

Sabbath School Lessons, 3rd Quarter, 2018

‘Behold, I will send you Elijah’

General Introduction.

‘Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5, 6.

The closing words of Malachi are a prophecy regarding the work that should be done preparatory to the first and the second advent of Christ.

Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ’s first advent.

Our message must be as direct as was that of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding the peril his life was in, he never allowed truth to languish on his lips.

In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elijah. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ’s first advent, called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” With the earnestness that characterised Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ’s Second Advent.

The hour of God’s judgment has come, and upon the members of His church on earth rests the solemn responsibility of giving warning to those who are standing as it were on the very brink of eternal ruin.

All can do something in the work. None will be pronounced guiltless before God unless they have worked earnestly and unselfishly for the salvation of souls.

Your duty cannot be shifted upon another. No one but yourself can do your work. If you withhold your light, someone must be left in darkness through your neglect.

The Lord has a place for everyone in His great plan.

The Faith I Live By, page 290

‘God’s promise is, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Just as in the days of Elijah, many of the professed people of God have forsaken His commandments, and are following the doctrines of a false god. . . . But just as the world is about to meet its God over His broken law; just as men are about to be summoned before the great judgement seat of Christ to be weighed in the balances of the Lord, the Elijah message is sent forth, calling the nations back again into full harmony with the law of their God. Once again the words of Elijah are pertinent: “Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” 1 Kings 18:21.’

W. H. Branson: *In Defence of the Faith* page 394.

Lesson 1: September 30-October 6

‘The word of the LORD came unto him’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.’ 1 Kings 17:24.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 119-132.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 17.

LESSON AIM: To understand the early days of Elijah’s ministry.

Introduction

‘Elijah’s whole life was devoted to the work of reform. He was a voice crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of moral evil. And while he came to the people as a reprover of sin, his message offered the Balm of Gilead for the sin-sick souls of all who would be healed. His zeal for God’s glory and his deep love for the house of Israel present lessons for the instruction of all who stand today as representatives of God’s work in the earth.’ *Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 15*, page 5.

‘A man subject to like passions as we are’

1. How did Elijah burst on the scene? 1 Kings 17:1.

NOTE: We know nothing of Elijah before his sudden emergence with a prophecy of the coming drought. We are told nothing of his birth or parentage. We are not even told of his call to the prophetic office. Mount Gilead was east of the River Jordan in the land given to the tribe of Gad. It has even been suggested (by Michaelis) that the phrase ‘of the inhabitants of Gilead’ might mean that he was not an Israelite by race, but an Ishmaelite, many of whom lived within the land of Gilead. If this is so, it would be a standing rebuke and shame to the apostate people of Israel that the Lord would employ a believing Gentile to rebuke

and shame them. His name Elijah, which means Jehovah is my God, testifies to his worship of the true God. He is called 'the Tishbite' and some have linked this name with Thisbe, the exact location of which is unknown, though it has been suggested that it was in the territory of Naphthali.

'Among the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, there dwelt in the days of Ahab a man of faith and prayer whose fearless ministry was destined to check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel. Far removed from any city of renown, and occupying no high station in life, Elijah the Tishbite nevertheless entered upon his mission confident in God's purpose to prepare the way before him and to give him abundant success. The word of faith and power was upon his lips, and his whole life was devoted to the work of reform. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil. And while he came to the people as a reprover of sin, his message offered the balm of Gilead to the sin-sick souls of all who desired to be healed. To Elijah was entrusted the mission of delivering to Ahab Heaven's message of judgment. He did not seek to be the Lord's messenger; the word of the Lord came to him. And jealous for the honour of God's cause, he did not hesitate to obey the divine summons, though to obey seemed to invite swift destruction at the hand of the wicked king.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 205.

2. What light does James shed on Elijah's prophecy? James 5:17.

NOTE: 'It was only by the exercise of strong faith in the unailing power of God's word that Elijah delivered his message. Had he not possessed implicit confidence in the One whom he served, he would never have appeared before Ahab. On his way to Samaria, Elijah had passed by ever-flowing streams, hills covered with verdure, and stately forests that seemed beyond the reach of drought. Everything on which the eye rested was clothed with beauty. The prophet might have wondered how the streams that had never ceased their flow could become dry, or how those hills and valleys could be burned with drought. But he gave no place to unbelief. He fully believed that God would humble apostate Israel, and that through judgments they would be brought to repentance. The fiat of Heaven had gone forth; God's word could not fail; and at the peril of his life Elijah fearlessly fulfilled his commission. Like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, the message of impending judgment fell upon the ears of the wicked king; but before Ahab could recover from his astonishment, or frame a reply, Elijah disappeared as abruptly as he had come, without waiting to witness the effect of his message. And the Lord went before him, making plain the way.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 121.

'It was because Elijah was a man of large faith that God could use him in this grave crisis in the history of Israel. As he prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favour. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service; for of the prophet from the mountains of Gilead it is written: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." James 5:17.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 156.

'He did according to the word of the LORD'

3. What command was Elijah given after he had proclaimed his prophecy? 1 Kings 17:2-4.

NOTE: 'Like a child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need. Every day you are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Be not disturbed if you have not sufficient for tomorrow. You have the assurance of His promise, "Thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." David says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." That God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children. Of him that walketh righteously it is written, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"' *Lift Him Up*, page 131.

4. How were the words of the Lord fulfilled for Elijah? 1 Kings 17:5-6.

NOTE: 'The Lord has shown me repeatedly that it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.' *Early Writings*, page 56.

'I have commanded'

5. When the brook finally dried up, what further provision did the Lord make for Elijah? 1 Kings 17:7-9.

NOTE: Zarephath, or Sarepta, was a Sidonian city, far away on the western coast, about nine miles south of Sidon and within the territory of Jezebel's idolatrous father. The great enemy of Baal worship would hardly be expected to find refuge there.

'The servants whom God had chosen for a special work were not allowed to labour for a hardhearted and unbelieving people. But those who had hearts to feel and faith to believe were especially favoured with evidences of His power through the prophets. In the days of Elijah, Israel had departed from God. They clung to their sins, and rejected the warnings of the Spirit through the Lord's messengers. Thus they cut themselves off from the channel by which God's blessing could come to them. The Lord passed by the homes of Israel, and found a refuge for His servant in a heathen land, with a woman who did not belong to the chosen people. But this woman was favoured because she had followed the light she had received, and her heart was open to the greater light that God sent her through His prophet.' *Desire of Ages*, page 238.

6. What lesson did Jesus draw from this circumstance? Luke 4:24-26.

NOTE: 'Our standing before God depends, not upon the amount of light we have received, but upon the use we make of what we have. Thus even the heathen who choose the right as far as they can distinguish it are in a more favourable condition than are those who have had great light, and profess to serve God, but who disregard the light, and by their daily life contradict their profession.' *Desire of Ages*, page 239.

'That we may eat it and die'

7. What request did Elijah make to the widow at the gate of Zarephath? 1 Kings 17:10-11.

NOTE: 'In this poverty-stricken home the famine pressed sore, and the pitifully meagre fare seemed about to fail. The coming of Elijah on the very day when the widow feared that she must give up the struggle to sustain life tested to the utmost her faith in the power of the living God to provide for her necessities.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 130.

8. What reply did the widow make to Elijah? 1 Kings 17:12.

NOTE: 'No greater test of faith than this could have been required. The widow had hitherto treated all strangers with kindness and liberality. Now, regardless of the suffering that might result to herself and child, and trusting in the God of Israel to supply her every need, she met this supreme test of hospitality by doing "according to the saying of Elijah.'" *Prophets & Kings*, page 130.

'According to the word of the LORD'

9. With what prophecy did Elijah respond to the widow's words? 1 Kings 17:13-14.

NOTE: 'To all who, in time of trial and want, give sympathy and assistance to others more needy, God has promised great blessing. He has not changed. His power is no less now than in the days of Elijah. No less sure now than when spoken by our Saviour is the promise, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." Matthew 10:41. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2. These words have lost none of their force through the lapse of time. Our heavenly Father still continues to place in the pathway of His children opportunities that are blessings in disguise; and those who improve these opportunities find great joy. "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isaiah 58:10, 11.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 131-132.

10. How was Elijah's prophecy fulfilled? 1 Kings 17:15-16. See Philippians 4:19 and compare Isaiah 33:15-17.

NOTE: 'The widow of Zarephath shared her morsel with Elijah, and in return her life and that of her son were preserved... That God who cared for Elijah in the time of famine, will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who has numbered the hairs of their head, will care for them, and in the days of famine they will be satisfied. While the wicked are perishing all around them for want of bread, their bread and water will be sure.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 206.

'I know thou art a man of God'

11. What tragedy befell the widow's household? 1 Kings 17:17-18.

NOTE: 'The ways of Providence cannot always be read or traced; they appear inexplicable to the wounded, stricken heart. The words of Jesus, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," are applicable to these bereaved ones. If our loved ones have given their hearts to Jesus, there is cause for joy. It is impossible to tell what might be their future. Many families experience a grief that is worse than sorrow for the death of friends. When their children pursue a course that will bring shame upon their parents, when they become impatient of restraint, break the ties which bind them to father and mother, and renounce the vows that held them in holy, happy allegiance to their Maker, then there is sorrow indeed. "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Let the bereaved Rachels be comforted; for their children shall "come again from the land of the enemy.'" *Review & Herald*, November 27, 1883.

12. How did Elijah respond to the widow's reproach? 1 Kings 17:19-23.

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. This religion teaches us to exercise patience and long-suffering when brought into places where we receive treatment that is harsh and unjust. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9). When Christ was reviled, He reviled not again. His religion brings with it a meek and quiet spirit. There is constant need of patience, gentleness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice in the exercise of Bible religion. But if the word of God is made an abiding principle in our lives, everything with which we have to do, each word, each trivial act, will reveal that we are subject to Jesus Christ. If the word of God is received into the heart, it will empty the soul of self-sufficiency and self-dependence. Our lives will be a power for good, because the Holy Spirit will fill our minds with the things of God.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 248.

13. What was the widow's response to the revival of her son? 1 Kings 17:24.

NOTE: 'The Lord is calling upon His people to take up different lines of missionary work, to sow beside all waters. We do but a small part of the work that He desires us to do among our neighbours and friends. By kindness to the poor, the sick, or the bereaved we may obtain an influence over them, so that divine truth will find access to their hearts. No such opportunity for service should be allowed to pass unimproved. It is the highest missionary work that we can do.' *Review & Herald*, June 6, 1912.

Lesson 2: January 7-13

Elijah's message

MEMORY VERSE: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD' Malachi 4:5.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 290.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Malachi 4:5-6.

LESSON AIM: To understand the different aspects of Elijah's message.

Introduction

'In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. The Lord is giving messages to His people, through the instruments He has chosen, and He would have all heed the admonitions and warnings He sends. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ's soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear, "Prepare to meet thy God.'" *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 4*, page 1184.

A message of warning

1. What message of warning was Elijah called to give? 1 Kings 17:1.

NOTE: 'In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church. But the people desire smooth things spoken to them, and the pure, unvarnished truth is not acceptable. Many reformers, in entering upon their work, determined to exercise great prudence in attacking the sins of the church and the nation. They hoped, by the example of a pure Christian life, to lead the people back to the doctrines of the Bible. But the Spirit of God came upon them as it came upon Elijah, moving him to rebuke the sins of a wicked king and an apostate people; they could not refrain from preaching the plain utterances of the Bible, doctrines which they had been reluctant to present. They were impelled to zealously declare the truth and the danger which threatened souls. The words which the Lord gave them they uttered, fearless of consequences, and the people were compelled to hear the warning. Thus the message of the third angel 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.' *Great Controversy*, page 606.

2. What accusation was made against Elijah because of the message God asked him to deliver? 1 Kings 18:17.

NOTE: 'Now as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproves the sins and errors of the times will excite opposition. "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." John 3:20. As men see that they cannot maintain their position by the Scriptures, many determine to maintain it at all hazards, and with a malicious spirit they assail the character and motives of those who stand in defence of unpopular truth. It is the same policy which has been pursued in all ages. Elijah was declared to be a troubler in Israel, Jeremiah a traitor, Paul a polluter of the temple. From that day to this, those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic. Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy will receive with unquestioning credulity an accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evildoer.' *Great Controversy*, page 458.

A message of rebuke

3. What message of rebuke did Elijah bear to the king of Israel? 1 Kings 18:18.

NOTE: 'Elijah's whole life was devoted to the work of reform. He was a voice crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of moral evil. And while he came to the people as a reprover of sin, his message offered the Balm of Gilead for the sin-sick souls of all who would be healed. His zeal for God's glory and his deep love for the house of Israel present lessons for the instruction of all who stand today as representatives of God's work in the earth.' *Special Testimonies, series B, No. 15*, page 6.

4. What is the Lord's purpose in rebuking His people? Hebrews 12:5-7.

NOTE: 'The people who profess to keep the law of God, He corrects, He reproves. He points out their sins, and lays open their iniquity; because He wishes to separate all sin and wickedness from them, that they may perfect holiness in His fear, and be prepared to die in the Lord, or to be translated to Heaven. God will rebuke, reprove, and correct them, that they may be refined, sanctified, elevated, and finally exalted to His throne.' *A Solemn Appeal*, page 144-145.

A message of challenge

5. What challenge did Elijah present to the people of Israel? 1 Kings 18:21.

NOTE: '[Elijah] was to vindicate the glory of God. He was to challenge apostate Israel either to serve God fully or Baal fully.' *1888 Materials*, page 489.

'Facing King Ahab and the false prophets, and surrounded by the assembled hosts of Israel, Elijah stands, the only one who has appeared to vindicate the honour of Jehovah. He whom the whole kingdom has charged with its weight of woe is now before them, seemingly without support, either human or divine; apparently defenceless in the presence of the men of war, the prophets of Baal, the monarch of Israel, and the surrounding thousands. But Elijah is not alone. Above and around him are the protecting hosts of heaven, angels that excel in strength. Realising his source of power, Elijah could say, "The Lord is with me as a mighty, terrible One: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten." In that vast multitude the prophet is undaunted. Unashamed and unterrified, he stands before the people, his countenance lighted with an awful solemnity. In anxious expectancy the people wait for him to speak. Looking first upon the broken-down altar of Jehovah and then upon the multitude, Elijah cries out in clear, trumpet-like tones, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.'" *Review & Herald*, September 18, 1913.

6. What was the people's answer to Elijah's challenge? 1 Kings 18:21, last part.

NOTE: 'The people answer him not a word. Not one in that vast assembly dare utter a word for God, not one dare reveal loyalty to Jehovah. Like a dark cloud, deception and blindness had covered Israel. Not all at once had this fatal apostasy closed about them; but gradually, as from time to time they had refused to heed the words of warning and reproof that the Lord sent them. Each departure from right-doing, each refusal to repent, had deepened their guilt, and driven them farther from Heaven. And now, in this crisis, they refused to take their stand for God.' *Review & Herald*, September 18, 1913.

'What astonishing deception and fearful blindness had, like a dark cloud, covered Israel! This blindness and apostasy had not closed about them suddenly, but it had come upon them gradually, as they had not heeded the word of reproof and warning which the Lord had sent to them because of their pride and their sins. They, in this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and the apostate king, remain neutral. If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is of doing nothing in a case of emergency. Indifference or neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime; and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.' *Review & Herald*, September 30, 1873.

A message of judgement

7. What message of judgement did Elijah bring to Ahab and Jezebel because of their sin in stealing Naboth's vineyard? 1 Kings 21:19 & 23.

NOTE: 'The king was not allowed to enjoy unrebuked that which he had gained by fraud and bloodshed. "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" And the Lord further instructed Elijah to pronounce upon Ahab a terrible judgment. The prophet hastened to carry out the divine command. The guilty ruler, meeting the stern messenger of Jehovah face to face in the vineyard, gave voice to his startled fear in the words, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Without hesitation the messenger of the Lord replied, "I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity." No mercy was to be shown. The house of Ahab was to be utterly destroyed, "like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah," the Lord declared through His servant, "for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked Me to anger, and made Israel to sin." And of Jezebel the Lord declared, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.'" *Prophets & Kings*, pages 206-207

8. How did Ahab respond to Elijah's message? 1 Kings 21:27.

NOTE: 'If those whose errors are pointed out make confession of their wrongdoing, the spell of the enemy may be broken. If they will repent and forsake their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 52.

9. What mitigation of His judgement on Ahab did God make? 1 Kings 21:28-29.

NOTE: 'The unwillingness of the Lord to chastise is here vividly shown. He stays His judgments that He may plead with the impenitent. He who exercises "loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth" yearns over His erring children; in every way possible He seeks to teach them the way of life everlasting. Jeremiah 9:24... Though they had wandered long in idolatry and had slighted His warnings, yet He now declares His willingness to defer chastisement and grant yet another

opportunity for repentance. He makes plain the fact that only by the most thorough heart reformation could the impending doom be averted.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 413.

A message of comfort

10. Why did Elijah confront the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel? 1 Kings 18:36. Compare 1 Kings 19:14.

NOTE: 'In [Christ's] service we need not expect ease, honour, and greatness in this life; for He, the Majesty of heaven, did not receive it. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." With this example before us, will we choose to shun the cross, and to be swayed by circumstances? Shall our zeal, our fervour, be kindled only when we are surrounded by those who are awake and zealous in the work and cause of God?' *Testimonies*, volume 2, page 516.

11. What was Elijah's prayer for his people and how was it answered? 1 Kings 18:37-39.

NOTE: 'Reminding the people of the long-continued apostasy that has awakened the wrath of Jehovah, Elijah calls upon them to humble their hearts and turn to the God of their fathers, that the curse upon the land of Israel may be removed. Then bowing reverently before the unseen God, he raises his hands toward heaven, and offers a simple prayer... Elijah prays simply and fervently, asking God to show his superiority over Baal, that Israel may be led to turn to him. "Lord," the prophet pleads, "let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again.'" *Review & Herald*, September 25, 1913.

A message of hope

12. What message of hope did Elijah bring to the widow of Zarephath? 1 Kings 17:12-14.

NOTE: 'It is difficult to know which most to wonder at: Elijah's calmness, consistency, and readiness of faith, or the widow's almost incredible simplicity of trustfulness. Elijah was not taken aback; he did not hesitate to go on with the trial of his hostess to the end; least of all was he afraid of the possible consequences. As in every real trial of our trust, there was first a general promise, and, on the ground of it, a specific demand, followed by an assurance to conquering faith.' Edersheim, *History of Judah and Israel*, page 193.

13. What promise is given to all those who put their trust in God? Isaiah 33:16-17.

NOTE: "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what [is] His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other. 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. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11-17. But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19.' *Desire of Ages*, page 121.

Lesson 3: October 14-20 'Give them warning from Me'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me.' Ezekiel 3:17.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 9-13.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 3:17-21.

LESSON AIM: To study the God's messages of warning throughout the Bible.

Introduction

'To Elijah was entrusted the mission of delivering to Ahab Heaven's message of judgment. He did not seek to be the Lord's messenger; the word of the Lord came to him. And jealous for the honour of God's cause, he did not hesitate to obey the divine summons, though to obey seemed to invite swift destruction at the hand of the wicked king.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 120.

'As the Lord God of Israel liveth'

1. From whom did Elijah's message of judgement come? 1 Kings 17:1.

NOTE: 'Elijah made no apology for his abrupt appearance. A Greater than the ruler of Israel had commissioned him to speak; and, lifting his hand toward heaven, he solemnly affirmed by the living God that the judgments of the Most High were about to fall upon Israel. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand," he declared, "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.'" *Prophets & Kings*, page 121.

2. Why does God bring His judgements upon His people? Isaiah 26:9, last part.

NOTE: "'If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes," the Israelites had been warned, "thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed." Deuteronomy 28:15, 23, 24. These were among the wise counsels of Jehovah to ancient Israel. "Lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul," He had commanded His chosen people, "and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 11:18, 19. Plain were these commands, yet as the centuries passed, and generation after generation lost sight of the provision made for their spiritual welfare, the ruinous influences of apostasy threatened to sweep aside every barrier of divine grace. Thus it had come to pass that God was now visiting His people with the severest of His judgments.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 136-137.

'No prophet is accepted in his own country'

3. What is likely to be the response to the prophet's message of judgement? Luke 4:24.

NOTE: 'In the days of Elijah, Israel had departed from the living God. In vain the Lord by His prophets spoke to that backsliding and rebellious people. In vain He reproved their sins, and threatened them with His judgments. The message which might have been a savour of life unto life, proved to them a savour of death unto death. They would not heed the warning which called them to a life of humility and faith. Instead of leading them to repentance, the prophet's words offended their pride, and aroused their hatred against the messenger of God. Thus they multiplied their sins, and aggravated the guilt which had already brought the judgments of God upon the land. They sought to find and destroy Elijah, as though by silencing him, they would prevent the fulfilment of his words. But God found among the heathen a hiding-place for his servant.' *Sins of the Times*, June 16, 1887.

4. What was the reaction of the people to the message of Jesus? Luke 4:28-29. Read verses 23-27 also.

NOTE: 'Here Jesus taught an important lesson that should be received by all who profess his name to the end of time. It was this: That even the heathen, who live according to the best light they have, doing right so far as they are able to distinguish right from wrong, are regarded with greater favour by God than those who, having great light, make high pretensions to godliness, but whose daily lives contradict their profession. Thus Jesus stood before the Jews, calmly revealing their secret thoughts, and pressing home upon them the bitter truth of their unrighteousness. Every word cut like a knife as their corrupt lives and wicked unbelief were laid before them. They now scorned the faith and reverence with which Jesus had at first inspired them, and they refused to acknowledge that this man, who had sprung from poverty and lowliness, was other than a common man. They would own no king who came unattended by riches and honour, and who stood not at the head of imposing legions.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 113.

'Few, that is, eight souls were saved'

5. What was the response to Noah's message of coming judgement? 1 Peter 3:20.

NOTE: 'The Lord looked down upon the impenitent world, and decided that He must give transgressors an exhibition of His power. He caused Noah to know His purpose, and instructed him to warn the people while building an ark in which the obedient could find shelter until God's indignation was overpast. For one hundred and twenty years Noah proclaimed the message of warning to the antediluvian world; but only a few repented. Some of the carpenters he employed in building the ark, believed the message, but died before the flood; others of Noah's converts backslid. The righteous on the earth were but few, and only eight lived to enter the ark. These were Noah and his family.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 504.

6. When judgement came upon Sodom and Gomorrah, how many were saved? Genesis 19:12-15. Compare Genesis 18:32 and read Genesis 19:26 & 31-34.

NOTE: 'In the time of Abraham, mercy ceased to plead with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot with his wife and two daughters were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. So in the days of Christ. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation: "Your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:38. Looking down to the last days, the same Infinite Power declares, concerning those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved": "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the

truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. As they reject the teachings of His word, God withdraws His Spirit and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.’ *Great Controversy*, page 431.

‘A rebellious nation’

7. What message of warning was Ezekiel commanded to give to his people? Ezekiel 2:3.

NOTE: ‘Amid forgetfulness and apostasy, God had dealt with Israel as a loving father deals with a rebellious son, admonishing, warning, correcting, still saying in the tender anguish of a parent’s soul, How can I give thee up?’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 19.

8. What was Ezekiel told about the response his message would receive? Ezekiel 2:6.

NOTE: ‘Those whom God has chosen for an important work, have ever been received with distrust and suspicion. Anciently, when Elijah was sent with a message from God to the people, they did not heed the warning. They thought Elijah unnecessarily severe. He must, they thought, have lost his senses, that he would denounce them, the favoured people of God, as sinners, and their crimes, so aggravating, that the judgments of God would awaken against them. Satan and his host have ever been arrayed against those who bear the message of warning and reprove sins. The unconsecrated will be united with the adversary of souls, to make the work of God’s faithful servants as hard as possible. Elijah, one of God’s great and mighty prophets, as he fled for his life from the rage of Jezebel, an infuriated woman, a fugitive, weary and travel worn, desired to die rather than live. His bitter disappointment in regard to Israel’s faithfulness crushed his spirits, and he felt that he could no longer put confidence in man.’ *Review & Herald*, September 16, 1873.

9. Even though his message received a hostile or indifferent reception, what was Ezekiel commanded to do? Ezekiel 2:7.

NOTE: ‘What is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God’s word, because it excites opposition, than had earlier Reformers. The confession of faith made by saints and martyrs was recorded for the benefit of succeeding generations. Those living examples of holiness and steadfast integrity have come down to inspire courage in those who are now called to stand as witnesses for God. They received grace and truth, not for themselves alone, but that, through them, the knowledge of God might enlighten the earth. Has God given light to His servants in this generation? Then they should let it shine forth to the world. Anciently the Lord declared to one who spoke in His name: “The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto Me.” Nevertheless He said: “Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” Ezekiel 3:7; 2:7. To the servant of God at this time is the command addressed: “Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”’ *Great Controversy*, page 459.

‘Give them warning from Me’

10. How did God describe the role of those chosen to give His warning message? Ezekiel 3:17.

NOTE: ‘The position of those who have been called of God to labour in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church is one of grave responsibility. In Christ’s stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God, and they can fulfil their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above. Christ’s ministers are the spiritual guardians of the people entrusted to their care. Their work has been likened to that of watchmen. In ancient times sentinels were often stationed on the walls of cities, where, from points of vantage, they could overlook important posts to be guarded, and give warning of the approach of an enemy. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within. At stated intervals they were required to call to one another, to make sure that all were awake and that no harm had befallen any. The cry of good cheer or of warning was borne from one to another, each repeating the call till it echoed round the city.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 360.

11. What responsibility does God place upon His watchmen? Ezekiel 3:18-19. Compare Ezekiel 33:7-9.

NOTE: ‘The words of the prophet declare the solemn responsibility of those who are appointed as guardians of the church of God, stewards of the mysteries of God. They are to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. Souls are in danger of falling under temptation, and they will perish unless God’s ministers are faithful to their trust. If for any reason their spiritual senses become so benumbed that they are unable to discern danger, and through their failure to give warning the people perish, God will require at their hands the blood of those who are lost. It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell men and women of their peril and point them to the place of safety. Faithfully are they to warn them of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interests of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never are they to sound one wavering, uncertain note. Not for wages are they to labour, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 361.

‘To every nation’

12. What messages of warning are given to the world in the last days? Revelation 14:6-12.

NOTE: 'In the presentation of unpopular truth, which involves a heavy cross, preachers should be careful that every word is as God would have it. Their words should never cut. They should present the truth in humility, with the deepest love for souls, and an earnest desire for their salvation, and let the truth cut. They should not defy ministers of other denominations, and seek to provoke a debate. They should not stand in a position like that of Goliath when he defied the armies of Israel. Israel did not defy Goliath but Goliath made his proud boasts against God and His people. The defying, the boasting, and the railing must come from the opposers of truth, who act the Goliath. But none of this spirit should be seen in those whom God has sent forth to proclaim the last message of warning to a doomed world.' *Evangelism*, page 162.

13. Will the whole world heed the messages of warning? Luke 18:8, last part.

NOTE: 'This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches scepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 15.

14. What is the final message of warning to be given in the world? Revelation 18:1-4.

NOTE: 'The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are "the times of refreshing" to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus." Acts 3:19, 20. Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side.' *Great Controversy*, pages 611-612.

Lesson 4: October 21-27 'The just shall live by faith'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.' James 5:17.

STUDY HELP: *Conflict & Courage*, page 205.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 18.

LESSON AIM: To study the part that faith played in the ministry of Elijah.

Introduction

'As [Elijah] prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favour. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service. Faith such as this is needed in the world today, faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 211.

'I will call upon the name of the LORD'

1. What proposal did Elijah make to the prophets of Baal to determine which is the true God? 1 Kings 18:22-24.

NOTE: 'While Israel on Carmel doubt and hesitate, the voice of Elijah again breaks the silence: "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.'" *Prophets & Kings*, page 148.

2. What opportunity did Elijah offer to Jezebel's prophets to prove that Baal was the true God? 1 Kings 18:25.

NOTE: ‘The proposal of Elijah is so reasonable that the people cannot well evade it, so they find courage to answer, “It is well spoken.” The prophets of Baal dare not lift their voices in dissent; and, addressing them, Elijah directs, “Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.”’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 149.

‘There was no voice’

3. What was the result of the prayers of the prophets of Baal? 1 Kings 18:26.

NOTE: ‘Outwardly bold and defiant, but with terror in their guilty hearts, the false priests prepare their altar, laying on the wood and the victim; and then they begin their incantations. Their shrill cries echo and re-echo through the forests and the surrounding heights, as they call on the name of their god, saying, “O Baal, hear us.” The priests gather about their altar, and with leaping and writhing and screaming, with tearing of hair and cutting of flesh, they beseech their god to help them. The morning passes, noon comes, and yet there is no evidence that Baal hears the cries of his deluded followers. There is no voice, no reply to their frantic prayers. The sacrifice remains unconsumed. As they continue their frenzied devotions, the crafty priests are continually trying to devise some means by which they may kindle a fire upon the altar and lead the people to believe that the fire has come direct from Baal. But Elijah watches every movement; and the priests, hoping against hope for some opportunity to deceive, continue to carry on their senseless ceremonies.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 149.

4. What mocking encouragement did Elijah offer and what was the result? 1 Kings 18:27-29.

NOTE: ‘Gladly would Satan have come to the help of those whom he had deceived, and who were devoted to his service. Gladly would he have sent the lightning to kindle their sacrifice. But Jehovah has set Satan’s bounds, restrained his power, and not all the enemy’s devices can convey one spark to Baal’s altar. At last, their voices hoarse with shouting, their garments stained with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the priests become desperate. With unabated frenzy they now mingle with their pleading terrible cursings of their sun-god, and Elijah continues to watch intently; for he knows that if by any device the priests should succeed in kindling their altar fire, he would instantly be torn in pieces. Evening draws on. The prophets of Baal are weary, faint, confused. One suggests one thing, and another something else, until finally they cease their efforts. Their shrieks and curses no longer resound over Carmel. In despair they retire from the contest. All day long the people have witnessed the demonstrations of the baffled priests. They have beheld their wild leaping round the altar, as if they would grasp the burning rays of the sun to serve their purpose. They have looked with horror on the frightful, self-inflicted mutilations of the priests, and have had opportunity to reflect on the follies of idol worship. Many in the throng are weary of the exhibitions of demonism, and they now await with deepest interest the movements of Elijah.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 150.

‘Then the fire of the LORD fell’

5. What preparations did Elijah make to ensure that there was no suspicion of trickery? 1 Kings 18:30-35.

NOTE: ‘After the victim is laid upon the altar, he commands the people to flood the sacrifice and the altar with water, and to fill the trench round about the altar. He then reverentially bows before the unseen God, raises his hands toward heaven, and offers a calm and simple prayer, unattended with violent gestures or contortions of the body.’ *Testimonies, volume 3*, page 284.

6. What prayer of faith did Elijah make and how was it answered? 1 Kings 18:36-39.

NOTE: ‘No sooner is the prayer of Elijah ended than flames of fire, like brilliant flashes of lightning, descend from heaven upon the upreared altar, consuming the sacrifice, licking up the water in the trench, and consuming even the stones of the altar. The brilliancy of the blaze illumines the mountain and dazzles the eyes of the multitude. In the valleys below, where many are watching in anxious suspense the movements of those above, the descent of fire is clearly seen, and all are amazed at the sight. It resembles the pillar of fire which at the Red Sea separated the children of Israel from the Egyptian host.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 152.

‘A sound of abundance of rain’

7. What prophecy did Elijah make in faith to Ahab? 1 Kings 18:41.

NOTE: ‘Elijah had set before the people their apostasy; he had called upon them to humble their hearts and turn to the Lord. The judgments of Heaven had been executed; the people had confessed their sins, and had acknowledged the God of their fathers as the living God; and now the curse of Heaven was to be withdrawn, and the temporal blessings of life renewed. The land was to be refreshed with rain. “Get thee up, eat and drink,” Elijah said to Ahab; “for there is a sound of abundance of rain.” Then the prophet went to the top of the mount to pray. It was not because of any outward evidence that the showers were about to fall, that Elijah could so confidently bid Ahab prepare for rain. The prophet saw no clouds in the heavens; he heard no thunder. He simply spoke the word that the Spirit of the Lord had moved him to speak in response to his own strong faith.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 155.

8. Having given this prophecy to Ahab, what did Elijah then do? 1 Kings 18:42. Compare James 5:18.

NOTE: ‘Throughout the day he had unflinchingly performed the will of God and had revealed his implicit confidence in the prophecies of God’s word; and now, having done all that was in his power to do, he knew that Heaven would freely bestow the blessings foretold. The same God who had sent the drought had promised an abundance of rain as the reward of right doing; and now Elijah waited for the promised outpouring. In an attitude of humility, “his face between his knees,” he interceded with God in behalf of penitent Israel.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 156.

‘A little cloud out of the sea’

9. As he prayed, what instruction did Elijah give to his servant? 1 Kings 18:43.

NOTE: ‘Important lessons are presented to us in the experience of Elijah. When upon Mt. Carmel he offered the prayer for rain, his faith was tested, but he persevered in making known his request unto God. Had he given up in discouragement at the sixth time, his prayer would not have been answered, but he persevered till the answer came. We have a God whose ear is not closed to our petitions; and if we prove His word, He will honour our faith. He wants us to have all our interests interwoven with His interests, and then He can safely bless us; for we shall not then take glory to self when the blessing is ours, but shall render all the praise to God. God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favours He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless, and fail to realise our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help.’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 212.

10. After going seven times to look towards the sea, what did Elijah’s servant report? 1 Kings 18:44, first part.

NOTE: ‘Again and again Elijah sent his servant to a point overlooking the Mediterranean, to learn whether there were any visible token that God had heard his prayer. Each time the servant returned with the word, “There is nothing.” The prophet did not become impatient or lose faith, but continued his earnest pleading. Six times the servant returned with the word that there was no sign of rain in the brassy heavens. Undaunted, Elijah sent him forth once more; and this time the servant returned with the word, “Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man’s hand.”’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 156.

‘That the rain stop thee not’

11. What was Elijah’s instant response to his servant’s report? 1 Kings 18:44, last part.

NOTE: ‘The servant watched while Elijah prayed. Six times he returned from the watch, saying, There is nothing, no cloud, no sign of rain. But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. And when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came. The servant appeared, and said, “Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.” Elijah did not wait for the heavens to gather blackness. In that small cloud, he beheld by faith an abundance of rain; and he acted in harmony with his faith. Faith such as this is needed in the world today, faith that will lay hold on the promises of God’s word, and refuse to let go until Heaven hears.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 88.

12. How was Elijah’s prophecy fulfilled? 1 Kings 18:45-46.

NOTE: ‘It was because Elijah was a man of large faith that God could use him in this grave crisis in the history of Israel. As he prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favour. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God’s service; for of the prophet from the mountains of Gilead it is written: “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” James 5:17. Faith such as this is needed in the world today, faith that will lay hold on the promises of God’s word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears. Faith such as this connects us closely with Heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. Through faith God’s children have “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Hebrews 11:33, 34. And through faith we today are to reach the heights of God’s purpose for us. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23. Faith is an essential element of prevailing prayer.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 156-157.

Lesson 5: October 28-November 3

‘How long halt ye between two opinions?’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.’ 1 Kings 18:21.

STUDY HELP: *Conflict & Courage*, page 209.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 18:17-39.

LESSON AIM: To study the heart of Elijah’s message.

Introduction

‘If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.’ *Testimonies, volume 3*, page 280.

‘Choose ye this day’

1. What challenge did Elijah bring to the people on Mount Carmel and what was the people’s response? 1 Kings 18:21.

NOTE: ‘Light and darkness cannot be mingled and harmonise. Many act partly as children of time, and partly as children of eternity, and this course God abhors. “If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.” If you believe the word of God, submit your ways to its guidance in all things, even though your own inclinations are crossed. Believe the truth heartily... The end is near! We have no time to halt between two opinions.’ *1888 Materials*, page 673.

2. What similar challenge had Joshua brought to the people? Joshua 24:15.

NOTE: ‘Every heart emptied of self will have the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit. It is now that some are being worked by satanic agencies. Mark the fruit. The whole life is one of ambitious determination to carry out their own plans and purposes, to do a special work to exalt themselves. God puts to them the challenge, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. If it be God, serve Him; if Baal, serve him.” But some have been fixing themselves for a long time by a species of deception and misrepresentation and prevarication, because they have not turned from their idols to serve the living and true God. It is not necessary to bow down to a stock or a stone to serve idols. Whatever takes possession of the heart, commanding its service, that is not the dictation of the Holy Spirit, assumes the form of an idol. How many hearts through a wrong course of allowing the mind to become concentrated upon a certain course of action to distinguish self, will come under the head of covetousness, which is idolatry! In order to obtain money, or to be first, some will betray the most precious cause of truth. There is an intense spirit that takes possession of mind and character. A man turns his whole being into accomplishing some great thing; an unquenchable thirst takes possession of the whole man to obtain money and spread himself as did Nebuchadnezzar. He wants glory to himself. He will bind up with worldly men and forsake the fountain of living waters. Nothing but the humbling of his soul to the light of the Word of God, and the Sun of Righteousness penetrating every chamber of his moral being, will break the fog and the dense darkness he has gathered about his soul.’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 18*, page 129.

‘Who is on the Lord’s side?’

3. What challenge had Moses brought to the people? Exodus 32:26.

NOTE: ‘God abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work. The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. The people of God are nearing the borders of the eternal world; what is of more importance to them than that they be loyal to the God of heaven? All through the ages, God has had moral heroes, and He has them now; those who, like Joseph and Elijah and Daniel, are not ashamed to acknowledge themselves His peculiar people. Such men make their wills and plans subordinate to the law of God. For love of Him, they count not their lives dear unto themselves. Their work is to catch the light from the Word, and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. Fidelity to God is their motto.’ *Review & Herald*, September 18, 1913.

4. What distinction does God want to make plain? Malachi 3:18.

NOTE: ‘Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects, God and truth and eternity, their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony. One class is ripening as wheat for the garner of God, the other as tares for the fires of destruction. How can there be unity of purpose or action between them? We are to beware of indulging a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. We are not to stand aside from others in a spirit that seems to say, “Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou.” We are not to shut ourselves away from our fellow human beings, but are to seek to impart to them the precious truth that has blessed our own hearts. But if we are Christians, having the spirit of Him who died to save men from their sins, we shall love the souls of our fellow men too well to countenance their sinful pleasures by our presence and our influence. Such a course, so far from benefiting them, would only cause them to doubt the reality of our religion. We should be firmly rooted in the conviction that whatever in any sense turns aside from truth and justice in our association and partnership with men, cannot benefit us and greatly dishonours God.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 310.

‘Come out from among them’

5. What warning does Paul give to those Christians who think they can participate in worldly activities? 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

NOTE: ‘God’s people have so long been led by the inventions and fashions of the world that they are unwilling to move out independent of them. When I study the Scriptures, I am alarmed for the Israel of God in these last days. They are exhorted to flee from idolatry. I fear that they are asleep and so conformed to the world that it would be difficult to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. The distance is widening between Christ and His people, and lessening between them and the world. The marks of distinction between Christ’s professed people and the world have almost disappeared. Like ancient Israel, they follow after the abominations of the nations around them.’ *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 276.

6. What call does Paul give to God’s people? 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

NOTE: ‘It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued

spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians! Those who claim to be Christians and will confess Christ should come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing, and be separate.’ *Christian service*, page 41.

‘The Lord knoweth them that are His’

7. Though we should not try to judge who is on the Lord’s side and who is not, does the Lord know His own? 2 Timothy 2:19.

NOTE: ‘The minds of some are being turned into the channel of unbelief. These persons think they see reason to doubt the word and the work of God, because the course of some professed Christians looks questionable to them. But does this move the foundation? We are not to make the course of others the basis of our faith. We are to imitate Christ, the perfect Pattern. If any allow their hold on Him to be weakened because men err, because defects are seen in the characters of those who profess the truth, they will ever be on sliding sand. Their eyes must be directed to the Author and Finisher of their faith; they must strengthen their souls with the assurance of the great apostle: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.” God cannot be deceived. He reads character correctly. He weighs motives. Nothing escapes His all-seeing eye; the thoughts, the intents and purposes of the hearts, all are discerned by Him.’ *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 583.

8. How does the Lord distinguish those who are His? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: ‘We are rapidly approaching the end of this earth’s history; and as we realise that Jesus is indeed coming soon, we shall be aroused to labour as never before. We are to raise the banner on which is inscribed, “The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Obedience to God’s law is the great issue. Let it not be put out of sight.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 341.

‘Till we have sealed the servants of God’

9. How does the Bible picture God’s work of identifying His own? Revelation 7:2-3.

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.

10. In contrast, how will the powers of evil identify their followers? Revelation 13:15-17.

NOTE: ‘After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image [Revelation 14:9-11] 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. The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God’s commandments.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 445-446.

‘That ye may know that I am the Lord your God’

11. What part of His Ten Commandments has the Lord especially chosen to identify those that are His? Ezekiel 20:20.

NOTE: ‘The observance of the Sabbath is the sign between God and His people. Let us not be ashamed to bear the sign that distinguishes us from the world. . . The Sabbath is ever the sign that distinguishes the obedient from the disobedient. With masterly power Satan has worked to make null and void the fourth commandment, that the sign of God may be lost sight of. The Christian world have trodden underfoot the Sabbath of the Lord and observe a sabbath instituted by the enemy. But God has a people who are loyal to Him. His work is to be carried forward in right lines. The people who bear His sign are to establish churches and institutions as memorials to Him. These memorials, however humble in appearance, will constantly bear witness against the false sabbath instituted by Satan, and in favour of the Sabbath instituted by the Lord in Eden, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ *Counsels on Health*, page 235.

12. How was the rebellion against God’s law foretold? Daniel 7:25. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

NOTE: The phrase ‘man of sin’ literally means ‘the man who transgresses God’s law.’ The Greek word ‘*anomia*’ refers to the act of transgression, disobedience to law.

‘The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorise the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change

foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: "He shall think to change the times and the law." The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfils the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God. While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandments, since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage, the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. It was in behalf of the Sunday that popery first asserted its arrogant claims; and its first resort to the power of the state was to compel the observance of Sunday as "the Lord's day." But the Bible points to the seventh day, and not to the first, as the Lord's day. Said Christ: "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The fourth commandment declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." And by the prophet Isaiah the Lord designates it: "My holy day." Mark 2:28; Isaiah 58:13.' *Great Controversy*, page 446.

Lesson 6: November 4-10

'What doest thou here?'

MEMORY VERSE: 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' Hebrews 13:5, last part-6.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 160-175.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 19.

LESSON AIM: To show how God dealt with Elijah when his faith failed.

Introduction

'It would seem that after showing courage so undaunted, after triumphing so completely over king and priests and people, Elijah could never afterward have given way to despondency nor been awed into timidity. But he who had been blessed with so many evidences of God's loving care was not above the frailties of mankind, and in this dark hour his faith and courage forsook him.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 159.

'Take away my life'

1. What warning did Elijah receive and what was Elijah's response? 1 Kings 19:1-3.

NOTE: 'Elijah should not have fled from his post of duty. He should have met the threat of Jezebel with an appeal for protection to the One who had commissioned him to vindicate the honour of Jehovah. He should have told the messenger that the God in whom he trusted would protect him against the hatred of the queen. Only a few hours had passed since he had witnessed a wonderful manifestation of divine power, and this should have given him assurance that he would not now be forsaken. Had he remained where he was, had he made God his refuge and strength, standing steadfast for the truth, he would have been shielded from harm. The Lord would have given him another signal victory by sending His judgments on Jezebel; and the impression made on the king and the people would have wrought a great reformation.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 160.

2. What was Elijah's state of mind having fled from Jezebel? 1 Kings 19:4

NOTE: 'A reaction such as frequently follows high faith and glorious success was pressing upon Elijah. He feared that the reformation begun on Carmel might not be lasting; and depression seized him. He had been exalted to Pisgah's top; now he was in the valley. While under the inspiration of the Almighty, he had stood the severest trial of faith; but in this time of discouragement, with Jezebel's threat sounding in his ears, and Satan still apparently prevailing through the plotting of this wicked woman, he lost his hold on God. He had been exalted above measure, and the reaction was tremendous. Forgetting God, Elijah fled on and on, until he found himself in a dreary waste, alone. Utterly wearied, he sat down to rest under a juniper tree. And sitting there, he requested for himself that he might die. "It is enough; now, O Lord," he said, "take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." A fugitive, far from the dwelling places of men, his spirits crushed by bitter disappointment, he desired never again to look upon the face of man. At last, utterly exhausted, he fell asleep.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 161.

'Arise and eat'

3. How did the Lord minister to Elijah in his discouragement? 1 Kings 19:5-8.

NOTE: 'God's eye was still upon His servant. He loved him no less when he felt broken-hearted and forsaken of God and man than when, in answer to his prayer, fire flashed from heaven illuminating Carmel. Those who have not borne weighty responsibilities, or who have not been accustomed to feel very deeply, cannot understand the feelings of Elijah and are not prepared to give him the tender sympathy he deserves. God knows and can read the heart's sore anguish under temptation and sore conflict. As Elijah sleeps under the juniper tree, a soft touch and pleasant voice arouse him. He starts at once in his terror, as if to flee, as though the enemy who was in pursuit of his life had indeed found him. But in the pitying face of love bending over him he sees, not the face of an enemy, but of a friend. An angel has been sent with food from heaven to sustain the faithful servant of God. His voice says to Elijah: "Arise and eat." After Elijah had partaken of the refreshment prepared for him, he again slumbered. A second time the angel of God ministers to the wants of Elijah. He touches the weary, exhausted man, and in

pitying tenderness says to him: "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." Elijah was strengthened and pursued his journey to Horeb.' *Testimonies, volume 3*, pages 290-291.

4. How did David recognise the love and care of the Lord for His own? Psalm 34:6-8. (Read the whole psalm.)

NOTE: 'The servant of God may have courage, knowing that he has a pitying Heavenly Father who reads the motives and understands the purposes of the soul. Those who stand in the front of the conflict, who are reined up by the Spirit of God to do a special work for Him, will frequently feel the reaction, when the pressure is removed, and despondency may press them hard, and shake the most heroic faith, and weaken the most steadfast minds. God understands all our weaknesses. He can pity and love when the hearts of men may be as hard as flint. To wait patiently and trust in God when everything looks dark, is the lesson His servants must learn more fully. God will not fail them in integrity.' *Review & Herald*, October 7, 1873.

'What doest thou here?'

5. What question did the Lord put to Elijah? 1 Kings 19:9.

NOTE: 'To Elijah, in his place of hiding, the Lord said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" I sent you to Samaria with a message to Ahab; I sent you to the brook Cherith, and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel; and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here? So, to every child of God not actively engaged in service whose voice the enemy of souls, no matter by what means, has succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, What doest thou here? I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here?' *Review & Herald*, October 30, 1913.

6. How did Elijah respond to the Lord's question? 1 Kings 19:10.

NOTE: 'There are many lessons to be drawn from Elijah's experience during these days of discouragement and apparent defeat, lessons invaluable to the servants of God in this age, marked as it is by general departure from right. The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet's day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their baleful influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. It is publicly taught that we have reached a time when human reason should be exalted above the teachings of the Word. The law of God, the divine standard of righteousness, is declared to be of no effect. The enemy of all truth is working with deceptive power to cause men and women to place human institutions where God should be, and to forget that which was ordained for the happiness and salvation of mankind.' *Review & Herald*, October 23, 1913.

'A still small voice'

7. How did the Lord reveal Himself to Elijah? 1 Kings 19:11-12.

NOTE: 'Not in mighty manifestations of divine power, but by "a still small voice," did God choose to reveal Himself to His servant. He desired to teach Elijah that it is not always the work that makes the greatest demonstration that is most successful in accomplishing His purpose. While Elijah waited for the revelation of the Lord, a tempest rolled, the lightnings flashed, and a devouring fire swept by; but God was not in all this. Then there came a still, small voice, and the prophet covered his head before the presence of the Lord. His petulance was silenced, his spirit softened and subdued. He now knew that a quiet trust, a firm reliance on God, would ever find for him a present help in time of need. It is not always the most learned presentation of God's truth that convicts and converts the soul. Not by eloquence or logic are men's hearts reached, but by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, which operate quietly yet surely in transforming and developing character. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 168-169.

8. What was Elijah's reaction when he heard the voice of the Lord? 1 Kings 19:13, first part.

NOTE: 'There should be an intelligent knowledge of how to come to God in reverence and Godly fear with devotional love. There is a growing lack of reverence for our Maker, a growing disregard of His greatness and His majesty. But God is speaking to us in these last days. We hear His voice in the storm, in the rolling thunder. We hear of the calamities He permits in the earthquakes, the breaking forth of waters, and the destructive elements sweeping all before them. We hear of ships going down in the tempestuous ocean. God speaks to families who have refused to recognise Him, sometimes in the whirlwind and storm, sometimes face to face as He talked with Moses. Again He whispers His love to the little trusting child and to the grey-haired sire in his dotage. And earthly wisdom has a wisdom as it beholds the unseen. When the still small voice which succeeds the whirlwind and the tempest that moves the rocks out of position is heard, let all cover their face, for God is very near. Let them hide themselves in Jesus Christ; for He is their hiding place. The cleft in the rock is hidden with His own pierced hand while the humble seeker waits in bowed attitude to hear what saith the Lord unto His servant.' *Selected Messages, book 2*, pages 315-316.

'There came a voice unto him'

9. How did the Lord repeat His question to Elijah? 1 Kings 19:13, last part.

NOTE: 'Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. He leads them to settle down at ease, or, for the sake of

greater worldly advantages, to remove from places where they might be a power for good. Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty, because of opposition or persecution. But all such are regarded by Heaven with tenderest pity. To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls had succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, "What doest thou here?" I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here?' *Prophets & Kings*, page 171.

10. How did Elijah again reply? 1 Kings 19:14.

NOTE: 'What strange work Elijah would have done in numbering Israel in the time when God's judgments were falling upon his backsliding people. He could only count one on the Lord's side. He said in mournful accents, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.'" *Review & Herald*, November 12, 1895.

'Go, return'

11. How did the Lord reassure Elijah that He would still use him as His prophet? 1 Kings 19:15-17.

NOTE: 'The Lord assured Elijah that the wrong-doers in Israel should not go unpunished. There was stern work to be done, that all might be given opportunity to take their position on the side of the true God. Elijah himself was to return to Israel, and share with others the burden of bringing about a reformation. Some were to be especially chosen to fulfil the divine purpose in the punishment of the idolatrous kingdom.' *Review & Herald*, October 23, 1913.

12. How did the Lord show Elijah that he was wrong in his belief that he was alone in his loyalty to God? 1 Kings 19:18.

NOTE: 'This apostasy, wide-spread as it is, is not universal. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who long to understand more fully in regard to Christ and the law, many who are hoping against hope that Jesus will soon come to end the reign of sin and death. And there are many who are worshiping Baal ignorantly, with whom the Spirit of God is striving. These need the personal help of those who have learned to know God and the power of His word. In such a time as this, every child of God should be actively engaged in helping others. As those who have an understanding of Bible truth try to seek out the men and women who are longing for light, angels of God will attend them. And where angels go, none need fear to move forward. As a result of the faithful efforts of consecrated workers, many will be turned from idolatry to the worship of the living God. Many will cease to pay homage to man-made institutions, and will take their stand fearlessly on the side of God and his law.' *Review & Herald*, October 23, 1913.

Lesson 7: November 11-17

'To hearken to the words of My servants the prophets'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I have sent also unto you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto Me.' Jeremiah 35:15.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 204-216.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 21:1-29, 2 Kings 1:2-17.

LESSON AIM: To study the messages of reproof that Elijah was given.

Introduction

'In the closing work of God in the earth, the standard of His law will be again exalted. False religion may prevail, iniquity may abound, the love of many may wax cold, the cross of Calvary may be lost sight of, and darkness, like the pall of death, may spread over the world; the whole force of the popular current may be turned against the truth; plot after plot may be formed to overthrow the people of God; but in the hour of greatest peril, the God of Elijah will raise up human instrumentalities to bear a message that will not be silenced. In the populous cities of the land, and in the places where men have gone to the greatest lengths in speaking against the Most High, the voice of stern rebuke will be heard.' *Christian Service*, page 165.

'Thou shalt not covet'

1. What led Ahab into sin over Naboth's vineyard? 1 Kings 21:1-4.

NOTE: 'In the Holy Scriptures fearful denunciations are pronounced against the sin of covetousness. "No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." The psalmist says, "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." Paul ranks covetous men with idolaters, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, none of whom shall inherit the kingdom of God. These are the fruits of a corrupt tree, and God is dishonoured by them.' *Signs of the Times*, February 7, 1884.

2. How did Jezebel arrange for Naboth's death? 1 Kings 21:7-13.

NOTE: 'Ahab cared not by what means his wife might accomplish the desired object, and Jezebel immediately proceeded to carry out her wicked purpose. She wrote letters in the name of the king, sealed them with his signet, and sent them to the elders and nobles of the city where Naboth dwelt, saying: "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: and set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die." The command was obeyed. "The men of his city, even the elders and the nobles, . . . did as Jezebel had . . . written in the letters which she had sent unto them." Then Jezebel went to the king and bade him arise and take the vineyard. And Ahab, heedless of the consequences, blindly followed her counsel and went down to take possession of the coveted property.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 205-206.

'The wages of sin is death'

3. What message of rebuke was Elijah commanded to give to Ahab? 1 Kings 21:17-19, 20, last part-22.

NOTE: 'The king was not allowed to enjoy unrebuked that which he had gained by fraud and bloodshed. "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" And the Lord further instructed Elijah to pronounce upon Ahab a terrible judgment.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 206.

4. How did Ahab greet Elijah? 1 Kings 21:20, first part. Compare Romans 8:7, James 4:4.

NOTE: 'Every indignity, reproach, and cruelty that Satan could instigate human hearts to devise, has been visited upon the followers of Jesus. And it will be again fulfilled in a marked manner; for the carnal heart is still at enmity with the law of God, and will not be subject to its commands. The world is no more in harmony with the principles of Christ today than it was in the days of the apostles. The same hatred that prompted the cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" the same hatred that led to the persecution of the disciples, still works in the children of disobedience. The same spirit which in the Dark Ages consigned men and women to prison, to exile, and to death, which conceived the exquisite torture of the Inquisition, which planned and executed the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and which kindled the fires of Smithfield, is still at work with malignant energy in unregenerate hearts. The history of truth has ever been the record of a struggle between right and wrong. The proclamation of the gospel has ever been carried forward in this world in the face of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 84.

'He went softly'

5. What was Ahab's response to the message of rebuke that Elijah brought? 1 Kings 21:27.

NOTE: The word 'softly' means meekly. It probably literally means 'barefooted.'
'As formerly what he witnessed on Carmel, so now the words of Elijah went straight to Ahab's heart. He no longer disguised the truth from himself, nor sought to divert his mind by thoughts of personal animosity on the part of the prophet. It was against Jehovah that he had sinned, and before Jehovah he humbled himself. As a mourner he rent his clothes; as a penitent he wore sackcloth; as guilty he fasted; and as one staggering under a load of heavy grief, he walked softly. And all this publicly – in the sight of men.' Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 56.

6. As a result, how did God modify His judgement upon the house of Ahab? 1 Kings 21:28-29.

NOTE: 'It was fitting, if we may venture on the expression, and in accordance with God's previous declaration of judgement, that the living God, Who had seen and avenged the crime done in secret, should also acknowledge the repentance shown in public. Accordingly the word of Jehovah came once more to Elijah to declare that the personal repentance of the personal sin had brought remission of the personal punishment, though not of that denounced upon the dynasty. The visible judgement, by which all were to perceive the retribution of God's justice, was delayed to the time of his son, and would have been delayed further, had he shown like repentance.' Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 56.

7. How were the words of Elijah's message concerning Ahab fulfilled? 1 Kings 22:37-38,

NOTE: 'Through the darkness sped the chariot that bore the dead body of Ahab, lying on its bloody bed. They reached Samaria and there they buried their king. But the chariot full of his gore they took outside, to wash in the pool by the city. And, horrible to behold, in the pale moonlight the wild masterless dogs, which in the East prowl at night about the city-walls, lapped up the water mingled with gore which flowed out of the blood-dyed chariot as they washed it.' Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 71.

'God is not mocked'

8. What message was Elijah commanded to give to Jezebel? 1 Kings 21:23.

NOTE: 'The judgement on Jezebel was to be executed "by the wall of Jezreel". The expression means properly: 'on the free space by the wall. And, as we remember that the window from which Jezebel looked down upon Jehu must have been in the city wall, since she addressed him as he entered in the gate, we can understand how literally the prediction was fulfilled.' Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 57.

9. How were the words of Elijah's message concerning Jezebel fulfilled? 2 Kings 9:30-37.

NOTE: ‘Tidings of all that was passing had rapidly reached Jezebel. Her course was soon chosen. She knew she must die; and she would die as a princess of her race, and a queen. After the Oriental fashion, she put paint on her eyes, “and tired her head.” Thus arrayed like a queen, she took her place at the window, awaiting the arrival of Jehu. As he appeared, she called to him from above... Looking up, he exclaimed in his impatient way: “Who is on my side? Who?” and when some of the eunuchs immediately responded, Jezebel was, at his command, thrown from the window. Her blood bespattered the wall and the horses and the chariot of Jehu, as he passed through the gate, crushed her mangled body.’ Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 203.

‘He did evil in the sight of the LORD’

10. What sort of king was Ahaziah, Ahab’s son and successor? 1 Kings 22:51-53.

NOTE: ‘Ahaziah, Ahab’s successor, “did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam.” “He served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel,” as his father Ahab had done. But judgments followed close upon the sins of the rebellious king. A war with Moab, and then an accident by which his own life was threatened, attested to God’s wrath against him.’ *Review & Herald*, January 15, 1914.

11. When Ahaziah suffered a severe accident, what course of action did he follow? 2 Kings 1:2.

NOTE: ‘Having fallen “through a lattice in his upper chamber,” Ahaziah, seriously injured, and fearful of the possible outcome, sent some of his servants to make inquiry of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover or not. The god of Ekron was supposed to give information, through the medium of its priests, concerning future events. Large numbers of people went to inquire of it; but the predictions there uttered, and the information given, proceeded from the prince of darkness.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 207.

‘Thou sendest to inquire of the god of Ekron’

12. What message of rebuke was Elijah commanded to give Ahaziah’s messengers to Baal-zebub? 2 Kings 1:3-4.

NOTE: ‘During the father’s reign, Ahaziah had witnessed the wondrous works of the Most High. He had seen the terrible evidences that God had given apostate Israel of the way in which He regards those who set aside the binding claims of His law. Ahaziah had acted as if these awful realities were but idle tales. Instead of humbling his heart before the Lord, he had followed after Baal, and at last he had ventured upon this, his most daring act of impiety. Rebellious, and unwilling to repent, Ahaziah died, “according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken.”’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 209.

13. When Elijah turned back Ahaziah’s messengers, how did they describe Elijah to the king? 2 Kings 7-8.

NOTE: ‘The astonished servants hastened back to the king, and repeated to him the words of the man of God. The king inquired, “What manner of man was he?” They answered, “He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.” “It is Elijah the Tishbite,” Ahaziah exclaimed. He knew that if the stranger whom his messengers had met was indeed Elijah, the words of doom pronounced would surely come to pass. Anxious to avert, if possible, the threatened judgment, he determined to send for the prophet.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 208.

14. After his repeated efforts to intimidate Elijah, what sentence was pronounced upon Ahaziah? 2 Kings 1:16-17, first part.

NOTE: ‘Twice Ahaziah sent a company of soldiers to intimidate the prophet, and twice the wrath of God fell upon them in judgment. The third company of soldiers humbled themselves before God; and their captain, as he approached the Lord’s messenger, “fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.” “The angel of Jehovah said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. And he said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore thou shalt not come down from the bed whither thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”’ *Prophets & Kings*, pages 208-209.

Lesson 8: November 18-24

‘Behold, I send you Elijah’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ Luke 1:17.

STUDY HELP: *Conflict & Courage*, page 272.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:13-17.

LESSON AIM: To study how John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6.

Introduction

'The prophecy that John's mission fulfilled outlines our work, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Matthew 3:2, 3. As John prepared the way for the first, so we are to prepare the way for the second, advent of the Saviour.' *Counsels to Writers & Editors*, page 178.

'I will send you Elijah'

1. What prophecy had been given to the prophet Malachi concerning Elijah? Malachi 4:5-6.

NOTE: 'The closing words of Malachi are a prophecy regarding the work that should be done preparatory to the first and the second advent of Christ. This prophecy is introduced with the admonition, "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." This prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist; for the Saviour Himself declared to His disciples, "Elias is come already." Upon hearing this, the disciples "understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.'" *Southern Watchman*, March 21, 1905.

2. What prophecy was made by the angel of the Lord to Zacharias concerning John the Baptist? Luke 1:17.

NOTE: 'In every stage of this earth's history God has had His agencies to carry forward His work, which must be done in His appointed way. John the Baptist had a special work, for which he was born and to which he was appointed, the work of preparing the way of the Lord. The mission and the work of John the Baptist were specified by the angel of the Lord, as recorded by Luke: "And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." The Holy Ghost was to be upon him.' *Southern Watchman*, March 21, 1905.

3. How did Jesus confirm that John was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi? Matthew 17:10-13. Compare Matthew 11:12-14. (Consider the meaning of John 1:21.)

NOTE: 'The work of John was foretold by the prophet Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Malachi 4:5, 6. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord, and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. He was a representative of those living in the last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. And the same principles of temperance which John practiced should be observed by those who in our day are to warn the world of the coming of the Son of man.' *Temperance*, page 91.

'He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink'

4. What specific aspect concerning John's upbringing did the angel of the Lord impress upon Zacharias? Luke 1:15.

NOTE: 'God had called the son of Zacharias to a great work, the greatest ever committed to men. In order to accomplish this work, he must have the Lord to work with him. And the Spirit of God would be with him if he heeded the instruction of the angel. John was to go forth as Jehovah's messenger, to bring to men the light of God. He must give a new direction to their thoughts. He must impress them with the holiness of God's requirements, and their need of His perfect righteousness. Such a messenger must be holy. He must be a temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. In order to fulfil his mission, he must have a sound physical constitution, and mental and spiritual strength. Therefore it would be necessary for him to control the appetites and passions. He must be able so to control all his powers that he could stand among men as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks and mountains of the wilderness.' *Lift Him Up*, page 363.

5. How did God emphasise this same important aspect to the parents of Samson? Judges 13:3-5 & 7.

NOTE: 'The carefulness with which the mother should guard her habits of life is taught in the Scriptures. When the Lord would raise up Samson as a deliverer for Israel, "the angel of Jehovah" appeared to the mother, with special instruction concerning her habits, and also for the treatment of her child. "Beware," he said, "and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing." Judges 13:13, 7. The effect of prenatal influences is by many parents looked upon as a matter of little moment; but heaven does not so regard it. The message sent by an angel of God, and twice given in the most solemn manner, shows it to be deserving of our most careful thought. If the mother unswervingly adheres to right principles, if she is temperate and self-denying, if she is kind, gentle, and unselfish, she may give her child these same precious traits of character. Very explicit was the command prohibiting the use of wine by the mother. Every drop of strong drink taken by her to gratify appetite endangers the physical, mental, and moral health of her child, and is a direct sin against her Creator.' *Ministry of Healing*, pages 372-373.

'Even from his mother's womb'

6. What promise did the angel of the Lord make concerning John, even before his birth? Luke 1:15, last part.

NOTE: It is a fundamental teaching of the so-called 'Reformed Churches' that all children are sinners at birth, naturally depraved and hopelessly corrupt. Some bibles use Psalm 51:5 to bolster this idea; thus this verse, which refers to the fact that David was born of sinful parents, is interpreted to mean, I was a sinner from birth. Other popular ways of presenting this idea include: We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners, or We are not sinful because we sin; we sin because we are sinful. This idea stems from Augustine of Hippo who tried to explain his own failure to overcome temptation by blending elements of the teachings of Plato with Christianity. Plato taught that all matter is in itself essentially evil. Thus he

concluded that the very fact that we inhabit bodies makes us evil. Only when our souls leave our bodies, Plato taught, will we become free from evil. It is impossible to reconcile this kind of teaching with the Bible's statement that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit 'even from his mother's womb.'

'The thoughts and feelings of the mother will have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. If she allows her mind to dwell upon her own feelings, if she indulges in selfishness, if she is peevish and exacting, the disposition of her child will testify to the fact. Thus many have received as a birthright almost unconquerable tendencies to evil. If the mother unswervingly adheres to right principles, if she is temperate and self-denying, if she is kind, gentle, and unselfish, she may give her child these same precious traits of character. She who expects to become a mother should keep her soul in the love of God. Her mind should be at peace; she should rest in the love of Jesus, practising the words of Christ. She should remember that the mother is a labourer together with God.' *Mind, Character & Personality, volume 1*, page 132.

7. What other instances are we given of God choosing His servants in the same way as John? Jeremiah 1:4-5, Judges 13:5. Compare Psalm 139:13, Galatians 1:15.

NOTE: 'A member of the Levitical priesthood, Jeremiah had been trained from childhood for holy service. In those happy years of preparation he little realised that he had been ordained from birth to be "a prophet unto the nations;" and when the divine call came, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his unworthiness. "Ah, Lord God!" he exclaimed, "behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." Jeremiah 1:5, 6.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 407.

'Thou hast turned their heart back again.'

8. What was to be the heart of John's work? Luke 1:16. Compare 1 Kings 18:37.

NOTE: 'Elijah had set before the people their apostasy; he had called upon them to humble their hearts and turn to the Lord. The judgments of Heaven had been executed; the people had confessed their sins, and had acknowledged the God of their fathers as the living God; and now the curse of Heaven was to be withdrawn, and the temporal blessings of life renewed. The land was to be refreshed with rain.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 155.

9. What wonderful promises did God make to those who would turn to Him? Deuteronomy 30:9-10, Isaiah 55:7, Hosea 14:1, 2 & 4.

NOTE: 'The Lord is infinitely merciful and gracious. He is waiting for us to repent and turn to Him with humble confession, saying, We will take Thy way, O Lord; we will no longer walk in the way of our own counsels. Have mercy on us and save us and those who have erred in following a path not cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. The time has come for the renunciation of all self-confidence. The time has come to follow the Lord's way. He has given instruction for all who will be guided by Him, who have faith in His word, and courage to go forward. God calls upon those who have walked in paths of their own choosing to return to Him.' *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, July 1, 1900.

10. What special promise is made to those who, like Elijah and John, turn the hearts of men back into the path of righteousness? Daniel 12:3.

NOTE: The word translated 'wise' may also be rendered as 'teachers' See marginal reference. The work of Elijah and John was to teach men the way of righteousness. Compare Proverbs 11:30.

'We have been commissioned to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. We are to bring to the lost the tidings that Christ can forgive sin, can renew the nature, can clothe the soul in the garments of His righteousness, bring the sinner to his right mind, and teach him and fit him up to be a labourer together with God.' *Christian Education*, page 96.

'In the spirit and power of Elias'

11. What power was to attend the work of John? Luke 1:17.

NOTE: 'It was not given to John to call down fire from heaven, or to raise the dead, as Elijah did, nor to wield Moses' rod of power in the name of God. He was sent to herald the Saviour's advent, and to call upon the people to prepare for His coming.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 279.

12. How did Jesus draw attention to John's greatness? Luke 7:28.

NOTE: 'In the estimation of Heaven, what is it that constitutes greatness? Not that which the world accounts greatness; not wealth, or rank, or noble descent, or intellectual gifts, in themselves considered. If intellectual greatness, apart from any higher consideration, is worthy of honour, then our homage is due to Satan, whose intellectual power no man has ever equalled. But when perverted to self-serving, the greater the gift, the greater curse it becomes. It is moral worth that God values. Love and purity are the attributes He prizes most. John was great in the sight of the Lord, when, before the messengers from the Sanhedrin, before the people, and before his own disciples, he refrained from seeking honour for himself, but pointed all to Jesus as the Promised One. His unselfish joy in the ministry of Christ presents the highest type of nobility ever revealed in man.' *Desire of Ages*, page 219.

'Aside from the joy that John found in his mission, his life had been one of sorrow. His voice had been seldom heard except in the wilderness. His was a lonely lot. And he was not permitted to see the result of his own labours. It was not his privilege to be with Christ and witness the manifestation of divine power attending the greater light. It was not for him to see the blind restored to sight, the sick healed, and the dead raised to life. He did not behold the light that shone through every word of Christ, shedding glory upon the promises of prophecy. The least disciple who saw Christ's mighty works and heard His words was in

this sense more highly privileged than John the Baptist, and therefore is said to have been greater than he.' *Desire of Ages*, page 220.

'To make ready a people, prepared for the Lord'

13. What was the ultimate purpose of John's ministry? Luke 1:17, last part.

NOTE: 'As a prophet, John was "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." In preparing the way for Christ's first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord's second coming. The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan's snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practice the sacred truths of God's Word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ's second coming.' *Lift Him Up*, page 363.

14. How was Isaiah shown the ministry of John? Isaiah 40:3. Compare John 1:19-23.

NOTE: 'The voice of John was lifted up like a trumpet. His commission was, "Shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1). He had obtained no human scholarship. God and nature had been his teachers. But one was needed to prepare the way before Christ who was bold enough to make his voice heard like the prophets of old, summoning the degenerate nation to repentance.' *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 148.

Lesson 9: November 25-December 1 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.' John 1:22-23.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 104-107.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Luke 3:1-18.

LESSON AIM: To study the message and character of John the Baptist.

Introduction

'Christ declared John the Baptist to be one of the greatest of the prophets, and He showed His hearers that they had had sufficient evidence that John was a messenger from God. The words of the preacher in the wilderness were with power. He bore his message unflinchingly, rebuking the sins of priests and rulers, and enjoining upon them the works of the kingdom of heaven. He pointed out to them their sinful disregard of their Father's authority in refusing to do the work appointed them. He made no compromise with sin, and many were turned from their unrighteousness.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 278 .

'Repentance for the remission of sins'

1. What was the central element in John's preaching? Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:4.

NOTE: 'Repent, repent, was the message rung out by John the Baptist in the wilderness. Christ's message to the people was, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:5. And the apostles were commanded to preach everywhere that men should repent. The Lord desires His servants today to preach the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers and mothers in Israel. The sinner must be laboured for, perseveringly, earnestly, wisely, until he shall see that he is a transgressor of God's law, and shall exercise repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.' *Evangelism*, page 179.

2. What is meant by repentance? Isaiah 55:7; Ezekiel 18:30-32.

NOTE: 'True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 557. 'No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.' *Desire of Ages*, page 555.

'Fruits meet for repentance'

3. How important is it to repent? Luke 13:3, 5. Consider 2 Peter 3:9.

NOTE: 'Our sins caused Jesus to die a shameful death, that through His sufferings and death we might receive pardon. Can we receive the forgiveness of sins before we feel that we are sinners? and before we realise the sinfulness of sin? I think not. When we repent before God of our sins sincerely, we shall feel that without the pardoning blood of Christ we must perish. If we cast ourselves in our wretchedness wholly upon the mercy of Christ, and feel that unless He saves us we perish; when we yield our

own will, our own way, and plead for Jesus to control our will and actions, then we come into a position where we can receive and appreciate pardon and the forgiveness of sin.' *An Appeal to the Youth*, page 67.

4. What practical counsel did John give to the people who responded to his preaching and asked him what they should do? Luke 3:10-11.

NOTE: 'All who became the subjects of Christ's kingdom, he said, would give evidence of faith and repentance. Kindness, honesty, and fidelity would be seen in their lives. They would minister to the needy, and bring their offerings to God. They would shield the defenceless, and give an example of virtue and compassion. So the followers of Christ will give evidence of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. In the daily life, justice, mercy, and the love of God will be seen. Otherwise they are like the chaff that is given to the fire.' *Desire of Ages*, page 107.

'What shall we do then?'

5. How did John reply to the publicans and soldiers who asked him the same question? Luke 3:12-14.

NOTE: "'Then came also publicans to be baptised, and said unto [John], Master, what shall we do?" (Luke 3:12). Did he say, Leave your toll and custom houses? No, he said to them, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you" (Luke 3:13). If they were tax gatherers still, they could hold just weights and balances of truth in their hands. They could reform in those things that savoured of dishonesty and oppression.' *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 150.

'When John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness, the soldiers came to him among others, and asked him, "What shall we do?" His answer was, "Do violence to no man." A man with less of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, might have said, "Leave the army at once," and thus have got them into trouble, and got himself branded as a mover of sedition. But John did not presume to take upon himself the responsibility of telling them how they should act, but gave them a simple Gospel precept, throwing the responsibility upon them. Soldiers who "do violence to no man," will soon find a place outside the ranks. The Christian soldier is the man who never fights with carnal weapons, and whose only sword is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'" E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, April 19, 1894.

6. How did John fearlessly rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees that flocked to hear him? Matthew 3:7-10.

NOTE: 'The forerunner of Christ's first advent was a very plain-spoken man. He rebuked sin, and called things by their right names. He laid the axe at the root of the tree. He thus addressed one class of professed converts who came to be baptised of him in Jordan: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. . . . And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." [Matthew 3:7-10.] In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth things, God will not acknowledge as His shepherds. A fearful woe is upon them.' *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed. pages 89-90.

'I am not worthy'

7. What words revealed the essential humility of John? Matthew 3:11.

NOTE: 'Before honour is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labour for God. The heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls.' *Desire of Ages*, page 436.

8. How did John respond to those who asked him whether he was the Messiah? John 1:19-23.

NOTE: 'When the messengers from the highest authority in Jerusalem were communing with John in reference to his mission and work, he could have taken honour to himself, had he been so disposed. But he would not assume honours that did not belong to him.' *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 2, page 63.

'Behold the Lamb of God'

9. How did John respond when Jesus came to him asking for baptism? Matthew 3:13-14.

NOTE: 'When Jesus came to be baptised, John recognised in Him a purity of character that he had never before perceived in any man. The very atmosphere of His presence was holy and awe-inspiring. Among the multitudes that had gathered about him at the Jordan, John had heard dark tales of crime, and had met souls bowed down with the burden of myriad sins; but never had he come in contact with a human being from whom there breathed an influence so divine. All this was in harmony with what had been revealed to John regarding the Messiah. Yet he shrank from granting the request of Jesus. How could he, a sinner, baptise the Sinless One? And why should He who needed no repentance submit to a rite that was a confession of guilt to be washed away? As Jesus asked for baptism, John drew back, exclaiming, "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"' *Desire of Ages*, pages 110-111.

10. How did Jesus reply to John's words? Matthew 3:15.

NOTE: 'With firm yet gentle authority, Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And John, yielding, led the Saviour down into the Jordan, and buried Him beneath the water. "And straightway coming up out of the water," Jesus "saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him." Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to

take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us.' *Desire of Ages*, page 111.

11. With what words did John now identify Jesus to his hearers? John 1:29. Read verses 29-34.

NOTE: 'John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognised the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world's Redeemer whom he had baptised. The Holy Spirit rested upon him, and with outstretched hand pointing to Jesus, he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." None among the hearers, and not even the speaker himself, discerned the import of these words, "the Lamb of God." Upon Mount Moriah, Abraham had heard the question of his son, "My father, . . . where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The father answered, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Genesis 22:7, 8. And in the ram divinely provided in the place of Isaac, Abraham saw a symbol of Him who was to die for the sins of men. The Holy Spirit through Isaiah, taking up the illustration, prophesied of the Saviour, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:7, 6); but the people of Israel had not understood the lesson. Many of them regarded the sacrificial offerings much as the heathen looked upon their sacrifices, as gifts by which they themselves might propitiate the Deity. God desired to teach them that from His own love comes the gift which reconciles them to Himself.' *Desire of Ages*, page 112.

'I must decrease'

12. What jealous feelings arose among John's disciples? John 3:26.

NOTE: 'Now he saw the tide of popularity turning away from himself to the Saviour. Day by day the crowds about him lessened. When Jesus came from Jerusalem to the region about Jordan, the people flocked to hear Him. The number of His disciples increased daily. Many came for baptism, and while Christ Himself did not baptise, He sanctioned the administration of the ordinance by His disciples. Thus He set His seal upon the mission of His forerunner. But the disciples of John looked with jealousy upon the growing popularity of Jesus. They stood ready to criticise His work, and it was not long before they found occasion. A question arose between them and the Jews as to whether baptism availed to cleanse the soul from sin; they maintained that the baptism of Jesus differed essentially from that of John. Soon they were in dispute with Christ's disciples in regard to the form of words proper to use at baptism, and finally as to the right of the latter to baptise at all. The disciples of John came to him with their grievances, saying, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come to Him." Through these words, Satan brought temptation upon John. Though John's mission seemed about to close, it was still possible for him to hinder the work of Christ. If he had sympathised with himself, and expressed grief or disappointment at being superseded, he would have sown the seeds of dissension, would have encouraged envy and jealousy, and would seriously have impeded the progress of the gospel.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 178-179.

13. What was John's humble reply? John 3:30.

NOTE: John 'said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." John represented himself as the friend who acted as a messenger between the betrothed parties, preparing the way for the marriage. When the bridegroom had received his bride, the mission of the friend was fulfilled. He rejoiced in the happiness of those whose union he had promoted. So John had been called to direct the people to Jesus, and it was his joy to witness the success of the Saviour's work. He said, "This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of self-abnegation. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, until they should rest upon the Lamb of God. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness. Now with joy he accepted silence and obscurity, that the eyes of all might be turned to the Light of life.' *Desire of Ages*, page 179.

'Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease."' *Conflict & Courage*, page 275.

Lesson 10: December 2-8

'John, whom I beheaded'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' Matthew 11:11.

STUDY HELP: , page.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:1-12.

LESSON AIM: To study the death of John the Baptist and the circumstances around it.

Introduction

'Many of those who profess to believe the truth would say, if they expressed their real sentiments, What need is there of speaking so plainly? They might as well ask, Why need John the Baptist have said to the Pharisees, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" [Matthew 3:7.] Why need he have provoked the anger of Herodias by

telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother's wife? He lost his life by speaking so plainly. Why could he not have moved along without incurring the anger of Herodias?' *Gospel Workers*, page 149.

'It is not lawful'

1. What had John said which led to his arrest and imprisonment? Mark 6:17-20.

NOTE: 'John the Baptist met sin with open rebuke in men of humble occupation and in men of high degree. He declared the truth to kings and nobles, whether they would hear or reject it. He spoke personally and pointedly. He reproved the Pharisees of the Sanhedrim because their religion consisted in forms and not in righteousness of pure, willing obedience. . . . He spoke to Herod in regard to his marriage with Herodias, saying, It is not lawful for thee to have her. He spoke to him of a future retribution, when God would judge every man according to his works.' *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 149.

2. What was the result of John's public rebuke of Herod? Matthew 14:3-4.

NOTE: 'Herod was affected as he listened to the powerful, pointed testimonies of John, and with deep interest he inquired what he must do to become his disciple. John was acquainted with the fact that he was about to marry his brother's wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful. Herod was unwilling to make any sacrifice. He married his brother's wife, and through her influence, seized John and put him in prison, intending however to release him.' *Early Writings*, page 154.

'Herodias had a quarrel against him'

3. Who was the one who really brought about John's arrest? Mark 6:18-19, first part.

NOTE: 'He [Herod] opened his mind to John, who brought Herod to the law of God, face to face, and told him it would be impossible for him to have part in the kingdom of the Messiah unless he should break away from the unlawful connections with his brother's wife, and, with his whole heart, obey the commandments of God. Herod was inclined to act upon the advice of John, and stated to Herodias that he could not marry her in defiance of the law of God. But this determined woman would not be thwarted in her designs. Intense hatred was awakened in her heart toward John. Herod was weak in principle, vacillating in mind, and Herodias had no great difficulty in re-establishing herself in his favour, and holding her influence over him. Herod yielded to the pleasures of sin, rather than submit to the restrictions of the law of God. When Herodias had gained influence over Herod, she determined to be revenged upon the prophet for his daring to reprove their course of crime. And she influenced him to imprison John.' *Lift Him Up*, pages 69-70.

'Herod's purpose to release John from prison was delayed from time to time through fear of displeasing Herodias, who was determined he should be put to death. While he was delaying, she was active, planning how to be revenged in the most effectual manner on the prophet, because he had ventured to tell the truth, and reprove their unlawful life. She knew that although Herod kept John in prison, he designed to release him, for he honoured and feared him, and believed that he was a true prophet of God. John had made known to Herod the secrets of his heart and life, and his reproofs had struck terror to the guilty conscience of the king.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 76.

4. What were Herod's feelings about John? Mark 6:20.

NOTE: 'John the Baptist had been first in heralding Christ's kingdom, and he was first also in suffering. From the free air of the wilderness and the vast throngs that had hung upon his words, he was now shut in by the walls of a dungeon cell. He had become a prisoner in the fortress of Herod Antipas. In the territory east of Jordan, which was under the dominion of Antipas, much of John's ministry had been spent. Herod himself had listened to the preaching of the Baptist. The dissolute king had trembled under the call to repentance. "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy; . . . and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." John dealt with him faithfully, denouncing his iniquitous alliance with Herodias, his brother's wife. For a time Herod feebly sought to break the chain of lust that bound him; but Herodias fastened him the more firmly in her toils, and found revenge upon the Baptist by inducing Herod to cast him into prison.' *Desire of Ages*, page 214.

'Art Thou He that should come?'

5. What doubts crept into John's mind while he was in prison? Luke 7:19-20.

NOTE: 'He was now shut in by the walls of a dungeon cell. As week after week passed, bringing no change, despondency and doubt crept over him. His disciples did not forsake him. But they questioned why, if this new teacher was the Messiah, He did nothing to effect John's release. Like the Saviour's disciples, John the Baptist did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom. He expected Jesus to take the throne of David; and as time passed, and the Saviour made no claim to kingly authority, John became perplexed and troubled. There were hours when the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit, and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him. Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared? But the Baptist did not surrender his faith in Christ. He determined to send a message of inquiry to Jesus. This he entrusted to two of his disciples. The disciples came to Jesus with their message, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"' *Conflict & Courage*, page 277.

6. What response did the disciples of John receive? Luke 7:21-23.

NOTE: 'The Saviour did not at once answer the disciples' question. As they stood wondering at His silence, the sick and afflicted were coming to Him to be healed. While He healed their diseases, He taught the people. Thus the day wore away, the disciples of John seeing and hearing all. At last Jesus called them to Him, and bade them go and tell John what they had

witnessed. The evidence of His divinity was seen in its adaptation to the needs of suffering humanity. The disciples bore the message, and it was enough. The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. Understanding more clearly now the nature of Christ's mission, he [John] yielded himself to God for life or for death, as should best serve the interests of the cause he loved.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 277.

'When a convenient day was come'

7. How did Herodias' plan to bring about John's death begin? Mark 6:21-22.

NOTE: 'She had tried, but unsuccessfully, to gain the consent of Herod to have John slain. Her revengeful spirit was now at work to accomplish her inhuman design by strategy. She knew that the only way to accomplish her purpose would be through the gratification of the king's intemperate appetite. So she covered her hatred as best she could, looking forward to the royal birthday, which she knew would be an occasion of gluttony and intoxication. The king's love of luxurious food and wine would give her an opportunity to throw him off his guard. She would entice him to indulge his appetite, which would arouse passions of the baser order, subvert the finer sensibilities, produce a recklessness of consequences, and an inability to exercise his proper judgment and decision. She was acquainted with the effect of these carnivals upon the intellect and morals. She knew that the unnatural exhilaration of the spirits induced by intemperance lowers the moral standard of the mind, making it impossible for holy impulses to enter the heart and govern the excited passions, that festivities and amusements, dances, and free use of wine, cloud the sense, and remove the fear of God; therefore she prepared everything to flatter his pride and vanity, and indulge his passions. She made the most costly preparations for feasting, and voluptuous dissipation. When the great day arrived, and the king with his lords was feasting and drinking in the banqueting hall, Herodias sent her daughter, dressed in a most enchanting manner, into the royal presence. Salome was decorated with costly garlands and flowers, sparkling jewels and flashing bracelets. With little covering, and less modesty, she danced for the amusement of the royal guests. To their perverted senses, she seemed a vision of beauty and loveliness, and charmed away the last remnants of self-respect and propriety.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, pages 76-77.

8. In response to Herod's reckless oath, what demand did Herodias instruct her daughter to make? Mark 6:22-25.

NOTE: 'The mind of Herod was in a whirl. His faculties were confused, judgment and reverence were dethroned. He saw only the hall of pleasure, with his revelling guests, the banquet table, sparkling wine and flashing lights, and the young girl in her voluptuous beauty dancing before him. In the recklessness of the moment he was desirous to make some display which would exalt him still higher before the great men of his kingdom; and he rashly promised, and confirmed his promise with an oath, to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she might ask. The object for which she had been sent into the royal presence was now gained. Having obtained so wonderful a promise, she ran to her mother, desiring to know what she should ask. The mother's answer was ready, the head of John the Baptist in a charger. Salome was shocked. She did not understand the hidden revenge in her mother's heart, and at first refused to present such an inhuman request; but the determination of the wicked mother prevailed. Moreover, she bade her daughter make no delay, but hasten to prefer her request before Herod would have time for reflection. Accordingly Salome returned to Herod with her terrible petition: "I will that thou give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.'" *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 78.

'His disciples . . . went and told Jesus'

9. What happened to John's body? Mark 6:29.

NOTE: 'Herodias received the gory head with fiendish satisfaction. She exulted in her revenge, and thought that Herod's conscience would be no more disturbed. But her calculations were greatly in error; no happiness resulted to her through her crime. Her name became notorious and abhorred because of her inhuman act, while the heart of Herod was more oppressed by remorse than it had been by the condemnation of John. And the very act which she imagined would rid the world of the prophet's influence, enshrined him as a holy martyr, not only in the hearts of his disciples, but of those who had not before ventured to stand boldly out as his followers. Many who had heard his message of warning, and had been secretly convinced by his teachings, now, spurred on by horror at his coldblooded murder, publicly espoused his cause and declared themselves his disciples. Herodias utterly failed to silence the influence of John's teachings; they were to extend down through every generation to the close of time, while her corrupt life and Satanic revenge would reap a harvest of infamy.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 81.

10. After burying John, what did his disciples do? Matthew 14:12.

NOTE: 'It was just after the return from their first missionary tour that Jesus bade His disciples, Come apart, and rest awhile. The disciples had returned, filled with the joy of their success as heralds of the gospel, when the tidings reached them of the death of John the Baptist at the hand of Herod. It was a bitter sorrow and disappointment. Jesus knew that in leaving the Baptist to die in prison He had severely tested the disciples' faith. With pitying tenderness He looked upon their sorrowful, tear-stained faces. Tears were in His own eyes and voice as He said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." Mark 6:31.' *Ministry of Healing*, page 56.

'More than a prophet'

11. What searching questions about John did Christ put to the people? Luke 7:24-25.

NOTE: 'After the messengers had departed, Jesus spoke to the people concerning John. The Saviour's heart went out in sympathy to the faithful witness now buried in Herod's dungeon. He would not leave the people to conclude that God had forsaken John, or that his faith had failed in the day of trial. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" He said. "A reed shaken with the wind?" The tall reeds that grew beside the Jordan, bending before every breeze, were fitting representatives of the rabbis who had stood as critics and judges of the Baptist's mission. They were swayed this way and that by the winds of popular opinion. They would not humble themselves to receive the heart-searching message of the Baptist, yet for fear of the people they dared not openly oppose his work. But God's messenger was of no such craven spirit. The multitudes who were gathered about Christ had been witnesses to the work of John. They had heard his fearless rebuke of sin. To the self-righteous Pharisees, the priestly Sadducees, King Herod and his court, princes and soldiers, publicans and peasants, John had spoken with equal plainness. He was no trembling reed, swayed by the winds of human praise or prejudice. In the prison he was the same in his loyalty to God and his zeal for righteousness as when he preached God's message in the wilderness. In his faithfulness to principle he was as firm as a rock. Jesus continued, "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts." John had been called to reprove the sins and excesses of his time, and his plain dress and self-denying life were in harmony with the character of his mission. Rich apparel and the luxuries of this life are not the portion of God's servants, but of those who live "in kings' courts," the rulers of this world, to whom pertain its power and its riches. Jesus wished to direct attention to the contrast between the clothing of John, and that worn by the priests and rulers. These officials arrayed themselves in rich robes and costly ornaments. They loved display, and hoped to dazzle the people, and thus command greater consideration. They were more anxious to gain the admiration of men than to obtain the purity of heart which would win the approval of God. Thus they revealed that their allegiance was not given to God, but to the kingdom of this world.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 218-219.

12. What amazing tribute did Jesus pay to John? Luke 7:26-28.

NOTE: 'In the estimation of Heaven, what is it that constitutes greatness? Not that which the world accounts greatness; not wealth, or rank, or noble descent, or intellectual gifts, in themselves considered. If intellectual greatness, apart from any higher consideration, is worthy of honour, then our homage is due to Satan, whose intellectual power no man has ever equalled. But when perverted to self-serving, the greater the gift, the greater curse it becomes. It is moral worth that God values. Love and purity are the attributes He prizes most. John was great in the sight of the Lord, when, before the messengers from the Sanhedrin, before the people, and before his own disciples, he refrained from seeking honour for himself, but pointed all to Jesus as the Promised One. His unselfish joy in the ministry of Christ presents the highest type of nobility ever revealed in man.' *Desire of Ages*, page 219.

Lesson 11: December 9-15 'I will send you Elijah'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.' Malachi 4:5.

STUDY HELP: *Maranatha*, page 22.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Joel 2:28-32.

LESSON AIM: To study the promise of the sending of Elijah for the last days.

Introduction

'The work of John the Baptist, and the work of those who in the last days go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to arouse the people from their apathy, are in many respects the same. His work is a type of the work that must be done in this age. Christ is to come the second time to judge the world in righteousness. The messengers of God who bear the last message of warning to be given to the world, are to prepare the way for Christ's second advent, as John prepared the way for His first advent.' *Southern Watchman*, March 21, 1905.

'To make ready a people prepared for the Lord'

1. What aspect of John's work is especially needed in the last days? Luke 1:17, last part.

NOTE: 'John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. He was a representative of those living in these last days to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first advent.' *Maranatha*, page 118.

2. What especially were John's parents instructed about his lifestyle? Luke 1:15.

NOTE: 'A great work was before John, and in order for him to have a sound physical constitution, and mental and moral power, to do this work, he must control appetite and passion. John was to lead out as a reformer, and by his abstemious life, and plain dress, rebuke the intemperate habits, and the sinful extravagance, of the people. The indulgence of appetite in luxurious

food, and the use of wine, were lessening physical strength, and weakening the intellect, so that crime and grievous sins did not appear sinful. The angel Gabriel gave special directions to the parents of John in regard to temperance. A lesson was given upon health reform by one of the exalted angels from the throne of Heaven. John was to reform the children of Israel, and turn them to the Lord.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, page 43.*

'In preparing the way for Christ's first advent, he [John] was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord's second coming. The world is given to self-indulgence. Errors and fables abound. Satan's snares for destroying souls are multiplied. All who would perfect holiness in the fear of God must learn the lessons of temperance and self-control. The appetites and passions must be held in subjection to the higher powers of the mind. This self-discipline is essential to that mental strength and spiritual insight which will enable us to understand and to practise the sacred truths of God's word. For this reason temperance finds its place in the work of preparation for Christ's second coming.' *Desire of Ages, page 101.*

3. What other mother was given a similar instruction? Judges 13:3-4.

NOTE: 'God had important work for the promised child of Manoah to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work, that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be so carefully regulated. "Neither let her drink wine nor strong drink," was the angel's instruction for the wife of Manoah, "nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe." The child will be affected for good or evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle, and must practice temperance and self-denial, if she would seek the welfare of her child. In the New Testament we find a no less impressive example of the importance of temperate habits. John the Baptist was a reformer. To him was committed a great work for the people of his time. And in preparation for that work, all his habits were carefully regulated, even from his birth. The angel Gabriel was sent from heaven to instruct the parents of John in the principles of health reform. He "shall drink neither wine nor strong drink," said the heavenly messenger; "and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." [Luke 1:15.]' *Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene, page 38.*

'I will pour out My Spirit'

4. What promise of spiritual power is given to those of God's people living in the last days? Joel 2:28-29. (Read verses 30-31 to see when this promise is to be fulfilled.)

NOTE: 'We are living in the last days, in a time when we may expect much from the Lord. These words should bring us to the throne of grace to claim great things of Him. Here the promise is given that on the men and women and on our sons and daughters the Holy Spirit is to come; and "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This brings to view a wonderful work to be done, for which we need the converting power of God in our hearts every day. It is our privilege to experience this. Heaven is full of blessings, and it is our privilege to claim the rich promises of God for our individual selves. We need to seek the Lord day and night that we may know just what steps to take and just what we ought to do. The Lord has a special work to do for us individually. As we see the wickedness of the world brought to light in the courts of justice and published in the daily papers, let us draw near to God, and by living faith lay hold of His promises, that the grace of Christ may be manifest in us. We may have an influence, a powerful influence, in the world. If the convicting power of God is in us, we shall be enabled to lead souls that are in sin to conversion. In the closing scenes of this earth's history, many children and youth [who receive a true Christian education] will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work proclaiming the truth to the world. They will do a work in the world that not all the powers of evil can counteract.' *My Life Today, page 62.*

5. When we contemplate the magnitude of the task before us, what important principle must we keep in mind? Zechariah 4:6.

NOTE: 'As the chosen people of God, we cannot copy the habits, aims, practices, or fashions of the world. We are not left in darkness, to pattern after worldly models and to depend on outward appearance for success. The Lord has told us whence comes our strength. "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. As the Lord sees fit, He imparts to those who keep His way power that enables them to exert a strong influence for good. On God they are dependent, and to Him they must give an account of the way in which they use the talents He has entrusted to them. They are to realise that they are God's stewards and are to seek to magnify His name.' *Counsels on Health, page 274.*

'He shall turn the hearts'

6. What aspect of the Elijah work is especially mentioned? Malachi 4:6.

NOTE: 'It is written in the prophecy of Malachi, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Malachi 4:5, 6. From Luke 1:17 we learn that the object of this work of Elijah the prophet is to prepare people for the appearing of Christ. Of John the Baptist it was said, "He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." To make ready a people prepared for the Lord is to cause them to become as little children, for only such can enter into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children is to put in the fathers the heart of a little child. As a result of this work done in the spirit and power of Elias, the fathers and children will become one in spirit. It is for the lack of this child-like spirit that so many parents have had to grieve over the rebellious dispositions of their children. It takes a humble,

child-like spirit on the part of the parent to deal successfully with the soul of the little one, and only as parents themselves become as little children can they have a saving influence over the young.' *Present Truth*, January 19, 1899.

7. Why is this work particularly important in the last days? Read Ephesians 5:25-6:4 and then read the first note below.

NOTE: 'Almost half (40%) of all babies born in the U.S. are born into "non-marital" families, called "fragile" because while parents may be committed to one another at the time of the child's birth, those commitments often dissolve in ensuing years, leaving children in single-parent (and often much more complicated) situations. The report details some of those scenarios, including the reality that one-third of fathers in fragile families disappear from their children's lives within five years after their birth.' Brad Griffin: *Fragile Family Phenomenon*, November 25, 2010.

'Home is to be the centre of the purest and most elevated affection. Peace, harmony, affection, and happiness should be perseveringly cherished every day, until these precious things abide in the hearts of those who compose the family. The plant of love must be carefully nourished, else it will die. Every good principle must be cherished if we would have it thrive in the soul. That which Satan plants in the heart, envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness, and vanity, must be uprooted. If these evil things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul!' *The Adventist Home*, page 195.

'The disobedient to the wisdom of the just'

8. What other aspect of John the Baptist's work is also needed in the last days? Luke 1:17.

NOTE: 'Many Christian parents fail to command their children after them, and then wonder that their children are perverse, disobedient, unthankful, and unholy. Such parents are under the rebuke of God. They have neglected to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have failed to teach them the first lesson of Christianity: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Foolishness," says the wise man, "is bound in the heart of a child." The love of folly, the desire to do evil, the hatred of holy things, are some of the difficulties that parents must meet in the home mission field. In the strength of God, parents must arise and command their households after them. They must learn to repress wrong with a firm hand, yet without impatience or passion. They should not leave the children to guess at what is right, but should point out the way in unmistakable terms and teach them to walk therein.' *Child Guidance*, page 87.

9. How does the Bible stress the importance of obedience to God and the dangers of disobedience? Romans 6:16. Consider 1 John 2:4.

NOTE: 'Parents are without excuse if they fail to obtain a clear understanding of God's will, that they may obey the laws of His kingdom. Only thus can they lead their children to heaven. My brethren and sisters, it is your duty to understand God's requirements. How can you educate your children in the things of God unless you first know yourselves what is right and what is wrong, unless you realise that obedience means eternal life and disobedience eternal death?' *Child Guidance*, page 65.

'The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely, because he is required to do so, will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right, because right doing is pleasing to God.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 97.

'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy'

10. What spiritual gift will be restored in the last days? Joel 2:28.

NOTE: 'In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God. God has promised to give visions in the "last days"; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 293.

11. What sound advice did the Apostle Paul give concerning those who claim to be prophets of God? 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21.

NOTE: 'Paul exhorts those who are called the "children of the light," those who are looking for the second coming of Christ, to "despise not prophesyings [the exercise of the prophetic gift]. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:20,21. The apostle well knew that in the last times there would be so much of Satan's work, and spurious gifts, that the people of God would be in danger of rejecting the genuine manifestations of the prophetic gift, of "despising," before duly considering, the gift; hence the exhortation, "Despise not prophesyings. . . . Hold fast that which is good," which is equivalent to saying, There are to be some good manifestations of the gift of prophecy connected with the last church. Do not allow prejudice to arise, and lead to a despising of such a gift before a candid and careful investigation. Do not at once cast aside a

genuine manifestation because you have met something bearing Satan's mark. Exercise care; for there is to be a true work. Prove it, test it, that the good may be discovered.' J. N. Loughborough: *Heavenly Visions*, page 28.

12. How did Jesus counsel us to discern between true and false prophets? Matthew 7:15-20.

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 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.

'Ye shall know them by their fruits'

13. What fruit should we expect to find in the messages and lives of true prophets? Galatians 5:22-23.

NOTE: 'The Good Shepherd came to seek and to save that which was lost. He has manifested in His works His love for His sheep. All the shepherds who work under the Chief Shepherd will possess His characteristics; they will be meek and lowly of heart. Childlike faith brings rest to the soul and also works by love and is ever interested for others. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, they will be Christlike and do the works of Christ.' *Lift Him Up*, page 213.

14. What fruit may we expect to find in the messages and lives of false prophets? Romans 8:7; 2 Peter 2:1-3. (But note Matthew 7:15 and remember Isaiah 8:20.)

NOTE: 'There are some who have departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and who by falsehood and misrepresentation seduce others. These false teachers are represented by Christ as ravening wolves. Their work is to tear down that which God through His agencies is seeking to build up. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets which make My people to err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God." False prophets are described by Paul in his second letter to Timothy: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Paul warns his son in the gospel, saying, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." Men oppose the truth with falsehood, and those who do not desire a knowledge of the truth listen eagerly to the fables presented to them. Their hearts are imbued with the same spirit of opposition to the truth that fills the hearts of the false teachers. They act toward God's commandment-keeping people in this time as the Jews acted when they refused to accept the truths that Christ unfolded before them.' *Review & Herald*, April 30, 1901.

Lesson 12: December 16-22

'Give them warning from Me'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me.' Ezekiel 3:17.

STUDY HELP: *Maranatha*, page 22.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 14:6-12.

LESSON AIM: To study the message God commands to be given to the world before Jesus returns.

Introduction

'The message of Revelation 14, proclaiming that the hour of God's judgement is come, is given in the time of the end. The angel of Revelation 10 is represented as having one foot on the sea and one foot on the land, showing that the message will be carried to distant lands, the ocean will be crossed, and the islands of the sea will hear the proclamation of the last message of warning to our world.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 340.

‘To every nation and kindred and tongue and people’

1. How many people are to have the opportunity to hear the final message of warning before Christ returns?

Revelation 14:6.

NOTE: ‘The last message of warning and mercy is to go to “every nation and kindred and tongue” (Revelation 14:6-14), “to take out of them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14; Revelation 18:1). And the earth shall be lightened with His glory.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 79.

‘The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world, “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” 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. As surely as this message shall be proclaimed in all the earth, so surely shall be fulfilled the prophecy given through Malachi: “From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”’ *Southern Watchman*, January 10, 1905.

2. What is the heart of this final message? Revelation 14:6. Consider Romans 1:16.

NOTE: ‘The Son of God came to our world, and took humanity upon Him, that fallen men and women might have the privilege of becoming the children of God. “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,” the apostle writes: “wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” It is the gospel, and the gospel alone, that will sanctify the soul. It is this that makes possible to the receiver the life that measures with the life of God. This is the record that God hath given us, even eternal life; and that life is in His Son. He who is partaker of the divine nature will escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. His faith in Christ as the Life-giver, gives him life. Those who submit their will to the will of God will grow in grace. A faith that works by love and purifies the soul will give them a rich experience. The fruits of the Spirit will be seen in their life, and the efficiency of the Spirit be seen in their works.’ *Review & Herald*, July 8, 1909.

‘The hour of His judgement is come’

3. What solemn warning does this message contain? Revelation 14:7, middle part. Compare 1 Peter 4:17-18.

NOTE: ‘The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord’s second coming. The announcement, “The hour of His judgment is come,” points to the closing work of Christ’s ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour’s intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. The work of judgment which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 342.

4. How are people warned to respond to this warning? Revelation 14:7.

NOTE: ‘That men may be prepared to stand in the judgement, the message commands them to “fear God, and give glory to Him,” “and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”’ *Great Controversy*, page 435.

‘Fear God and give glory to Him’

5. What does it mean to fear God? Psalm 34:11-14.

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” 1 John 5:3. “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination” Proverbs 28:9.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 342.

6. How may we give glory to God? Matthew 5:16.

NOTE: ‘The power of an ever-abiding Saviour is greater now than ever before, because the emergencies are greater; and yet we are weak in spiritual life and experience. Oh, how much we have lost as a people by our lack of faith! We have suffered loss to our own souls, and have failed to reveal to others, by our words and in our character, what Christ is and will be to everyone who comes to Him believing. He is “made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 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.

‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy’

7. How does God especially command us to worship our Creator? Exodus 20:8-11. Note the resemblance between Exodus 20:11 and Revelation 14:7, last part.

NOTE: ‘God made the world in six literal days, and on the seventh literal day He rested from all His work which He had done, and was refreshed. So He has given human beings six days in which to labour. By thus setting apart the Sabbath, God gave the world a memorial. He did not set apart one day and any day in seven, but one particular day, the seventh day. And by observing the Sabbath, we show that we recognise God as the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 18. Why does Revelation 14:7 mention “the fountains of water”? The context is about judgement; read Genesis 6:11 to see how the fountains of water figured in an earlier judgement by God.

8. What counsel does God give as to how we are to keep the Sabbath day holy, and what is promised to those who heed God's words? Isaiah 58:13-14.

NOTE: ‘The Lord says, “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” Isaiah 58:13, 14. To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:28.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 289.

‘Babylon is fallen’

9. What further information forms part of this final message? Revelation 14:8.

NOTE: ‘Babylon is fallen, “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8). What is that wine? Her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the falsehood that Satan first told Eve in Eden, the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).’ *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 118.

10. Since literal Babylon was fallen long before the Revelation was written, what is the symbolic meaning of 'Babylon'?

NOTE: ‘The woman (Babylon) of Revelation 17 is described as “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness:...and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots.” Says the prophet: “I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” Babylon is further declared to be “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Revelation 17:4-6, 18. The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet colour, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared “drunken with the blood of the saints” as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with “the kings of the earth.” It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. Babylon is said to be “the mother of harlots.” By her daughters must be symbolised churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgement, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God’s people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith. At the time of their rise these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. Even the unbelieving world was constrained to acknowledge the beneficent results that followed an acceptance of the principles of the gospel. In the words of the prophet to Israel: “Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” But they fell by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel, the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly. “Thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown.” Ezekiel 16:14, 15. Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome’s example of iniquitous connection with “the kings of the earth”, the state churches, by their relation to secular governments; and other denominations, by seeking the favour of the world. And the term “Babylon”, confusion, may be appropriately applied to these bodies, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting creeds and theories.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 382-383.

‘The wine of the wrath of God’

11. What terrible warning forms the final part of this message? Revelation 14:9-11.

NOTE: ‘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 judgements, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.' *Great Controversy*, page 449.

12. In contrast to those who worship the beast and his image, how are God's faithful people described? Revelation 14:12.

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.

Lesson 13: December 23-29 'Come out of her, My people'

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

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies, volume 9*, pages 149-152.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 16-18.

LESSON AIM: To study God's final call of mercy.

Introduction

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

'Between two opinions'

1. What is God's final call to those who profess to be His people? Revelation 18:4.

NOTE: 'God's work is to be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence who are to act their part in warning the world. Not all in the world are 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." 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.' *Evangelism*, page 66.

2. What similar call did Elijah make to God's professed people? 1 Kings 18:21 .

NOTE: 'Today, as in the days of Elijah, the line of demarcation between God's commandment-keeping people and the worshipers of false gods is clearly drawn. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Elijah cried; "if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). And the message for today is: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:2-5). The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness. Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in

China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan's supreme effort is made to cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke," will "shine as lights in the world" (Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15). The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.' *Lift Him Up*, page 164.

‘Choose ye this day’

3. How does this call compare with other calls made at times of crisis? Genesis 7:1; Genesis 19:15; Exodus 32:26; Joshua 24:14-15. .

NOTE: 'The sins of the world will have reached unto heaven when the law of God is made void; when the Sabbath of the Lord is trampled in the dust, and men are compelled to accept in its stead an institution of the papacy through the strong hand of the law of the land. In exalting an institution of man above the institution ordained of God, they show contempt for the great Lawgiver, and refuse his sign or seal. The question of most vital importance for this time is, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Who will unite with the angel in giving the message of truth to the world? Who will receive the light that is to fill the whole earth with its glory? Those who cherish the light that they have will receive more. Increasing light will shine about the souls who yield to the softening, subduing grace of Christ; and those who love the light, will be saved from the delusions of Satan. He will strive with intense energy to exhibit, through his miracle-working power, signs and wonders that will seem to eclipse the work that God will do in the earth. And all will be deceived except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. We need light now at every step, lest we be swept away with the error of the wicked.' *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1889.

4. What similar call did the Apostle Paul make to the believers in Corinth? 1 Corinthians 6:17.

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

‘Be not partakers of her plagues’

5. Why is it essential for those who love God to get out of Babylon? Revelation 18:4, last part-6.

NOTE: 'Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that no man may buy or sell, save he that has the mark of the beast, and, finally, that whoever refuses to receive the mark shall be put to death. [Revelation 13:15, 17.] The word of God declares: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." [Revelation 14:9, 10.] But not one is made to feel the wrath of God until the truth has been brought in contact with his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many in the churches of our country who have never, even in this land of light and knowledge, had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. Jesus reads every heart, and tries every motive. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently. The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 422.

6. What are these plagues which will fall on those still in Babylon? Revelation 16.

NOTE: 'I saw that the seven last plagues were soon to be poured out upon those who have no shelter; yet the world regarded them no more than they would so many drops of water that were about to fall. I was then made capable of enduring the awful sight of the seven last plagues, the wrath of God. I saw that His anger was dreadful and terrible, and if He should stretch forth His hand, or lift it in anger, the inhabitants of the world would be as though they had never been, or would suffer from incurable sores and withering plagues that would come upon them, and they would find no deliverance, but be destroyed by them. Terror seized me, and I fell upon my face before the angel and begged of him to cause the sight to be removed, to hide it from me, for it was too dreadful. Then I realised, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a great wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them.' *Early Writings*, page 64.

‘He hath said’

7. What precious promises are given to those willing to stand on the Lord's side? Psalm 91:7-11; Isaiah 33:14-17 .

NOTE: 'Those who have had living faith in the messages of God for the time in which they have lived, and who have acted out their faith in obedience to His commands, have been accepted of God, and have escaped the judgements that were to fall upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me." Noah obeyed and was saved. The message came to Lot, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." He placed himself under the guardianship of the heavenly messengers, and was saved. Those who obeyed the warning of Christ in marking the sign of the coming ruin, and in fleeing from Jerusalem, were not involved in her destruction. The message comes in our own time, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Those who obey this message will escape the terrible plagues that will surely be visited upon her.' *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1889.

8. What precious promises of Jesus are given to those faithful to Him? Matthew 28:20, last part; Hebrews 13:5-6.

NOTE: 'Do not take your troubles to human beings. Take them to the Lord. You may think that others ought to sympathise with you in your trials, but you will sometimes be disappointed. Jesus never disappoints the one who comes to Him for help. He is saying to you today, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He will give you rest in Him. No one who comes to Him goes away unhelped. Take your burdens to the divine Burden Bearer and leave them with Him, knowing that He will carry them for you. Act your part in helping yourselves, as all must do who would be blessed. Do not dwell upon the hardships of the Christian life. Do not talk of your trials. Do not utter one despondent word, for such words please Satan. Talk of Christ's goodness and tell of His power. Words of hope and trust and courage are as easily spoken as words of complaint. When the enemy tells you that the Lord has forsaken you, tell him that you know He has not; for He declares, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Dismiss the enemy. Tell him you will not dishonour the Lord by doubting His love. There is no limit to the help that the Saviour is willing to bestow on us. He asks us to bring into our lives the grace that will keep us from sin. From the cross of Calvary there comes to us liberty, hope, and strength. Do not dishonour your Redeemer by doubting His power. Trust Him all the time. Take hold of the riches of His grace, saying, "I will believe; I do believe that Jesus died for me." The way before you may seem dark, but Jesus can make it light. Be joyful in God. Christ is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Look toward the light. Accustom yourselves to speak the praise of God. Make others happy. This is your first work. It will strengthen the best traits of character. Throw the windows of the soul wide open heavenward and let the sunshine of Christ's righteousness in. Morning, noon, and night your hearts may be filled with the bright rays of heaven's light.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 275.

'Speaking the truth in love'

9. What is to be the motive of those who give the final Elijah message? Jude 1:21-23.

NOTE: 'Christ will impart to His messengers the same yearning love that He Himself has in seeking for the lost. We are not merely to say, "Come." There are those who hear the call, but their ears are too dull to take in its meaning. Their eyes are too blind to see anything good in store for them. Many realise their great degradation. They say, I am not fit to be helped; leave me alone. But the workers must not desist. In tender, pitying love, lay hold of the discouraged and helpless ones. Give them your courage, your hope, your strength. By kindness compel them to come. "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Jude 1:22, 23.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 235.

10. How should this message always be given, and what sort of person will give that message most effectively? Ephesians 4:15.

NOTE: 'Christ wants His followers to be like Him, because He desires to be correctly represented in the family circle, in the church, and in the world. He wants us to attend to ourselves. When we do this, we shall find that we have enough to keep us busy. We are to accept Christ as our efficiency, our strength, that we may reveal His character to the world. This is the work resting upon us as Christians. We are to witness to the power of heavenly grace. But are there not many who are like a chestnut bur, hurting those with whom they come in contact? Those who represent Christ will not speak harshly. Their words will be pleasant and helpful. "Speaking the truth in love," we "grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:15).' *In Heavenly Places*, page 321.

'Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing'

11. What precious promise is for those who faithfully sow the seed of God's Word? Psalm 126:5-6.

NOTE: 'For a time the good seed may lie unnoticed in the heart, giving no evidence that it has taken root; but afterward, as the Spirit of God breathes on the soul, the hidden seed springs up, and at last brings forth fruit. In our lifework we know not which shall prosper, this or that. This question it is not for us to settle. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." Ecclesiastes 11:6. God's great covenant declares that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest . . . shall not cease." Genesis 8:22. In the confidence of this promise the husbandman tills and sows. Not less confidently are we, in the spiritual sowing, to labour, trusting His assurance: "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 126:6.' *Education*, page 105.

12. Though God's people often seem few in number, what vision of the climax of the Gospel work are we shown? Revelation 7:9-10.

NOTE: 'All classes, all nations and kindreds and people and tongues will stand before the throne of God and the Lamb with their spotless robes and jewelled crowns. Said the angel, These are they that have come up through great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white, while the lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, the self-indulgent and disobedient, have lost both worlds. They have neither the things of this life nor the immortal life. That triumphant throng, with songs of victory and with crowns and harps, have trodden in the fiery furnace of earthly affliction when it was heated and intensely hot. From destitution, from hunger and torture, they come, from deep self-denial and bitter disappointments. Look upon them now as conquerors, no longer poor, no longer in sorrow, in affliction and hatred of all men for Christ's sake. Behold their heavenly garments, white and shining, richer than any kingly robe. Look by faith upon their jewelled crowns; never did such a diadem deck the brow of any earthly monarch. Listen to their voices as they sing loud hosannas and as they wave the palm branches of victory. Rich music fills heaven as their voices sing forth these words: "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain and rose again forevermore. Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And the angelic host, angels, covering cherub and glorious seraph, echo back the refrain of that joyous, triumphant song saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever" (Revelation 7:12). Oh, in that day it will be discovered that the righteous were the wise ones, while the sinful and disobedient were fools. Shame and everlasting contempt is their portion. Those who have been co-labourers for Christ will then be near the throne of God, girt with purity and the garments of eternal righteousness.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 371.