation 13:16-17.

LESSON AIM: To study what is meant by the sealing of God’s people.

Introduction

‘Many do not realise what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.’ *Early Writings*, page 71.

‘The servants of our God’

1. What work must be completed before the final judgements of God fall upon the earth? Revelation 7:1-3. Compare Revelation 9:4.

NOTE: ‘I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, “My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!” Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand, and crying with a loud voice, “Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.” I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.’ *Early Writings*, page 38.

‘When our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out. I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus’ work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues.’ *Early Writings*, page 36.

2. What will happen when the angels release the winds? Compare Revelation 7:1 with Revelation 16:1-3.

NOTE: ‘Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of

society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones. The time is at hand when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn. Disasters by sea and by land follow one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of disorganised, unregulated forces of nature, wholly beyond the control of man; but in them all, God's purpose may be read. They are among the agencies by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.' *Christian Service*, page 52.

'Sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise'

3. Who is the One that seals God's people? Ephesians 4:30.

NOTE: 'Of the number of them that shall be sealed will be those who have come from every nation and kindred and tongue and people. From every country will be gathered men and women who will stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb, crying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Revelation 7:10. But before this work can be accomplished, we must experience here in our own country the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 532.

4. What guarantee [earnest] does God give to those who are sealed? 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.

NOTE: 'It is Christ's purpose to enlighten our understanding, that we may know "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power" to all who deny self, and taking up the cross, follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Words can not express the blessedness of following His guidance. He pledges Himself to work with those who strive to represent Him in thought, word, and deed. He gives them assurances to encourage them when they are cast down. He speaks words that will uplift them, but He never designs to exalt them in their own estimation. He gives them the earnest of His Spirit, recognising their meekness in wearing His yoke. "Learn of Me," He says, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Holiness of heart and works and spirit is obtained through a belief of the truth.' *Battle Creek Letters*, page 56.

5. What does the seal of God indicate? 2 Timothy 2:19, first part.

NOTE: 'The testing time will come to all, when the hopes of many who have for years thought themselves secure, will be seen to be without foundation. When in new positions, under varied circumstances, some who have seemed to be pillars in the house of God reveal only rotten timber beneath the paint and varnish. But the humble in heart, who have daily felt the importance of riveting their souls to the eternal Rock, will stand unmoved amid the tempests of trial, because they trusted not to themselves. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19).' *The Sanctified Life*, page 12.

'In their foreheads'

6. Where are the servants of God to be sealed? Revelation 7:3. Compare Revelation 9:4.

NOTE: 'What are you doing in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mould and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth, these are receiving the heavenly mould and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity. Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God, candidates for heaven. Every individual soul, if he would receive the seal of the living God, must hear the Word of the Lord, and do it with exactitude. There must be no such thing as haphazard religion if men would have a place in the family of God. 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 288.

7. Where is the mark of the beast to be placed? Revelation 13:16.

NOTE: 'The Sabbath is the sign of God; it is the seal of His Law. Isaiah 8:16. It is the token of His authority and power. It is a sign whereby we may **know** that He is God, and therefore it is appropriately said to be placed in the forehead. The worshipers of the beast (Revelation 13) are said to receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. As the forehead represents the intellect, the hand represents power, as Psalm 89:48, "Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Compulsory worship is not acceptable to God; His servants are sealed only in their foreheads. But it is acceptable to wicked powers; it has always been craved by the Romish hierarchy. . . The sign or seal of God is His Sabbath, and the seal or mark of the beast is in direct opposition to it; it is a counterfeit sabbath on the "day of the sun." In the message of the Third Angel (Revelation 14:9-12) they who do not receive the mark of the beast keep the Commandments of God, and the Sabbath is in the fourth precept; they keep the Sabbath of the Lord; they have His sign or seal. The importance of this sign is shown in this, that the Fourth Commandment is the only one in the Law which distinguishes the Creator from false gods. Compare Jeremiah 10:10-12; Acts 17:23, 24; Revelation 14:6, 7; etc. And it is that part of His Law for keeping which His people will suffer persecution. But when the wrath of God comes upon the persecutors who are found enforcing the sign or mark of the beast [Revelation 16:2], then they will realise the importance of the Sabbath, the seal of the living God. They who turn away from that which the Lord

spoke when His voice shook the earth will confess their fatal error when His voice shall shake the heavens and the earth. Hebrews 12:25, 26: Joel 3:9-16, and others.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 505.

'Steadfast, unmoveable'

8. What quality must the children of God possess? 1 Corinthians 15:58.

NOTE: '[The seal of God] is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved.' *Maranatha*, page 200.

9. What choice will those who are sealed be obliged to make? Acts 5:29.

NOTE: 'Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads (it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved) just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming. The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.' *Maranatha*, page 200.

'These are they which came out of great tribulation'

10. What assurance are we given that the sealed ones will come through their ordeal of tribulation? Revelation 7:14.

NOTE: "These [the hundred and forty-four thousand] are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5. "These are they which came out of great tribulation;" they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault" before God.' *Great Controversy*, page 648.

11. What song of victory will be theirs? Revelation 15:3.

NOTE: 'Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, so resplendent is it with the glory of God, are gathered the company that have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, "having the harps of God," they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, "the voice of harpers harping with their harps." And they sing "a new song" before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb, a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience, an experience such as no other company have ever had.' *Great Controversy*, page 648.

12. What privilege will be granted to those who are sealed? Revelation 14:3-5.

NOTE: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Revelation 7:14-17.' *Great Controversy*, page 648.

'No corrupt communication'

13. What is required of those who are to be sealed? Ephesians 4:29-30.

NOTE: 'A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 337.

14. How is the character and behaviour of those who are sealed described? 2 Timothy 2:19.

NOTE: 'Not all members of the church are cultivating personal piety; therefore they do not understand their personal responsibility. They do not realise that it is their privilege and duty to reach the high standard of Christian perfection. Are we looking forward to the Latter Rain, confidently hoping for a better day, when the church shall be endued with power from on high and thus fitted for work? The Latter Rain will never refresh and invigorate the indolent, who do not use the powers God

has given them. We are in great need of the pure, life-giving atmosphere that nurtures and invigorates the spiritual life. We need greater earnestness. The solemn message given us to give to the world is to be proclaimed with greater fervency, even with an intensity that will impress unbelievers, leading them to see that the Most High is working with us, that He is the source of our efficiency and strength.' *Maranatha*, page 212.

Lesson 7: February 8-14

'He, the Spirit of truth'

MEMORY VERSE: 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' Romans 8:16.

STUDY HELP: *Gospel Workers*, pages 284-289.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 14:16-17, 26, 16:7-14.

LESSON AIM: To study the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing a people for the coming of Christ.

Introduction

'The work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.' *Desire of Ages*, page 173.

'He will reprove the world'

1. How did Jesus describe the work of the Holy Spirit? John 16:8.

NOTE: The Greek word 'elegcho' translated 'reprove' can be rendered as convict, convince, rebuke.

'The Spirit brings us face-to-face with the reality of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. In other words the Spirit persuades man that he is a sinner, leads him to look for righteousness in Jesus, and admonishes him about the coming judgement to encourage repentance.' Fernando Chaij; *The Key to Victory*, page 75.

'The office of the Holy Spirit is distinctly specified in the words of Christ: "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance, and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements.' *My Life Today*, page 43.

2. What will the conviction of sin lead the sinner to do? Psalm 51:3.

NOTE: 'We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee [Luke 18:10-14] felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armour which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. He came "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. But "they that are whole need not a physician." Luke 5:31. We must know our real condition, or we shall not feel our need of Christ's help. We must understand our danger, or we shall not flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds, or we should not desire healing.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 158.

'Have mercy upon me, O God'

3. When the sinner acknowledges his sin, what must he do? Psalm 51:1.

NOTE: 'Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offence to your friend or neighbour, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you have sinned against his Creator. True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. Many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of mortals; for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate. God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God. Do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Desire the fullness of the grace of Christ. Let your heart be filled with an intense longing for His righteousness.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 128.

4. What precious promise may we claim when we confess our sins? 1 John 1:9, Psalm 32:5.

NOTE: 'When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Galatians 1:4. And "this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5:14, 15. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.' *Desire of Ages*, page 266.

'The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness'

5. How does the Holy Spirit convict the heart of righteousness? Isaiah 26:9.

NOTE: 'Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be moulded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 52.

6. How did Jesus describe the work of the Holy Spirit for believers? John 16:13, John 14:26.

NOTE: 'The Holy Spirit is constantly at work seeking to draw the attention of men to the great sacrifice made upon the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God to man, and to open to the convicted soul the precious promises in the Scriptures. It is the Holy Spirit that brings to the darkened minds the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit that makes men's hearts burn within them with an awakened intelligence of the truths of eternity. It is the Holy Spirit that presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convicts of sin. It is the Holy Spirit that produces godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and inspires faith in Him who alone can save from all sin. It is the Holy Spirit that works to transform character by withdrawing the affections of men from those things which are temporal and perishable, and fixing them upon the immortal inheritance, the eternal substance which is imperishable. The Holy Spirit recreates, refines, and sanctifies the human agents, that they may become members of the royal family, children of the Heavenly King.' *Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1893.

7. What remains for those who reject the Holy Spirit's convicting influence? Hebrews 10:26-27.

NOTE: 'God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit's work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from God, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner. "Let him alone" (Hosea 4:17) is the divine command. Then "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26, 27.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 405.

'The Spirit of truth shall be in you'

8. What promise did Jesus make to His disciples? John 14:17.

NOTE: 'The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the Word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 199.

9. How does Paul describe the lives of those who are willing to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance? Romans 8:4.

NOTE: 'If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" (Psalm 19:7, margin). Through love "the righteousness of the law" will be "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).' *Reflecting Christ*, page 73.

'The Spirit maketh intercession for us'

10. How does the Holy Spirit aid us in our prayer life? Romans 8:26. Consider Ephesians 6:18.

NOTE: 'We must have help from above if we resist the manifold temptations of Satan, and escape his devices. Amid the prevailing darkness, we must have light from God to reveal the traps and gins of error, or we shall be ensnared. We should improve the opportunity for prayer, both in secret and around the family altar. Many need to learn how to pray. When we in humility tell the Lord our wants, the Spirit itself makes intercession for us; as our sense of need causes us to lay bare our souls

before the all-searching eye of Omnipotence, our earnest, fervent prayers enter within the veil, our faith claims the promises of God, and help comes to us.' *Our High Calling*, page 129.

11. How are we shown that the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to have access to God? Ephesians 2:18.

NOTE: 'Through faith the Holy Spirit finds access to the heart, and creates holiness therein. Man cannot become an agent to work the works of Christ unless he is in communion with God through the Holy Spirit. We can be fitted for heaven only through a transformation of character; we must have Christ's righteousness as our credentials, if we would find access to the Father. We must be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We must daily be transformed by the influence of the Holy Spirit; for it is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man, by presenting to the soul the matchless charms of Jesus.' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 77.

'Ye shall receive power'

12. What did Jesus promise to His disciples once the Holy Spirit had come upon them? Acts 1:8.

NOTE: 'The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfilment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should they pray that God will baptise His chosen ambassadors in mission fields with a rich measure of His Spirit. The presence of the Spirit with God's workers will give the proclamation of truth a power that not all the honour or glory of the world could give.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 50.

13. What had to happen among the disciples before the promised power was given? Acts 2:1.

NOTE: 'In obedience to the word of their Master the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and for ten days they prayed for the fulfilment of God's promise. These ten days were days of deep heart searching. The disciples put away all difference that had existed among them, and drew close together in Christian fellowship. At the end of the ten days the Lord fulfilled His promise by a wonderful outpouring of His Spirit. When they were "all with one accord in one place" in prayer and supplication, the promised blessing came.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 333.

'Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 507.

Lesson 8: February 15-21
'The former rain'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.' Hosea 6:3.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 333.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: 1 John 4:13-5:4.

LESSON AIM: To study the work of the Holy Spirit in the 'former rain.'

Introduction

'As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.' *Last Day Events*, page 183.

'They were pricked in their heart'

1. How does the former rain of the Spirit begin? Acts 2:37-38.

NOTE: 'A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfil the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God's Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the word; but when the Spirit's power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God's word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home will be prepared to exert a healthful influence.' *Review & Herald*, March 22, 1887.

2. What will be the effect on the lives of those who experience the former rain? Acts 2:46-47.

NOTE: 'Only when the Church is composed of pure, unselfish members, can it fulfil God's purpose. Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, We will first get them into the church, and then reform them. But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray with them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God's people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts.' *Review & Herald*, May 21, 1901.

'To be spiritually minded is life and peace'

3. What will be the evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life? Galatians 5:22-23.

NOTE: 'True Christians, the world over, will be Christlike. Said the Saviour, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." And again, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." This evidence is conclusive. If Christ dwells in the heart, the precious fruits of His Spirit will as a natural result be manifested in the life. If Satan controls the mind, evil traits will as surely be apparent.' *Review & Herald*, September 6, 1881.

'The followers of Christ should evidence to the world a change in their life for the better, and by their good works show the transforming influence of the Spirit of God upon their hearts. But there are many who bear no fruit to the glory of God; they give no evidence of a radical change in their life. Although they make high profession, they have not felt the necessity of obtaining a personal experience for themselves, by engaging in Christian duties with hearts of love, intensified by their new and holy obligations, feeling no weight of their responsibility in doing their Master's work with readiness and diligence.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 56.

4. How important is it to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart? Romans 8:9.

NOTE: 'Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 408.

'Ye have purified your souls'

5. What effect does the ministry of the Holy Spirit have upon the heart and life? 1 Peter 1:22.

NOTE: 'Grace can thrive only in the heart that is being constantly prepared for the precious seeds of truth. The thorns of sin will grow in any soil; they need no cultivation; but grace must be carefully cultivated. The briars and thorns are always ready to spring up, and the work of purification must advance continually. If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off but not uprooted grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 50.

6. How important is it for the heart to be pure? Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: 'The Lord is waiting to do great things for His people; but they must be pure in heart before they can see God or know Him as a pure and holy God. Jesus led His disciples into the audience chamber of the Most High. He impressed upon their minds what was to be the burden of their prayer. They were to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would supply every need of the soul, for it would work by love and purify the soul. The Spirit taking its abode in the heart, will transform the entire being, conforming it to the likeness of Christ.' *Bible Training School*, June 1, 1917.

'So is everyone that is born of the Spirit'

7. What transformation does the Holy Spirit bring to the life? Romans 12:2.

NOTE: 'While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it

transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.' *Desire of Ages*, page 173.

8. How was this transformation seen in the apostles? Acts 4:13.

NOTE: 'The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 6*, page 1117.

'The sword of the Spirit'

9. What does the Holy Spirit use in this work of transforming the life? Ephesians 6:17.

NOTE: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 100.

10. How may we lay hold on the Spirit's power to transform the life? Ephesians 6:18.

NOTE: 'We have great victories to gain, and a heaven to lose if we do not gain them. The carnal heart must be crucified; for its tendency is to moral corruption, and the end thereof is death. Nothing but the life-giving influences of the gospel can help the soul. Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 312.

11. What is likewise of vital importance in the lives of those led by the Spirit? Acts 1:8.

NOTE: 'The only way to grow in grace is to be disinterestedly [i.e. unselfishly] doing the very work which Christ has enjoined upon us, to engage, to the extent of our ability, in helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life. Those who endeavour to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working. And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in degeneration and decay. A man who would refuse to exercise his limbs would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength that he already had.' *Steps to Christ*, page 80.

'The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence become witnesses for God and His truth. In many places consecrated men and women may be seen communicating to others the light that has made plain to them the way of salvation through Christ. And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptised with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 53.

'If we walk in the light'

12. What counsel does Paul give to those who have been enlightened by the Spirit? Ephesians 5:8-9.

NOTE: 'I have been shown the condition of God's people. They are stupefied by the spirit of the world. They are denying their faith by their works. I was pointed back to ancient Israel. They had great light and exalted privileges; yet they did not live up to the light nor appreciate their advantages, and their light became darkness. They walked in the light of their own eyes instead of following the leadings of God. The history of the children of Israel was written for the benefit of those who live in the last days, that they may avoid following their example of unbelief.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 43.

13. What does John say is vital if we are to be cleansed from all sin? 1 John 1:7.

NOTE: 'There must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognise the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 333.

'We are not to pass judgment on those who have not had the opportunities and privileges we have had. Some of these will go into heaven before those who have had great light but have not lived up to the light.' *Evangelism*, page 173.

'The latter rain'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.' Acts 2:17-18.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 506-512.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Joel 2:28-32.

LESSON AIM: To study the work of the Holy Spirit in the 'latter rain.'

Introduction

'We need not worry about the latter rain. All we have to do is to keep the vessel clean and right side up and prepared for the reception of the heavenly rain, and keep praying, "Let the latter rain come into my vessel. Let the light of the glorious angel which unites with the third angel shine upon me; give me a part in the work; let me sound the proclamation; let me be a co-labourer with Jesus Christ." Thus seeking God, let me tell you, He is fitting you up all the time, giving you His grace.' *The Upward Look*, page 283.

'They shall be filled'

1. How are we shown that only those who thirst will be filled? Matthew 5:6.

NOTE: 'The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 302.

'There must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognise the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.' *Maranatha*, page 219.

2. What example are we given of those who failed to recognise the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:12-13.

NOTE: 'The baptism of the Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion and to the performance of many wonderful works. Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God. But should the Lord work upon men as He did on and after the day of Pentecost, many who now claim to believe the truth would know so very little of the operation of the Holy Spirit that they would cry, "Beware of fanaticism." They would say of those who were filled with the Spirit, "These men are full of new wine.'" *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 57.

n.b. The comment: 'These men are full of new wine' was, of course, mockery, as the Bible points out. It is impossible to get drunk on new wine.

'Be of one mind, live in peace'

3. What was the condition of the disciples when the Holy Spirit was poured out? Acts 2:1.

NOTE: 'Every individual must realise his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 333.

4. What had been the situation among the disciples only seven weeks previously? Luke 22:24.

NOTE: 'Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life; it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognised as labourers together with God.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 402.

'Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between the people and the message of heaven. The message of God will come to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out. I call upon every minister to seek the Lord, to put away pride, to put away strife after supremacy, and humble the heart before God. It is the coldness of heart, the unbelief of those who ought to have faith, that keeps the churches in feebleness.' *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892.

'Them that obey Him'

5. To whom only will the Holy Spirit be given? Acts 5:32.

NOTE: 'Those who refuse to reform by accepting Christ, find nothing reformatory in sin. Their minds are set to carry out their purpose of revolt, and they are not, and never will be, forced into submission. Today there is danger that, as of old, the Holy Spirit will be rejected because it comes in a way not in accordance with the minds of men. Because it comes, not to praise men, or to build up their erroneous theories, but to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, many turn

away from it. They are not willing to exchange their own righteousness (which is unrighteousness) for the righteousness of Christ, which is pure, unadulterated truth. The Holy Spirit flatters no man, neither does it work according to human devising; and if it comes as a reprover, it is man's place to hear and to obey its voice.' *Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1899.

6. What terrible sin of the Jews must we not repeat? Acts 7:51.

NOTE: 'It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. [See Matthew 12:24.] They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power.' *Desire of Ages*, page 322.

'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me'

7. What work must accompany the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8.

NOTE: 'The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be labourers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognise the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not labourers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"' *Christian Service*, page 52.

8. What need expressed by Christ is still the same today? Matthew 9:37.

NOTE: "'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.'" [Acts 1:8.] These words of Jesus have lost none of their force. Our Saviour calls for faithful witnesses in these days of religious formalism; but how few, even among the professed ambassadors for Christ, are ready to give a faithful, personal testimony for their Master! Many can tell what the great and good men of generations past have done, and dared, and suffered, and enjoyed. They become eloquent in setting forth the power of the gospel, which has enabled others to rejoice in trying conflicts, and to stand firm against fierce temptations. But while so earnest in bringing forward other Christians as witnesses for Jesus, they seem to have no fresh, timely experience of their own to relate.' *Gospel Workers*, page 273.

'What the cause most needs is consecrated young men and women, who feel a personal responsibility for the advance of the work, and who will co-operate with divine agencies to shed light into the moral darkness of the world.' *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, page 67.

'For a witness unto all nations'

9. What is the purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8, Matthew 24:14.

NOTE: 'God has given His people a great work to do in the world, and every soul who professes to be a son or daughter of God should give evidence that his heart is being impressed by the Holy Spirit. This will mean everything to the success of his labours. The Lord has placed various gifts in the church that we may appreciate these gifts, and act our part in the grand finishing-up work of this earth's history. Let us understand our need of communion with God. We are to experience the sanctifying power of His grace on the human heart. We are to be submissive to the will of God, and willing to engage in the work that He has appointed His servants to do.' *General Conference Bulletin*, May 18, 1909.

10. What promise are we given that the Gospel work will be finished? Romans 9:28.

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.' *Maranatha*, page 19.

'The everlasting Gospel'

11. What is the message that we have been commanded to give to the world? Revelation 14:6-12.

NOTE: 'This message [is] to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety [the blood of Christ]; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All

power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 91.

12. What did the early church do to prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:14.

NOTE: 'Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. We must seek His favours with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." Matthew 18:20. The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labour for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend that at this very time, God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 334.

Lesson 10: March 1-7 'This Gospel of the kingdom'

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

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 91-98.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 14:6-12.

LESSON AIM: To study the message God has commanded His church to give to the world.

Introduction

'This is the testimony that must go throughout the length and breadth of the world. It presents the law and the gospel, binding up the two in a perfect whole. (See Romans 5 and 1 John 3:9 to the close of the chapter.) These precious scriptures will be impressed upon every heart that is opened to receive them. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple," those who are contrite in heart. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." These have not a mere nominal faith, a theory of truth, a legal religion, but they believe to a purpose, appropriating to themselves the richest gifts of God. They plead for the gift, that they may give to others. They can say, "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 94.

'The power of God unto salvation'

1. How does the Bible explain what the Gospel is? Romans 1:16.

NOTE: 'The gospel is called the power of God unto salvation, because God alone can make the truth a power which sanctifies the soul. He alone can render the cross of Christ triumphant.' *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899.

'Many voices are advocating error; let your voice advocate truth. Present subjects that will be as green pastures to the sheep of God's fold. Do not lead your hearers into waste tracts, where they will be no nearer the fountain of living water than they were before hearing you. Present the truth as it is in Jesus, making plain the requirements of the law and the gospel. Present Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and tell of His power to save all who come to Him. The Captain of our salvation is interceding for His people, not as a petitioner to move the Father to compassion, but as a conqueror, who claims the trophies of His victory. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. Make this fact very plain.' *Gospel Workers*, page 154.

2. How effective is the power of Jesus Christ in the Gospel? Hebrews 7:25.

NOTE: "'His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). None of us need excuse our hasty temper, our misshapen characters, our selfishness, envy, jealousy, or any impurity of soul, body, or spirit. We must learn of Christ. We must know what He is to those He has ransomed. We must realise that through belief in Him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 235.

'Fear God and give glory to Him'

3. What three responses are associated with the 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.' *Great Controversy*, page 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.

'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.' *Great Controversy*, page 437.

4. What event's arrival makes these three responses especially urgent? Revelation 14:7.

NOTE: This 'work of judgment... 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.

'Come out of her, My people'

5. What further warning follows the call to proclaim the everlasting Gospel? Revelation 14:8.

NOTE: "The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and they that "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfilment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 285.

6. What final call comes to those of God's people who have remained in Babylon? Revelation 18:1-4.

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.

'All in the world are not lawless and sinful. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. There are God-fearing men and women in the fallen churches. If this were not so, we would not be given the message to bear: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people." Revelation 18:2-4. Many of the honest in heart are gasping for a breath of life from heaven. They will recognise the gospel when it is brought to them in the beauty and simplicity with which it is presented in God's word.' *Testimonies, volume 9*, page 110.

'If any worship the beast and his image'

7. When the final test comes to the whole of mankind, what warning is to be given? Revelation 14:9-11.

NOTE: 'In contrast to those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, the third angel points to another class, against whose errors a solemn and fearful warning is uttered: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:9, 10. A correct interpretation of the symbols employed is necessary to an understanding of this message.' *Great Controversy*, page 438.

'The third angel's warning is: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." "The beast" mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopard-like beast of Revelation 13, the papacy. The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. The "mark of the beast" still remains to be defined. 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 worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.' *Great Controversy*, page 445.

8. What event makes this warning necessary? Revelation 13:15-17.

NOTE: 'When Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honour popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has

declared to be the sign of His authority, and honour in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome, "the mark of the beast." And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive "the mark of the beast." *Great Controversy*, page 449.

9. What is meant by the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture? Revelation 15:1. Read Revelation 16.

NOTE: 'Without mixture' means undiluted.

'The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.' *Great Controversy*, page 449.

'Here are they'

10. What identifies the people of God during this final crisis? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: 'The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will be betrayed "both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends." Luke 21:16. *Testimonies, volume 9*, page 231.

11. Though threatened by the wrath of evil men, what reward awaits those who refuse to worship the beast and his image? Revelation 15:2.

NOTE: '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. *Great Controversy*, page 450.

'Be ye reconciled to God'

12. What is to be the heart of the final message of warning to the world? 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.

NOTE: 'The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. It is to reach all classes of men, rich and poor, high and low. "Go out into the highways and hedges," Christ says, "and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 228.

'This message [is] to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety [the blood of Christ]; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 91.

13. What will characterise the lives of those who give the final message of warning? Revelation 14:5.

NOTE: 'Our example and lives tell either for heaven, eternal life, or darkness and death. Our lives should be holy, and we should oft hold communion with God, draw nourishment from Jesus the living vine, that our souls may flourish in the Lord. Then can we exert a holy influence. How holy should those live who believe we are having the last message of mercy to the world. We should take a humble, meek stand, and yet the very truths that we profess will lead us to exalt the standard, and to occupy an elevated position, far above the low, vain, joking trifler of the world. True Christian humility will lead us to this. A sense of our own weakness and frailty will lead us to lean upon One that is mighty to save, whose delight is to impart strength and courage to the humble, self-abased suppliant. Humility is the greatest ornament a Christian can wear. Jesus loves to honour such, and lift them up. There is a fullness in Jesus. We can partake of His rich grace, and abundant salvation. We can rejoice in a whole Saviour, and have unwavering trust and confidence in God. We are too faithless, too doubting. Our faith in God's precious promises should grow every day. If we hold the victory over the powers of darkness it must be by constant, persevering watchfulness and almost unceasing prayer. It must be an everyday work. If we grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth, we must have the words of our mouth select, and seasoned with grace. God will help in our efforts. Angels will watch over us, and our soul will be like a watered garden.' *Review & Herald*, January 10, 1856.

Lesson 11: March 8-14 'He will finish the work'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.' Matthew 24:14.

STUDY HELP: *Evangelism*, pages 697-701.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:13-15.

LESSON AIM: To study the finishing of God's work in the world and the part each Christian must play in this work.

Introduction

'God has given His people a great work to do in the world, and every soul who professes to be a son or daughter of God should give evidence that his heart is being impressed by the Holy Spirit. This will mean everything to the success of his labours. The Lord has placed various gifts in the church that we may appreciate these gifts, and act our part in the grand finishing-up work of this earth's history. Let us understand our need of communion with God. We are to experience the sanctifying power of His grace on the human heart. We are to be submissive to the will of God, and willing to engage in the work that He has appointed His servants to do.' *General Conference Bulletin*, May 18, 1909.

'Into all the world'

1. What is the work that Christ has committed to His Church? Matthew 28:19-20.

NOTE: 'The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organised for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvellous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 9.

2. What assurance did Jesus give that this work will be completed? Matthew 24:14.

NOTE: 'The great enemy of souls would be pleased if we were kept busy with things of but little importance, and so should lose our present opportunities for labour. We need now to awake out of sleep, and to labour earnestly to warn those in the highways and in the byways. Soon the work will be finished, and now is our time to labour with intense energy and untiring industry. The judgments of God are in the earth, and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we must give the message of warning that He has entrusted to us. We must give this message quickly, line upon line, precept upon precept. Men will soon be forced to great decisions, and it is our duty to see that they are given an opportunity to understand the truth, that they may take their stand intelligently on the right side. The Lord calls upon His people to labour, labour earnestly and wisely, while probation lingers. Among the members of our churches, there should be more house-to-house labour in giving Bible readings and distributing literature. A Christian character can be symmetrically and completely formed, only when the human agent regards it as a privilege to work interestedly in the proclamation of the truth, and to sustain the cause of God with means. The treasury must not be allowed to become empty, when there are such urgent calls for help from every part of the world.' *Southern Watchman*, April 16, 1907.

'Ye shall receive power'

3. What gift has God promised to enable His people to finish the work He has entrusted to them? Acts 1:8.

NOTE: 'It is the Spirit's power that we need. This can do more for us in one minute than we can ever accomplish by talking. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train.' *My Life Today*, page 47.

4. How did Paul acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit in taking the Gospel to the world? 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

NOTE: 'We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and deceptions are misleading the minds of men; and without the Spirit's aid, our efforts to present divine truth will be in vain. We are living in the time of the Holy Spirit's power. It is seeking to diffuse itself through the agency of humanity, thus increasing its influence in the world. For if any man drinks of the water of life, it will be in him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14); and the blessing will not be confined to himself, but will be shared by others. To reject the Holy Spirit, through whose power we conquer the forces of evil, is the sin that surpasses all others; for it cuts us off from the source of our power, from Christ and communion with Him.' *Our High Calling*, page 155.

'The everlasting Gospel'

5. What message is the church to take to the world? Mark 16:15.

NOTE: 'The gospel inculcates universal humility and benevolence. It produces the virtues of Christ's character in all who savingly accept it. Christ made the sacrifice of Himself to furnish man with grace and power. All who receive His spirit become sons of God, one with Christ in God. Those who attain to eternal life must overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. In order to be saved men must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, revealing a faith which works by love and purifies the soul. Love for God and man has been enjoined upon every human being. God works by His Holy Spirit in those who believe in Christ as their personal Saviour. He helps them to work out their own salvation, giving them grace for the grace which they impart to others.' *Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1900.

6. How does Paul explain what the Gospel is? Romans 1:16.

NOTE: '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.

'An angel flying in the midst of heaven'

7. What symbol does the Bible use for those who will take the last message to the world? Revelation 14:6.

NOTE: 'Under the appropriate symbol of an angel flying through the midst of heaven is represented the work of the people of God. In this work heavenly intelligences co-operate with human agencies in extending the last message to the inhabitants of the world. But the plans and work of men are not keeping pace with the providence of God; for while some in these countries who claim to believe the truth declare by their attitude, "We want not Thy way, O Lord, but our own way," there are many who are pleading with God that they may understand what is truth. In secret places they are weeping and praying that they may see light in the Scriptures; and the Lord of heaven has commissioned His angels to co-operate with human agencies in carrying forward His vast design, that all who desire light may behold the glory of God. We are to follow where God's providence opens the way; and as we advance, we shall find that Heaven has moved before us, enlarging the field for labour far beyond the proportion of our means and ability to supply. The great want of the field open before us should appeal to all to whom God has entrusted talents of means or ability, that they may devote themselves and their all to God. We are to be as faithful stewards, not only of our means, but of the grace given unto us, that many souls may be brought under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel. The purposes and ends to be attained by consecrated missionaries are very comprehensive. The field for missionary operation is not limited by caste or nationality. The field is the world, and the light of truth is to go to all the dark places of the earth in a much shorter time than many think possible.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 208.

8. How must the messengers proclaim the final message of warning? Compare Revelation 14:7, first part, Revelation 14:9, first part, Revelation 18:1-2, first part.

NOTE: 'The message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table. The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Revelation 14:6. The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. It is to reach all classes of men, rich and poor, high and low. "Go out into the highways and hedges," Christ says, "and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 228.

'Come out of her, My people'

9. What final warning is to be given? Revelation 18:4.

NOTE: 'Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 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.' *Great Controversy*, page 390.

'There are God-fearing men and women in the fallen churches. If this were not so, we would not be given the message to bear: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." "Come out of her, My people." [Revelation 18:2, 4.] Many of the honest in heart are gasping for a breath of life from heaven. They will recognise the gospel when it is brought to them in the beauty and simplicity with which it is presented in God's word.' *Gospel Workers*, page 346.

10. Why are God's people to come out of Babylon? Revelation 18:2.

NOTE: 'The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel [Revelation 14:8]. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination. The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and they that "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfilment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future.' *Great Controversy*, page 389.

'He will cut it short in righteousness'

11. How does the Bible describe the finishing of God's work? Romans 9:28.

NOTE: 'Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 332.

12. What sad words of Christ should speak to the hearts of His people today? Matthew 9:37-38.

NOTE: 'We are not, as a people, sufficiently aroused to the short time in which we have to work, and we do not understand the magnitude of the work for the time. The night soon cometh, in which no man can work. God calls for men and women to qualify themselves, by consecration to His will and earnest study of the Scriptures, to do His special work for these last days. He calls for men now who can work. As they engage in the work in sincerity and humility to do all they can, they will be obtaining a more thorough experience. They will have a better knowledge of the truth and better know how to reach souls and help them just where they need to be helped. Workmen are needed now, just now, to labour for God. The fields are already white for the harvest, and yet labourers are few.' *Life Sketches*, page 211.

Lesson 12: March 15-21

'A time of trouble, such as never was'

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

STUDY HELP: *Conflict & Courage*, page 68.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 13:11-18, Revelation 7:13-17.

LESSON AIM: To study 'the time of trouble'.

Introduction

'When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 68.

'And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth'

1. What work of deception will unite all those uncommitted to Christ? Revelation 13:11-15. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10.

NOTE: 'Some will be tempted to receive these wonders as from God. The sick will be healed before us. Miracles will be performed in our sight. Are we prepared for the trial which awaits us when the lying wonders of Satan shall be more fully exhibited? Will not many be ensnared and taken? By departing from the plain precepts and commandments of God and giving heed to fables, the minds of many are preparing to receive these lying wonders. We must all now seek to arm ourselves for the contest in which we must soon engage. Faith in God's word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan's power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 302.

2. How did Jesus warn against this end-time work of deception? Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24.

NOTE: 'In these days many deceptions are being taught as truth. Some of our brethren have taught views which we cannot endorse. Fanciful ideas, strained and peculiar interpretations of the Scripture are coming in. Some of these teachings may seem to be but jots and tittles now, but they will grow and become snares to the inexperienced. We have a decided work to do. Let not the enemy cause us to swerve from the proclamation of the definite truth for this time, and turn our attention to fanciful ideas. Unless we are individually wide awake to discern the workings of the Holy Spirit, we shall certainly stumble and fall into Satan's pitfalls of unbelief. I call upon our brethren to watch as faithful shepherds and guardians over the inexperienced, who are exposed to the wiles of seductive influences. Keep a continual lookout for rocks and quicksands that threaten to destroy faith in the messages that God has given for us at this time. Watch for souls as they that must give account. We need to search the Scriptures daily, that we may know the way of the Lord, and that we be not deceived by religious fallacies. The world is full of false theories and seductive spiritualistic ideas, which tend to destroy clear spiritual perception, and to lead away from truth and holiness. Especially at this time do we need to heed the warning, "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Ephesians 5:6).' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 170.

'No man might buy or sell'

3. What means will be employed to compel obedience to this confederation of deception? Revelation 13:16-17.

NOTE: 'The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast. In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the characteristics of a lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of a dragon and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan. The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day.' *Maranatha*, page 183.

4. What threat will be made against those who refuse to worship the image of the beast and accept the mark? Revelation 13:15.

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

5. What spiritual anguish will God's people undergo during this time? Jeremiah 30:7.

NOTE: 'The righteous will not cease their earnest, agonising cries for deliverance. They cannot bring to mind any particular sins; but in their whole life they can see but little good. Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne away into the land of forgetfulness, and they could not bring them to remembrance. Certain destruction threatens them, and, like Jacob, they will not suffer their faith to grow weak because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the pangs of hunger, they will not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God, as Jacob laid hold of the angel; and the language of their soul is, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." The saints at length prevail, like Jacob, and are gloriously delivered by the voice of God.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1*, page 123.

'If any man worship the beast and his image'

6. What warning must be given to the world? Revelation 14:9-11.

NOTE: 'This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. This symbol {the beast}, as most Protestants have believed, represents the Papacy. The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite "the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday." 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"? Sunday-keeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. And it is not until the issue is plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive "the mark of the beast." When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 286.

7. What will distinguish God's people from those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark? 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 worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.' *Great Controversy*, page 445.

'In them is filled up the wrath of God'

8. What is 'the wrath of God, poured out without mixture'? Revelation 15:1, Revelation 16:1.

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 (Revelation 14:9, 10), 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 judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. . . . 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 unmixed with mercy.' *Maranatha*, page 267.

9. Against whom is God's wrath directed? Revelation 16:2, 10. Compare Revelation 14:9-10.

NOTE: 'The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God. Of all who receive this mark, God says, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.'" *Review & Herald*, July 13, 1897.

'The wrath of God is not declared against unrepentant sinners merely because of the sins they have committed, but because, when called to repent, they choose to continue in resistance, repeating the sins of the past in defiance of the light given them.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 62.

'They blasphemed the God of heaven'

10. What effect will these plagues have on those who worship the beast and his image? Revelation 16:9, 11.

NOTE: 'The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. Some were denouncing God and cursing Him. Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonising prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given.' *Last Day Events*, page 244.

'When the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent, and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 187.

11. Why does God act in this way? Consider Genesis 6:3, 5-7, 11-13. Read Matthew 24:37.

NOTE: 'The Lord is teaching men that there are limits to His forbearance. In fires, in floods, in earthquakes, in the fury of the great deep, in calamities by sea and by land, the warning is given that God's Spirit will not always strive with men. The times in which we live are times of great depravity and crime of every degree. Why? Because men whom God has blessed and favoured have reduced His holy law to a dead letter, making void the law of God by the traditions and inventions of the man of sin. A more-than-common contempt is put upon the commandments of God.' *Manuscript Releases*, volume 3, page 315.

'Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling'

12. Will God's people be harmed by the Seven Last Plagues? Psalm 91:8-10. Read the whole psalm. Compare Isaiah 26:20.

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.' *Great Controversy*, page 629.

13. What promise may God's faithful ones depend on during this time of trouble? Daniel 12:1, last part.

NOTE: 'From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when "God is judge Himself." (Psalm 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. "The rebuke of His people shall He take away." Isaiah 25:8. White robes will be given to every one of them. (Revelation 6:11.) And "they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Isaiah 62:12. Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, whatever losses they have sustained, whatever persecution they have suffered, even to the loss of their temporal life, the children of God are amply recompensed. "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 180.

Lesson 13: March 22-28

'Therefore be ye also ready'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.' 1 Thessalonians 5:4.

STUDY HELP: *God's Amazing Grace*, page 353.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-24.

LESSON AIM: To consider what it means to be ready for the coming of Christ.

Introduction

'The Lord is waiting to do great things for His children who trust in Him. Do we expect to dwell with Christ in the eternal world? Then we must dwell with Him here, that He may help us in every time of trial and temptation and make us ready for His coming in the clouds of heaven. The beauty and grace of Christ must be woven into our characters. We cannot keep Christ so apart from our lives as we do, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven. He is to be the all in all of heaven, and must be our all in all upon earth.' *That I May Know Him*, page 119.

'Let us not sleep'

1. What warning are we given concerning 'the day of the Lord'? 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.

NOTE: 'The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5. This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. They lull their hearts into security, and dream not of danger. When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up offered to every soul. The message of the gospel has been heralded, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20. It is in a crisis that character is revealed.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 411-412.

2. How are we to be ready for the onset of sudden destruction? 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6.

NOTE: 'Warning, admonition, promise, all are for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6). Watch against the stealthy approach of the enemy, watch against old habits and natural inclinations, lest they assert themselves; force them back, and watch. Watch the thoughts, watch the plans, lest they become self-centred. Watch over the souls whom Christ has purchased with His own blood. Watch for opportunities to do them good. If you draw close to Jesus and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 332.

'Us who are of the day'

3. What safeguards are we to make in preparation for the coming crisis? 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

NOTE: 'However short our service or humble our work, if in simple faith we follow Christ, we shall not be disappointed of the reward. That which even the greatest and wisest cannot earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 404.

4. What similar counsel was given to God's final church? Revelation 3:18.

NOTE: 'As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now; the Pharisees do not know their spiritual destitution. To them comes the message, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:17, 18. Faith and love are the gold tried in the fire. But with many the gold has become dim, and the rich treasure has been lost. The righteousness of Christ is to them as a robe unworn, a fountain untouched. To them it is said, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Revelation 2:4, 5.' *Desire of Ages*, page 280.

'Comfort yourselves together'

5. What ministry of encouragement is committed to those who are children of light? 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Compare Hebrews 10:24-25.

NOTE: 'The Lord has promised that where two or three are met together in His name, there will He be in the midst. Those who meet together for prayer will receive an unction from the Holy One. There is great need of secret prayer, but there is also need that several Christians meet together and unite with earnestness their petitions to God. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty, and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven. We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigour from the Source of our strength. These meetings should be most precious seasons.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 91.

6. Who especially are we to care for? 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

NOTE: "'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake'. . . Are we striving most earnestly to obey these words? Shall we not draw nigh to God, fearing to sin against Him by being unjust to our brethren? If we hope in God's mercy, we shall manifest the most tender interest in all for whom Christ has died. We shall fear to offend His children. We shall not wound nor bruise His heritage. We shall not, because we are not exalted and honoured as we think we should be, handle the reputation of our brethren in a way that offends God, who loves them as He loves us, and who takes as much pleasure in them as He does in us.' *Review & Herald*, April 27, 1897.

'Be at peace among yourselves'

7. What should prevail among God's people? 1 Thessalonians 5:13, last part.

NOTE: 'Self must be subdued and kept in subjection. A Christian will not pursue a course of bickering and contention with even the most wicked and unbelieving. How wrong to indulge this spirit with those who believe the truth and who are seeking for peace, love, and harmony! Says Paul: "Be at peace among yourselves." This spirit of contention is opposed to all the principles of heaven. In Christ's Sermon on the Mount He says: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." You will have trouble wherever you go, unless you learn the lesson God designs you to learn. You should be less confident and forward in your own opinion, and possess a teachable spirit, that of a learner. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Says James: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'" *Testimonies*, volume 2, page 163.

8. What practical ways of achieving peace did Paul propose? 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15. Compare 1 Peter 3:8-11.

NOTE: 'Bible religion is not a garment which can be put on and taken off at pleasure. It is an all-pervading influence, which leads us to be patient, self-denying followers of Christ, doing as He did, walking as He walked. If no one ever came under your notice who needed your sympathy, your words of compassion and pity, then you would be guiltless before God for failing to exercise these precious gifts; but every follower of Christ will find opportunity to show Christian kindness and love; and in so doing he will prove that he is a possessor of the religion of Jesus Christ.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 248.

'Despise not prophesyings'

9. What counsel are we given concerning the messages of guidance God gives to His people? 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20.

NOTE: '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. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days. Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 296.

10. What approach are we counselled to take towards all who claim to be prophets of God? 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Compare 1 John 4:1-3.

NOTE: 'The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18. Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions, to mislead and mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions, as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 296.

'Sanctify you wholly'

11. What work will God do for His church that is awaiting the return of our Saviour? 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

NOTE: 'Erroneous theories of sanctification, also, springing from neglect or rejection of the divine law, have a prominent place in the religious movements of the day. These theories are both false in doctrine and dangerous in practical results; and the fact that they are so generally finding favour, renders it doubly essential that all have a clear understanding of what the Scriptures teach upon this point. True sanctification is a Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonian church, declares: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." And he prays: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23. The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is and how it is to be attained. The Saviour prayed for His disciples: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. And Paul teaches that believers are to be "sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:16. What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. And the psalmist says: "Thy law is the truth." By the word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is "holy, and just, and good," a transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says: "I have kept My Father's commandments." "I do always those things that please Him." John 15:10; 8:29. The followers of Christ are to become like Him, by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification. *Great Controversy*, page 469.

12. What promise are we given that this work of total sanctification, of preserving His people from blame, will be accomplished? 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

NOTE: 'This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. Paul admonishes believers: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13). The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, but he will maintain a constant warfare against it. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). The Scriptures plainly show that the work of sanctification is progressive. When in conversion the sinner finds peace with God through the blood of the atonement, the Christian life has but just begun. Now he is to "go on unto perfection;" to grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." *A New Life, Revival and Beyond*, pages 13-14.

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