

'My kingdom is not of this world'

General Introduction

O that the church was awake! O that all who profess the truth for this time were sanctified through the truth, that they might discern the designs of God, and understand their own individual responsibility to give the light to the world. The seed of truth will spring forth in a new creation, and souls will be converted to God.

In the face of what might be done, will the church sleep on, or will they feel the responsibility and the honour that is conferred upon them through the merciful providence of God, and gather up their hereditary trusts, and the advantages of present light, and feel the necessity of rising to the urgent emergency that now presents itself before us? The world is watching our movements with greater interest than we imagine. Many see that what we have told them in regard to the curtailing of religious liberty in our country is coming to pass, although they have denied that such a thing was possible. They have said, "When we see that which you predict, when there is danger of a union of Church and State, we will acknowledge that you have the truth." But will they acknowledge it? Will they accept the situation, and know that the end is near? Protestantism is reaching out its hands to clasp hands with popery, and every indication makes manifest that the prophecies are about to be fulfilled. And now men are looking upon those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, to see what will be their course. O that all may arouse, and manifest to the world that this is a living faith, that a vital issue is before the world, that Jesus will soon come. Let men see that we believe we are on the borders of the eternal world.

Review & Herald, February 21, 1893

In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.

When Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honour popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshiping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honour in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome, "the mark of the beast." And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive "the mark of the beast."

In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" (Revelation 13:16), to receive "the mark of the beast," yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.

Maranatha, page 169.

Explanatory Foreword. (Please read this before starting the lessons.)

This series of lessons considers what the Bible has to say about church and state, and their relationship to each other. It is a fact that **all** pre-Christian societies saw religion and state as being two aspects of the same thing. Each state had its gods and part of being a citizen of that state was that you worshipped its gods. This sort of society may be defined as **sacral**.

Even today there are many sacral states. We speak of Muslim nations or Catholic nations, for example. What is meant by this is that the whole nation is seen as following the same political and religious leaders. In such states, it actually makes no sense to talk of church and state because they are simply two aspects of the one thing. Indeed in some sacral states, the political leader and the religious leader may be the same person. But whether there are two leaders or one, the territory ruled over by each is identical. Religion (the word comes from a Latin word meaning to bind together) is what holds the people together.

In a sacral society, religion is a public thing, a communal activity, where the citizens meet at the shrine to witness the sacrament, the solemn ceremony. In such societies, private or individual acts of religious worship are seen as subversive to the state. Sacral religion is a religion of public acts, not personal beliefs; communal acts, not individual acts. In a sacral society, there is no body of belief, of doctrine, to be accepted. Instead you have ritual and liturgy.

Because religion is a communal activity in a sacral society, such a society may use force to compel those who refuse to participate. The thing asked of them is something anyone can do, and those who refuse are simply obstinate. So they must comply or be destroyed. The religion of a sacral society is always intolerant. This is because, in such a society, to refuse to conform is to be an enemy of the people, to oppose the state.

In authentic Christianity, the essence of religion is a believing response to the teachings. This response cannot be forced. Christianity denies the use of force because one cannot be forced to love or to have faith. Christianity, rather than forcing everyone into the same mould, brings people to the point of decision.

One other aspect of sacral religion is that there is no mission, either to those inside or to those outside. Those inside are already presumed to be fellow-religionists. Those outside belong to a different sacral society. When Roman Catholic 'missionaries' went to the New World, their aim was not to convert the people, but to convert the king. Once the king accepted

the new religion, it was accepted as inevitable that his subjects would follow him. This is sacral thinking. There is no desire to seek and save the lost.

Finally, in sacral societies, there is no distinction of lifestyle. Sacral religion is not seen as changing the life; there are no saints and sinners. Such a distinction would divide society, instead of binding it together. So of course such a religion has no martyrs, no one who is persecuted and suffers for his religious commitment.

It was this kind of religion that Jesus came to replace with 'pure religion.'

Lesson 1: 'Pure religion'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' James 1:27.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 220.

LESSON AIM: To examine what genuine religion really is.

Introduction

'Let everyone inquire seriously, "Am I a genuine Christian? Am I bearing the true marks of a Christian? Am I doing my best to perfect a character after the divine model?" Pure religion is an imitation of Christ.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 220.

'Choose ye this day'

1. What decision lies at the basis of all true religion? Joshua 24:14-15.

NOTE: 'After presenting the goodness of God toward Israel, [Joshua] called upon them, in the name of Jehovah, to choose whom they would serve. The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practised, and Joshua endeavoured now to bring them to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel. "If it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah," he said, "choose you this day whom ye will serve." Joshua desired to lead them to serve God, not by compulsion, but willingly. Love to God is the very foundation of religion. To engage in His service merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment would avail nothing. Open apostasy would not be more offensive to God than hypocrisy and mere formal worship.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 523.

2. How did Elijah place the same decision before the people of Israel? 1 Kings 18:21.

NOTE: 'Those who accept Christ as their Saviour have the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. The human agent owes no part of his ability to the service of Satan; but his entire allegiance is due to the infinite and eternal God. The lowliest disciple of Christ may become an inhabitant of heaven, an heir of God to an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away. Oh that every one might make choice of the heavenly gift, become an heir of God to that inheritance whose title is secure from any destroyer, world without end! O, choose not the world, but choose the better inheritance! Press, urge your way toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus.' *Review and Herald*, November 21, 1893.

'Go ye therefore and teach'

3. What did Jesus command His disciples to do, so that people might make an informed choice? Matthew 28:19, first part & verse 20.

NOTE: 'Christ has died for me. He has purchased me at an infinite cost, and He has atoned for everything that is offensive to Him. I must be a labourer with Him. I must take His yoke upon myself. I must wear the yoke of Christ. I must lift His burdens. I must teach others how to be lifted from the sinful state that I was in and to grasp by living faith the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. That is the only way that the sinner can be saved.' *Faith & Works*, page 72.

4. How important was this work of teaching to the apostles as they strove to bring souls to Christ? Acts 5:42.

NOTE: 'In their work of teaching and healing, the disciples followed the example of the Master Teacher, who ministered to both soul and body. The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together.' *Counsels to Teachers, Parents & Students*, page 465.

'A man may preach in a spirited manner and please the ear, but convey no new idea or real intelligence to the mind. The impressions received through such preaching last no longer than while the speaker's voice is heard. When search is made for the fruit of such labour, there is little to be found. These flashy gifts are not as beneficial, and well calculated to advance the cause of truth, as a gift that can be trusted in hard, difficult places. In the work of teaching the truth it is necessary that the important points of our position be well fortified with Scripture evidences. Assertions may silence the unbeliever, but will not convince him. Believers are not the only ones for whose benefit labourers are sent into the field. The salvation of souls is the great object.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 447.

'I know whom I have believed'

5. What foundation is needed for our religion? 1 John 2:21. Compare 2 Timothy 1:12.

NOTE: 'With the great work before us of enlightening the world, we who believe the truth should feel the necessity of thorough education in the practical branches of knowledge, and especially our need of an education in the truths of the Scriptures. Error of every character is now exalted as truth, and it is our duty earnestly to search the sacred word, that we may know what is truth, and be able intelligently to present it to others. We shall be called upon to make known the reasons of our faith. We shall have to stand before magistrates to answer for our allegiance to the law of God. The Lord has called us out from the world that we may be witnesses for His truth.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 202.

'Our salvation depends upon our knowledge of God's will as it is contained in His word. Never cease asking and searching for Truth. You need to know your duty. You need to know what you must do to be saved. And it is God's will that you shall know what He has said to you. But you must exercise faith. As you search the Scriptures, you must believe that God is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. O search the Bible with a heart hungry for spiritual food! Dig into the word as a miner digs into the earth to find the veins of gold. Do not give up your search till you have learned your relation to God and His will concerning you.' *Messages to Young People*, pages 260-261.

6. What danger does Paul warn against? Ephesians 4:14.

NOTE: 'This class do not know what they really believe, or the reasons for their belief. They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. One man arises with wild, erroneous views, and claims that God has sent him with new and glorious light, and all must believe what he brings. Some who have no established faith, who are not subject to the body, but are drifting about without an anchor to hold them, receive that wind of doctrine.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 418.

'By every word'

7. What must be the basis of our religion? Matthew 4:4.

NOTE: 'God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority, not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.' *Great Controversy*, page 595.

8. How did Jesus speak of those who placed the word of man above the Word of God? Matthew 15:8-9.

NOTE: 'Satan is constantly endeavouring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will. When Christ came to speak the words of life, the common people heard Him gladly; and many, even of the priests and rulers, believed on Him. But the chief of the priesthood and the leading men of the nation were determined to condemn and repudiate His teachings. Though they were baffled in all their efforts to find accusations against Him, though they could not but feel the influence of the divine power and wisdom attending His words, yet they encased themselves in prejudice; they rejected the clearest evidence of His Messiahship, lest they should be forced to become His disciples. These opponents of Jesus were men whom the people had been taught from infancy to reverence, to whose authority they had been accustomed implicitly to bow. "How is it," they asked, "that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these pious men receive Him if He were the Christ?" It was the influence of such teachers that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.' *Great Controversy*, page 595.

'By their fruits'

9. How will true religion manifest itself? James 1:27.

NOTE: 'Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another, these are the two great arms upon which hang all the law and the prophets. A good tree produces good fruit. The evidence of love for Christ is the manifestation of love for one another. Unselfish love for those around us is placed among the brightest evidences of true religion. By it a daily witness in Christ's favour is borne to the world.' *This Day With God*, page 287.

10. How did Jesus identify His true disciples? John 13:34-35.

NOTE: 'The Spirit of Christ is grieved when any of His followers give evidence of possessing a harsh, unfair, or exacting spirit. As labourers together with God, each should regard the other as part of God's great firm. He desires that they shall counsel together. There is to be no drawing apart, for the spirit of independence dishonours the truth we profess. One special evidence that the Spirit of Christ is abiding in His church is the unity and harmony which exist among its members. This is the brightest witness to the possession of true religion; for it will convert and transform the natural man, and fashion him after the divine similitude.' *Review & Herald*, February 18, 1909.

'Live by faith'

11. How only can true religion be lived from day to day? Habakkuk 2:4. Compare Romans 1:17.

NOTE: 'Paul feared lest, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. He realised that if he did not carry out in his life the principles he believed and preached, his labours in behalf of others would avail him nothing. His conversation, his influence, his refusal to yield to self-gratification, must show that his religion was not a profession merely, but a daily, living

connection with God. One goal he kept ever before him, and strove earnestly to reach, “the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Philippians 3:9.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 314.

‘Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting in God in trial, believing in His promise in the darkness as well as in the light. Religion is to walk by faith, as well as by sight, trusting in God with all confidence, and resting in His love.’ *Our High Calling*, page 214.

12. How are we shown the importance of faith? Hebrews 11:6.

NOTE: ‘We should not present our petitions to God to prove whether He will fulfil His word, but because He will fulfil it; not to prove that He loves us, but because He loves us. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 125.

Lesson 2: ‘The sons of God and the daughters of men’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.’ 2 Corinthians 6:17.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, page 45-46.

LESSON AIM: To trace the beginnings of apostasy and the controversy between true and false religion.

Introduction

‘The Eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saints and the sinners, the converted and the unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colours of the rainbow. They are as distinct as midday and midnight.’ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 341.

‘He builded a city’

1. What early division took place in the human race? Genesis 4:3-8.

NOTE: ‘Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favour with God. It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development, that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favour by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. This history of Cain shows what must be the result. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12).’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 25.

2. What lifestyle was adopted by Cain and his descendants? Genesis 4:17. See verses 19-24.

NOTE: ‘Upon receiving the curse of God, Cain had withdrawn from his father’s household. He had first chosen his occupation as a tiller of the soil, and he now founded a city, calling it after the name of his eldest son. He had gone out from the presence of the Lord, cast away the promise of the restored Eden, to seek his possessions and enjoyment in the earth under the curse of sin, thus standing at the head of that great class of men who worship the god of this world. In that which pertains to mere earthly and material progress, his descendants became distinguished. But they were regardless of God, and in opposition to His purposes for man. To the crime of murder, in which Cain had led the way, Lamech, the fifth in descent, added polygamy, and, boastfully defiant, he acknowledged God, only to draw from the avenging of Cain an assurance of his own safety. Abel had led a pastoral life, dwelling in tents or booths, and the descendants of Seth followed the same course, counting themselves “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” seeking “a better country, that is, an heavenly.” Hebrews 11:13, 16.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 81.

‘To call upon the name of the Lord’

3. In contrast to the descendants of Cain, what is said of the family of Seth? Genesis 4:26.

NOTE: The marginal reading for this verse is: ‘then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord.’ Both readings have much to commend them.

“To Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.” The faithful had worshiped God before; but as men increased, the distinction between the two classes became more marked. There was an open profession of loyalty to God on the part of one, as there was of contempt and disobedience on the part of the other.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 80.

4. How important is it for men to call upon the name of the Lord? Joel 2:32. Compare Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13.

NOTE: 'Families must be divided in order that all who call upon the name of the Lord may be saved. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a sword, a disturber of their peace. The light of Christ will cut away the darkness that covers their evil doings, and their corruption, their fraud, and cruelty, will be exposed. Christianity unmask the hypocrisies of Satan, and it is this unmasking of his designs that stirs his bitter hatred against Christ and His followers. It is impossible for any one to become a true follower of Jesus Christ, without distinguishing himself from the worldly mass of unbelievers. If the world would accept of Jesus, then there would be no sword of dissension; for all would be disciples of Christ and in fellowship one with another, and their unity would be unbroken. But this is not the case. Here and there an individual member of a family is true to the convictions of his conscience, and is compelled to stand alone in his family or in the church to which he belongs, and is finally compelled, because of the course of those with whom he associates, to separate himself from their companionship. The line of demarcation is made distinct. One stands upon the word of God, the others upon the traditions and sayings of men.' *Review & Herald*, July 24, 1894.

'They took them wives'

5. What development took place to break down this separation between the sons of God and the daughters of men? Genesis 6:1-2.

NOTE: 'For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to mingle with the inhabitants of the valleys. This association was productive of the worst results. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain's descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. Many of the worshipers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment were disregarded, "and they took them wives of all which they chose." The children of Seth went "in the way of Cain" (Jude 11); they fixed their minds upon worldly prosperity and enjoyment and neglected the commandments of the Lord. Men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge;" they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21. Therefore "God gave them over to a mind void of judgment." Verse 28, margin. Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 81.

6. What other example does the Bible give of this successful strategy in perverting the people of God? Numbers 25:1-2. Compare Numbers 31:16, Revelation 2:14.

NOTE: 'No one who fears God can without danger connect himself with one who fears Him not. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God. The Lord's direction is, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14, 17, 18).' *Conflict & Courage*, page 57.

'Near the close of this earth's history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner [as at Baal-peor] and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before their entering the land of promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls, and to take God's professed people upon their weakest points. It is now the duty of God's commandment-keeping people to watch and pray, to search the Scriptures diligently, to hide the word of God in the heart, lest they sin against Him in idolatrous thoughts and debasing practices, and thus the church of God become demoralised.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 115.

'Let us make us a name'

7. What pivotal event took place shortly after the Flood? Genesis 11:1-4. Compare Genesis 9:1.

NOTE: 'For a time the descendants of Noah continued to dwell among the mountains where the ark had rested. As their numbers increased, apostasy soon led to division. Those who desired to forget their Creator and to cast off the restraint of His law felt a constant annoyance from the teaching and example of their God-fearing associates, and after a time they decided to separate from the worshipers of God. Accordingly they journeyed to the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the river Euphrates. They were attracted by the beauty of the situation and the fertility of the soil, and upon this plain they determined to make their home. Here they decided to build a city, and in it a tower of such stupendous height as should render it the wonder of the world. These enterprises were designed to prevent the people from scattering abroad in colonies. God had directed men to disperse throughout the earth, to replenish and subdue it; but these Babel builders determined to keep their community united in one body, and to found a monarchy that should eventually embrace the whole earth. Thus their city would become the metropolis of a universal empire; its glory would command the admiration and homage of the world and render the founders illustrious. The magnificent tower, reaching to the heavens, was intended to stand as a monument of the power and wisdom of its builders, perpetuating their fame to the latest generations.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 118-119.

8. Who was primarily responsible for the rebellion at Babel? Genesis 10:8-10.

NOTE: Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, was the instigator of the building of the Tower of Babel. (See Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 1, chapter 4.) The false religion Nimrod promoted was based on astrology; the sun, moon and five visible

planets were worshipped as deities, giving their names to the days of the week. The sun, as the principal deity, was assigned the first day of the week, followed by the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. In many languages, including English, the days of the week retain these pagan names. From Nimrod also comes the concept of the unity of religion and state. 'The men of Babel had determined to establish a government that should be independent of God. There were some among them, however, who feared the Lord, but who had been deceived by the pretensions of the ungodly and drawn into their schemes. For the sake of these faithful ones the Lord delayed His judgments and gave the people time to reveal their true character. As this was developed, the sons of God laboured to turn them from their purpose; but the people were fully united in their Heaven-daring undertaking. Had they gone on unchecked, they would have demoralised the world in its infancy. Their confederacy was founded in rebellion; a kingdom established for self-exaltation, but in which God was to have no rule or honour. Had this confederacy been permitted, a mighty power would have borne sway to banish righteousness, and with it peace, happiness, and security, from the earth. For the divine statutes, which are "holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12), men were endeavouring to substitute laws to suit the purpose of their own selfish and cruel hearts.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 123.

'Not of this world'

9. How did Jesus speak of the division that will exist between His followers and the world? Matthew 10:34-36.

NOTE: 'Christ said of Himself, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34. The Prince of Peace, He was yet the cause of division. He who came to proclaim glad tidings and to create hope and joy in the hearts of the children of men opened a controversy that burns deep and arouses intense passion in the human heart. And He warns His followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake." "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death." John 16:33; Luke 21:12, 16.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 84.

10. How did Jesus explain the relation of His kingdom to the world? John 18:36.

NOTE: 'Today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne.' *Desire of Ages*, page 509.

'The minister of God'

11. What attitude should the Christian take to the state? Romans 13:1-5, Titus 3:1.

NOTE: The Biblical view is that government and religion operate in two different and distinct spheres. Both the ruler and the priest are ordained by God, but to do quite different and distinct work. So long as the ruler operates within his divinely ordained sphere, respect and obedience is due to him. The Christian is required to be law-abiding, so long as the laws do not infringe his religious liberty. Christians have long recognised the necessity for human government in the maintenance of good order and the dangers brought about by lawlessness.

12. When conflict arises between obedience to God and obedience to human commands, what must be our choice? Acts 5:29.

NOTE: 'The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. . . . We are to recognise human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognised as above all human legislation. A "Thus saith the Lord" is not to be set aside for a "Thus saith the church" or a "Thus saith the state." The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 59.

Lesson 3: 'A holy nation'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.' Exodus 19:5-6, first part.

STUDY HELP: *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 284-296.

LESSON AIM: To show the principles upon which God set up the nation of Israel.

Introduction

‘Through the Jewish nation it was God’s purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 286.

‘A kingdom of priests’

1. What was God’s purpose in bringing Israel out of Egypt? Exodus 19:6.

NOTE: ‘It is God’s purpose to manifest through His people the principles of His kingdom. That in life and character they may reveal these principles, He desires to separate them from the customs, habits, and practices of the world. He seeks to bring them nearer to Himself that He may make known to them His will. His purpose for His people today is the same that He had for Israel when He brought them forth from Egypt. By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in His church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognise the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people in the world.’ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 321.

2. How did God through Isaiah remind His people of this purpose? Isaiah 60:1-3.

NOTE: ‘It was the privilege of the Jewish nation to represent the character of God as it had been revealed to Moses. In answer to the prayer of Moses, “Show me Thy glory,” the Lord promised, “I will make all My goodness pass before thee.” Exodus 33:18, 19. “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. This was the fruit that God desired from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they were to show that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7... it was God’s purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world. God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 285, 290.

When taken into captivity, ‘they were also to impart to others a knowledge of the living God. Many from among the sons of the strangers were to learn to love Him as their Creator and their Redeemer; they were to begin the observance of His holy Sabbath day as a memorial of His creative power; and when He should make “bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,” to deliver His people from captivity, “all the ends of the earth” should see of the salvation of God. Verse 10. Many of these converts from heathenism would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites and accompany them on the return journey to Judea. None of these were to say, “The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people” (Isaiah 56:3), for the word of God through His prophet to those who should yield themselves to Him and observe His law was that they should thenceforth be numbered among spiritual Israel, His church on earth.’ *Prophets & Kings*, page 371.

‘A token of the covenant betwixt Me and you.’

3. What symbol was given of membership of the holy nation? Genesis 17:11-14.

NOTE: ‘The rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfil, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 138.

4. What happened after the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea? Joshua 5:2-7.

NOTE: ‘For nearly forty years the children of Israel are lost to view in the obscurity of the desert... During these years the people were constantly reminded that they were under the divine rebuke. In the rebellion at Kadesh they had rejected God, and God had for the time rejected them. Since they had proved unfaithful to His covenant, they were not to receive the sign of the covenant, the rite of circumcision. Their desire to return to the land of slavery had shown them to be unworthy of freedom, and the ordinance of the Passover, instituted to commemorate the deliverance from bondage, was not to be observed. Yet the continuance of the tabernacle service testified that God had not utterly forsaken His people. And His providence still supplied their wants. “The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand,” said Moses, in rehearsing the history of their wanderings. “He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness; these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.” And the Levites’ hymn, recorded by Nehemiah, vividly pictures God’s care for Israel, even during these years of rejection and banishment: “Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the

way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst Thou sustain them in the wilderness; . . . their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not." Nehemiah 9:19-21.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 406.

'To love the LORD thy God with all thine heart'

5. Was circumcision to be restricted to Jews? Exodus 12:48.

NOTE: 'They rendered outward service to God as the means of attaining to national greatness. They did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation to idolatry. In the instruction given through Moses, God had placed restrictions upon their association with idolaters; but this teaching had been misinterpreted. It was intended to prevent them from conforming to the practices of the heathen. But it was used to build up a wall of separation between Israel and all other nations. The Jews looked upon Jerusalem as their heaven, and they were actually jealous lest the Lord should show mercy to the Gentiles.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

6. How is the significance of this rite explained in the Bible? Deuteronomy 10:12-16, Deuteronomy 30:6. Compare Romans 2:28-29.

NOTE: 'The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. To believe that He will save others, but will not save you is not genuine faith; but when the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is moulded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deuteronomy 30:6). It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised.'" *Selected Messages, Book 1*, page 392.

'Ye shall afflict your souls'

7. Under what circumstances might a person be removed from the holy nation? Exodus 31:14, Leviticus 18:29 (see preceding verses), Numbers 9:13, Numbers 15:30.

NOTE: The Lord explained that if a person wilfully chose to sin against the expressed will of God, he was to be cut off from the people of God. By such acts of wilful sin, these persons had broken their covenant with God and, unless they repented, they could no longer be regarded as part of God's people. Thus, although membership of the chosen nation was administered to infants on the eighth day, this membership could only be maintained by those who chose to fulfil God's will.

8. In what way was this choice brought home to the people each year? Leviticus 23:27-30.

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

'The anger of the LORD was kindled against them'

9. How did God separate the civil and religious elements in Israel? Exodus 3:10, Exodus 27:21-28:1.

NOTE: God separated the civil and religious leadership of the people. Moses, though chosen of God to lead the people, was not to minister in the tabernacle, while Aaron, though appointed by God to be the spiritual leader of the people as their high priest, was not to assume civil leadership. Thus God began to teach the principle of the separation of church and state. It was their failure to recognise this principle that led to the rejection of Saul and Uzziah in later years.

10. How did God show His displeasure when Aaron, with his sister, attempted to assume the civil leadership of Israel? Numbers 12:1-2, 9-11.

NOTE: 'In the appointment of the seventy elders Miriam and Aaron had not been consulted, and their jealousy was excited against Moses... God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God Himself. The seditious whisperers were summoned to the tabernacle, and brought face to face with Moses. "And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam." Their claim to the prophetic gift was not denied; God might have spoken to

them in visions and dreams. But to Moses, whom the Lord Himself declared “faithful in all Mine house,” a nearer communion had been granted. With him God spake mouth to mouth. “Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and He departed.” The cloud disappeared from the tabernacle in token of God’s displeasure, and Miriam was smitten. She “became leprous, white as snow.” Aaron was spared, but he was severely rebuked in Miriam’s punishment. Now, their pride humbled in the dust, Aaron confessed their sin, and entreated that his sister might not be left to perish by that loathsome and deadly scourge.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 382, 384.

‘Bringing forth the fruits thereof’

11. What is the qualification today to be part of God’s kingdom? Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: ‘As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others. The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a lesson for us. The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great privileges and blessings, and He expects corresponding returns. We have been redeemed by a costly ransom. Only by the greatness of this ransom can we conceive of its results. On this earth, the earth whose soil has been moistened by the tears and blood of the Son of God are to be brought forth the precious fruits of Paradise. In the lives of God’s people the truths of His word are to reveal their glory and excellence. Through His people Christ is to manifest His character and the principles of His kingdom.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 296.

12. How did Peter explain God’s purpose for His people today? 1 Peter 2:9.

NOTE: ‘That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today. He has “let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen,” even to His covenant-keeping people, who faithfully “render Him the fruits in their seasons.” Never has the Lord been without true representatives on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are numbered among the spiritual Israel, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people. Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. For many centuries God’s people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As a consequence, the Lord’s great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God’s word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God’s church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile. But, thank God, His church is no longer in bondage. To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. In every part of the earth, men and women are responding to the Heaven-sent message which John the Revelator prophesied would be proclaimed prior to the second coming of Christ: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” Revelation 14:7.’ *Prophets & Kings*, pages 713-714.

Lesson 4: ‘To obey is better than sacrifice’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.’ 1 Samuel 15:22.

STUDY HELP: *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 617-621.

LESSON AIM: To examine the sin of Saul, how he tried to break down the separation between king and priest.

Introduction

‘God had directed that only those consecrated to the office should present sacrifices before Him. But Saul commanded, “Bring hither a burnt offering;” and, equipped as he was with armour and weapons of war, he approached the altar and offered sacrifice before God.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 618.

‘Make us a king’

1. What call did the people of Israel make? 1 Samuel 8:4-5.

NOTE: ‘The Lord had, through His prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king; but it does not follow that this form of government was best for them or according to His will. He permitted the people to follow their own choice, because they refused to be guided by His counsel. Hosea declares that God gave them a king in His anger. Hosea 13:11. When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realise their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 605.

2. How did God show Samuel the true nature of this request? 1 Samuel 8:7.

NOTE: ‘They had not manifested disrespect for him, but for the authority of God, who had appointed the rulers of His people. Those who despise and reject the faithful servant of God show contempt, not merely for the man, but for the Master who sent

him. It is God's words, His reproofs and counsel, that are set at nought; it is His authority that is rejected.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 605.

'This will be the manner of king'

3. How did Samuel explain to them the nature of kingship? 1 Samuel 8:11-18.

NOTE: 'He faithfully set before them the burdens that would be laid upon them, and showed the contrast between such a state of oppression and their present comparatively free and prosperous condition. Their king would imitate the pomp and luxury of other monarchs, to support which, grievous exactions upon their persons and property would be necessary. The goodliest of their young men he would require for his service. They would be made charioteers and horsemen and runners before him. They must fill the ranks of his army, and they would be required to till his fields, to reap his harvests, and to manufacture implements of war for his service. The daughters of Israel would be for confectioners and bakers for the royal household. To support his kingly state he would seize upon the best of their lands, bestowed upon the people by Jehovah Himself. The most valuable of their servants also, and of their cattle, he would take, and "put them to his work." Besides all this, the king would require a tenth of all their income, the profits of their labour, or the products of the soil. "Ye shall be his servants," concluded the prophet. "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." However burdensome its exactions should be found, when once a monarchy was established, they could not set it aside at pleasure.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 606.

4. How did Israel respond to what Samuel told them? 1 Samuel 8:19-20.

NOTE: "'Like all the nations.'" The Israelites did not realise that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honour, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God. As they depart from the Lord they become ambitious for the gains and honours of the world. Christians are constantly seeking to imitate the practices of those who worship the god of this world. Many urge that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs they might exert a stronger influence over the ungodly. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are the enemies of God. For the sake of earthly distinction they sacrifice the unspeakable honour to which God has called them, of showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. 1 Peter 2:9.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 607.

'I have given your priest's office unto you'

5. What command had God given regarding the priest's office? Numbers 18:7.

NOTE: 'Aaron and his sons, were to minister before the tabernacle of witness. "The Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. . . . Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. . . . Thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift." So particular was the Lord that this sacred work should be performed only by those whom He had appointed, that He declared: "The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." Every worker was to know his place, and to perform faithfully the special duties committed to him; and he was to let alone that which another worker had been appointed to do.' *Review & Herald*, October 5, 1905.

6. What agreement had Samuel made with Saul? 1 Samuel 10:8.

NOTE: 'He had received from Samuel explicit directions concerning the course to be pursued at this time. "Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal," said the prophet; "and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do." 1 Samuel 10:8.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 617.

7. When Samuel was delayed in keeping his appointment, what did Saul do? 1 Samuel 13:8-9.

NOTE: 'With growing impatience he awaited the arrival of Samuel and attributed the confusion and distress and desertion of his army to the absence of the prophet. The appointed time came, but the man of God did not immediately appear. God's providence had detained His servant. But Saul's restless, impulsive spirit would no longer be restrained. Feeling that something must be done to calm the fears of the people, he determined to summon an assembly for religious service, and by sacrifice entreat the divine aid. God had directed that only those consecrated to the office should present sacrifices before Him. But Saul commanded, "Bring hither a burnt offering;" and, equipped as he was with armour and weapons of war, he approached the altar and offered sacrifice before God.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 618.

'What hast thou done?'

8. How did Samuel reproach Saul? 1 Samuel 13:10-11.

NOTE: 'Samuel saw at once that Saul had gone contrary to the express directions that had been given him. The Lord had spoken by His prophet that at this time He would reveal what Israel must do in this crisis. If Saul had fulfilled the conditions upon which divine help was promised, the Lord would have wrought a marvellous deliverance for Israel, with the few who were loyal to the king. But Saul was so well satisfied with himself and his work that he went out to meet the prophet as one

who should be commended rather than disapproved. Samuel's countenance was full of anxiety and trouble; but to his inquiry, "What hast thou done?" Saul offered excuses for his presumptuous act.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 618.

9. How did Samuel explain the nature of Saul's sin? 1 Samuel 13:13.

NOTE: 'Either Israel must cease to be the people of God, or the principle upon which the monarchy was founded must be maintained, and the nation must be governed by a divine power. If Israel would be wholly the Lord's, if the will of the human and earthly were held in subjection to the will of God, He would continue to be the Ruler of Israel. So long as the king and the people would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long He could be their defence. But in Israel no monarchy could prosper that did not in all things acknowledge the supreme authority of God... We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfilment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honour His name, and bless His people.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 621.

'I forced myself'

10. What excuses did Saul make for his sin? 1 Samuel 13:11-12.

NOTE: 'It should be noted that Saul needed religion because 'scattering' was taking place; and it should be recalled that in a sacral situation [i.e. when religion and state are united] the prime function of religion is to counteract scattering by means of a sacrament. A more sacral mental climate and an act more strongly dictated by sacralism than that of Saul can scarcely be imagined.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 30.

11. What sentence did Samuel pronounce on Saul? 1 Samuel 13:13-14.

NOTE: 'To Saul's feeble apology for his course of action (which he knew to be out of order – for he contended that he had 'forced' himself to it) the priest replied: "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you" From that moment on, King Saul was under the frown of God, a frown that was not lifted again; it only grew darker as the months and years went by.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 30.

'If Saul had shown a regard for the requirements of God in this time of trial, God could have worked His will through him. His failure now proved him unfit to be the vicegerent of God to His people. He would mislead Israel. His will, rather than the will of God, would be the controlling power. If Saul had been faithful, his kingdom would have been established forever; but since he had failed, the purpose of God must be accomplished by another. The government of Israel must be committed to one who would rule the people according to the will of Heaven.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 621.

'Hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD'

12. What final opportunity was Saul given to redeem himself? 1 Samuel 15:1-3.

NOTE: 'Saul had failed to bear the test of faith in the trying situation at Gilgal, and had brought dishonour upon the service of God; but his errors were not yet irretrievable, and the Lord would grant him another opportunity to learn the lesson of unquestioning faith in His word and obedience to His commands. When reproved by the prophet at Gilgal, Saul saw no great sin in the course he had pursued. He felt that he had been treated unjustly, and endeavoured to vindicate his actions and offered excuses for his error. From that time he had little intercourse with the prophet. Samuel loved Saul as his own son, while Saul, bold and ardent in temper, had held the prophet in high regard; but he resented Samuel's rebuke, and thenceforth avoided him so far as possible. But the Lord sent His servant with another message to Saul. By obedience he might still prove his fidelity to God and his worthiness to walk before Israel. Samuel came to the king and delivered the word of the Lord. That the monarch might realise the importance of heeding the command, Samuel expressly declared that he spoke by divine direction, by the same authority that had called Saul to the throne.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 627.

13. How did Saul fail once more to obey God? 1 Samuel 15:8-9.

NOTE: 'The divine edict devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction was but partially fulfilled. Ambitious to heighten the honour of his triumphal return by the presence of a royal captive, Saul ventured to imitate the customs of the nations around him and spared Agag, the fierce and warlike king of the Amalekites. The people reserved for themselves the finest of the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden, excusing their sin on the ground that the cattle were reserved to be offered as sacrifices to the Lord. It was their purpose, however, to use these merely as a substitute, to save their own cattle. Saul had now been subjected to the final test. His presumptuous disregard of the will of God, showing his determination to rule as an independent monarch, proved that he could not be trusted with royal power as the vicegerent of the Lord.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 629.

14. What excuse did Saul give for his disobedience and what was Samuel's response? 1 Samuel 15:15, 22-23.

NOTE: 'In stern and solemn words the prophet swept away the refuge of lies and pronounced the irrevocable sentence: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.'" *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 631.

“To obey is better than sacrifice.” The sacrificial offerings were in themselves of no value in the sight of God. They were designed to express on the part of the offerer penitence for sin and faith in Christ and to pledge future obedience to the law of God. But without penitence, faith, and an obedient heart, the offerings were worthless. When, in direct violation of God’s command, Saul proposed to present a sacrifice of that which God had devoted to destruction, open contempt was shown for the divine authority. The service would have been an insult to Heaven. Yet with the sin of Saul and its result before us, how many are pursuing a similar course. While they refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in wilful violation of one of His commands.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 635.

Lesson 5: ‘It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him.’ Deuteronomy 13:4.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 303-304.

LESSON AIM: To examine the sin of Uzziah when he tried to break down the separation between church and state.

Introduction

‘God is no respecter of persons. “The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.” Numbers 15:30.’ *Review & Herald*, March 4, 1915.

‘He did that which was right’

1. Who was Uzziah? 2 Chronicles 26:1-3. See also 2 Kings 14:17-21.

NOTE: Uzziah (meaning ‘My strength is Jehovah’ is also known as Azariah (meaning ‘Jehovah helps’).

‘In 2 Chronicles the new king is always called Uzziah, while in the Book of Kings he is designated during the first part of his reign as Azariah, while in the notices of the latter part of that period he appears as Uzziah (2 Kings 15:13, 30, 32, 34). The usual explanations either of a clerical error through the confusion of similar letters, or that he bore two names, seem equally unsatisfactory. Nor is the meaning of the two names precisely the same. May it not be that Azariah was his real name and that when, after his daring intrusion into the sanctuary, he was smitten with lifelong leprosy, his name was significantly altered into the cognate Uzziah, ‘My strength is Jehovah’, in order to mark that the ‘help’ which he had received had been dependent on his relation to the Lord.’ Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, pages 60-61.

2. What sort of king was he? 2 Chronicles 26:4-5, first part.

NOTE: ‘Here we make the acquaintance of a good king of Judah, an exceptional man, so good in the sight of God that he was “marvellously helped” of God. Everything to which he put his hand was a success.’ Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

‘He sought God’

3. What was the foundation of his success as a king? 2 Chronicles 26:5, last part.

NOTE: ‘Seek the Lord with all your heart. Come with zeal, and when you sincerely feel that without the help of God you perish, when you pant after Him as the hart panteth after the water brooks, then will the Lord strengthen you speedily. Then will your peace pass all understanding. If you expect salvation, you must pray. Beg of God to work in you a thorough reformation, that the fruits of His Spirit may dwell in you. It is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy the deep movings of the Spirit of God. A sweet heavenly peace will pervade the mind, and you will love to meditate upon God and heaven. You will feast upon the glorious promises of His Word. But know first that you have begun the Christian course. Know that the first steps are taken in the road to everlasting life.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 318.

‘One day alone is ours, and during this day we are to live for God. For this one day we are to place in the hand of Christ, in solemn service, all our purposes and plans, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 30:15. If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ, the yoke of obedience and service, all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 101.

4. What reputation did Uzziah have among the surrounding nations and what was the reason for his success? 2 Chronicles 26:15, last part.

NOTE: ‘The long reign of Uzziah (Azariah), in the land of Judah and Benjamin, was characterised by a prosperity greater than that of any other ruler since the death of Solomon, nearly two centuries before. For many years the king ruled with discretion. “He sought the Lord,” and “God helped him.” Under the blessing of Heaven, his armies regained some of the territory that had

been lost in former years; cities were rebuilt and fortified, and the position of the nation among the surrounding peoples was greatly strengthened. Commerce revived, and the riches of the nations flowed into Jerusalem. Uzziah's name "spread far abroad: for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong." *Review & Herald*, March 4, 1915.

'His heart was lifted up'

5. Who were some of the prophets that ministered during the reign of Uzziah? Isaiah 1:1, Hosea 1:1, Amos 1:1.

NOTE: Isaiah 'was to witness the invasion of Judah by the combined armies of northern Israel and of Syria; he was to behold the Assyrian hosts encamped before the chief cities of the kingdom. During his lifetime, Samaria was to fall, and the ten tribes of Israel were to be scattered among the nations. Judah was again and again to be invaded by the Assyrian armies, and Jerusalem was to suffer a siege that would have resulted in her downfall had not God miraculously interposed. Already grave perils were threatening the peace of the southern kingdom. The divine protection was being removed, and the Assyrian forces were about to overspread the land of Judah. But the dangers from without, overwhelming though they seemed, were not so serious as the dangers from within. It was the perversity of his people that brought to the Lord's servant the greatest perplexity and the deepest depression. By their apostasy and rebellion those who should have been standing as light bearers among the nations were inviting the judgments of God. Many of the evils which were hastening the swift destruction of the northern kingdom, and which had recently been denounced in unmistakable terms by Hosea and Amos, were fast corrupting the kingdom of Judah.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 305.

'This was a flourishing period of prophetism in Israel. This perhaps the more, because now the last warning voices were raised among a people sunk in idolatry and corruption, and nigh to judgement. From the prophetic allusions the state of matters in Judah seems, at least during the first period of this reign, to have been somewhat better. But here also, alike owing to increasing prosperity and to success, pride and its resultant vices soon became apparent. This chiefly on the part of the king himself.' Edersheim, *The History of Israel & Judah*, page 77.

6. What went wrong in Uzziah's experience? 2 Chronicles 26:16, first part.

NOTE: 'This outward prosperity, however, was not accompanied by a corresponding revival of spiritual power. The temple services were continued as in former years, and multitudes assembled to worship the living God; but pride and formality gradually took the place of humility and sincerity. Of Uzziah himself it is written: "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God.'" *Prophets & Kings*, page 303.

'To burn incense upon the altar'

7. What was Uzziah tempted to do? 2 Chronicles 26:16.

NOTE: 'What had gone wrong? Why the demotion? It was occasioned by one rash act: Uzziah the king went into the Holy Place to perform the functions of the priest; the king had once again invaded the province of the priest. That did it.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

8. How did the high priest explain his sin to him? 2 Chronicles 26:17-18.

NOTE: 'Nor was it done by him in ignorance, for his rash deed set the whole sanctuary in an uproar, the horrified priests remonstrating: "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honour from the Lord God.'" Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

'The LORD had smitten him'

9. What was Uzziah's reaction to the high priest's rebuke? 2 Chronicles 26:19, first part.

NOTE: 'This, we are told, only made the king more unruly: such finickiness – didn't these priests know that he was, after all, the king?' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

10. How did God punish the king's presumption? 2 Chronicles 26:19, last part - 21.

NOTE: 'Uzziah was filled with wrath, that he, the king, should be thus rebuked. But he was not permitted to profane the sanctuary against the united protest of those in authority. While standing there in wrathful rebellion, he was suddenly smitten with a divine judgment. Leprosy appeared on his forehead. In dismay he fled, never again to enter the temple courts. Unto the day of his death, some years later, Uzziah remained a leper, a living example of the folly of departing from a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Neither his exalted position nor his long life of service could be pleaded as an excuse for the presumptuous sin by which he marred the closing years of his reign, and brought upon himself the judgment of Heaven.' *Review & Herald*, March 4, 1915.

'He died in disgrace excluded from the house of the Lord. He was deprived of his sceptre, and a regent took over his regal functions. Later, after he had died, they buried him not in the royal burial place but in the burial field which belonged to the kings.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

'If ye will obey His voice'

11. How does the Bible clearly show the importance of obeying God's commands? Exodus 19:5.

NOTE: 'Plainly the sin of Uzziah was that he ignored completely the divine instruction in the matter (that there had been such instruction is wholly apparent from the fact that the assembled priests were to a man horrified at the spectacle). He refused to

move along with the division of labour that God had instituted with the coming of the first Israelitish king. Uzziah preferred to continue along the lines of the older epoch, in which the man who swung the sceptre was also considered competent to swing the censer.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

12. What does the Bible teach concerning those who choose to disobey the Lord? 1 Samuel 12:15.

NOTE: 'No one can read the sad tale of King Uzziah and his demotion (nor that of King Saul and his earlier demotion for the same infraction) without being amazed and probably perplexed at the rigour and severity of the God who is portrayed in these accounts. Can we hope to see through such scrupulousness, such sternness, in a matter that must seem quite trivial to us? Is there perhaps the inculcation here of so important a piece of truth as to render understandable the seemingly unreasonable punctiliousness of the Being not known for trifling with men? We do well to try to put into words that piece of truth which the revealing Spirit was trying to get across to men in the rigours practised with King Saul and King Uzziah.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 31.

The state and the priesthood were instructed by God to perform separate and unique functions. The state was 'the minister of God', ordained by God 'to execute wrath on him that doeth evil.' Romans 13:4. The priesthood was ordained by God to teach mankind that only through Christ can man be delivered from evil. Through the state, God has given the means for sin to be curbed. This grace is for all men. Through the priesthood, firstly of men, but ultimately of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the means through which sin may be vanquished. This grace is offered to all men but is only given to those who respond to God's call. But when the state meddles in the affairs of the church or the church in the affairs of the state, then only evil can result. This was the lesson that God was teaching through the experiences of Saul and Uzziah.

Lesson 6: 'Arise, go to Nineveh'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.' Jonah 4:2, last part.

STUDY HELP: *Prophets & Kings*, pages 265-278.

LESSON AIM: To show how God tried to foster the missionary spirit in Israel and to show the kind of religion that operates in a state where state and religion are one.

Introduction

'The people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfil their holy mission. The blessings they received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages they appropriated for their own glorification. They shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation. The restrictions that God had placed upon their association with idolaters as a means of preventing them from conforming to the practices of the heathen, they used to build up a wall of separation between themselves and all other nations. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 14.

'Arise, go to Nineveh'

1. What call did God give to Jonah? Jonah 1:1-2.

NOTE: 'Among the cities of the ancient world in the days of divided Israel one of the greatest was Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian realm. Founded on the fertile bank of the Tigris, soon after the dispersion from the tower of Babel, it had flourished through the centuries until it had become "an exceeding great city of three days' journey." Jonah 3:3. In the time of its temporal prosperity Nineveh was a centre of crime and wickedness. Inspiration has characterised it as "the bloody city, . . . full of lies and robbery." In figurative language the prophet Nahum compared the Ninevites to a cruel, ravenous lion. "Upon whom," he inquired, "hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" Nahum 3:1, 19.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 265.

2. How are we shown that it was always God's intention for His people to be missionaries? Isaiah 56:6-7, Jeremiah 29:7.

NOTE: 'God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God's will. In the early days of Israel the nations of the world, through corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. They had once known Him; but because "they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, . . . their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them an opportunity of again becoming acquainted with Him through His chosen people. Through the teachings of the sacrificial service, Christ was to be uplifted before all nations, and all who would look to Him should live. Christ was the foundation of the Jewish economy. The whole system of types and symbols was a compacted prophecy of the gospel, a presentation in which were bound up the promises of redemption.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 14.

'Jonah rose up to flee'

3. What was Jonah's reaction to God's call? Jonah 1:3.

NOTE: 'The prevailing assumption was that since Israel was the "chosen" race, God's beneficent concern did not reach beyond its borders. Needless to say, this allowed the individual Israelite to be unconcerned with "outsiders". Such a mental climate not only precluded the rise of mission but made men resist any gesture in the direction of mission. Even a prophet of God, Jonah, the son of Amittai, was unable to break free of the anti-missionary attitude common to sacral [i.e. church-state] societies. When called to go to Nineveh on a preaching mission, Jonah flatly refused, choosing rather to go to sea on a tramp freighter. That Jonah went to sea rather than to some hideout in the desert is in itself a revelation of the man's anti-missionary frame of mind.' Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 42.

4. How are we shown that even the early church had not learned from Jonah's experience? Acts 11:1-3.

NOTE: 'When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to those assembled, they were surprised and offended. They feared that such a course, which looked to them presumptuous, would have the effect of counteracting his own teaching. When they next saw Peter they met him with severe censure, saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 141.

'Yet forty days'

5. What message was Jonah called to give? Jonah 3:1-4.

NOTE: 'The thing Jonah didn't like in the orders God had given him was contained in one phrase of the assignment, something in fine print as it were. It was the phrase "after forty days." This was intended to leave the way open for conversion on the part of the Ninevites and for consequent cancellation of the message of doom. It was this phrase, providing forty days of grace, that made Jonah balk.' Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 42.

6. What does this message reveal about the Lord? Jonah 4:2.

NOTE: 'Yet Nineveh, wicked though it had become, was not wholly given over to evil. He who "beholdeth all the sons of men" (Psalm 33:13) and "seeth every precious thing" (Job 28:10) perceived in that city many who were reaching out after something better and higher, and who, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, would put away their evil deeds and worship Him. And so in His wisdom God revealed Himself to them in an unmistakable manner, to lead them, if possible, to repentance. The instrument chosen for this work was the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai. To him came the word of the Lord, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me." Jonah 1:1, 2.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 265-266.

'The decree of the king and his nobles'

7. What kind of state was Nineveh? Jonah 3:6-9.

NOTE: 'It was a sacral city-state, and as such it had a publicly espoused religion. When the rulers of Nineveh, impressed by the preaching of the prophet from afar, came to the conviction that fasting in sackcloth and ashes was in order, they published a decree calling all Nineveh to a mass ceremony of contrition. Every Ninevite was expected to participate; every throat was to join in a grand ensemble – without exception. There was no one who elected not to join in the massive demonstration. Here we see a typically sacral society in action.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 13.

8. What other examples of this kind of mass worship, commanded by the state, do we see in the Bible? Daniel 3:4-6, Daniel 6:6-9.

NOTE: In a sacral society, the religion and the state are one and the same. The king rules over exactly the same people for whom the priest officiates at the altar. There is no "church" that is distinguishable from the state and there is no state that can be distinguished from the "church". To be a citizen is to be follower of the religion. In England vestiges of this remain, for any citizen of England may describe himself as a member of the Church of England. His only qualification is to be English. The typical Muslim state is a sacral society and those citizens who choose to follow another religion may be actively discouraged from so doing. The religion of a sacral state serves as a means of tying together the citizens. Indeed this is what the word 'religion' actually means, a tying together. In a sacral society, religion is a public, not a private, matter. All citizens will attend the shrine for the sacramental occasions. To worship privately or secretly is regarded as subversive. In a sacral society, there is no doctrine, or body of belief, that is preached. Religion revolves around ceremonies, rituals and liturgy. It has no place for faith or love. All that is required is participation in the rites. And because the "church" is identical with the state, the sacral state needs to send no missionaries, nor to be concerned with the religion of those outside its borders, unless it means to conquer them. Christianity acquired a sacral aspect in the time of Constantine with the founding of Christendom.

'It displeased Jonah exceedingly'

9. How did Jonah respond to the success of his mission? Jonah 4:1, 3.

NOTE: 'When Jonah learned of God's purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to rejoice because of God's amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city. The compassion shown by God toward the repentant Ninevites "displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."' *Prophets & Kings*, page 271.

10. What did Jonah do when taxed by God with his response to Nineveh's repentance? Jonah 4:4-5.

NOTE: 'He is not only not in favour of a mission to Nineveh; he hates the mission's success when it comes, moping and pouting on a hilltop that overlooks the now penitent city... We have this from his own lips: "'Is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil.'" Jonah 4:2.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 43.

'Should I not spare Nineveh?'

11. How did God teach Jonah the error in his thinking? Jonah 4:6-11.

NOTE: 'God stages the gourd scene in order to show the prophet how far afield he is. When the gourd dies as suddenly as it has sprung up, the prophet grumbles. And then God has the chance to preach, the chance for which He has caused the gourd to come up: "You pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" In this preachment God tries to get Jonah to realise that the divine concern does not restrict itself to the "chosen" people, something men would have to learn if ever there was to be mission.'" Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 43.

12. How did God reveal this lesson to the early church? Acts 11:4-18.

NOTE: 'Here we may perceive the workings of God's plan to set the machinery in motion, whereby His will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. Peter had not yet preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Many of them had been interested listeners to the truths which he taught; but the middle wall of partition, which the death of Christ had broken down, still existed in the minds of the apostles, and excluded the Gentiles from the privileges of the gospel. The Greek Jews had received the labours of the apostles, and many of them had responded to those efforts by embracing the faith of Jesus; but the conversion of Cornelius was to be the first one of importance among the Gentiles. By the vision of the sheet and its contents, let down from heaven, Peter was to be divested of his settled prejudices against the Gentiles; to understand that, through Christ, heathen nations were made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Jews, and were to be thus benefited equally with them.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, page 327.

Lesson 7: 'Ye shall be plucked from off the land'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.' Psalm 50:15.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 372.

LESSON AIM: To show God's purpose in taking His people into captivity.

Introduction

'Among the children of Israel who were carried captive to Babylon at the beginning of the seventy years' captivity were Christian patriots, men who were as true as steel to principle, who would not be corrupted by selfishness, but who would honour God at the loss of all things. In the land of their captivity these men were to carry out God's purpose by giving to heathen nations the blessings that come through a knowledge of Jehovah. They were to be His representatives. Never were they to compromise with idolaters; their faith and their name as worshipers of the living God they were to bear as a high honour. And this they did. In prosperity and adversity they honoured God, and God honoured them.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 479.

'The Lord shall scatter thee'

1. What warning did God give Israel of the future captivity? Deuteronomy 28:36.

NOTE: 'Moses traced the evils that would result from a departure from the statutes of Jehovah. Calling heaven and earth to witness, he declared that if, after having dwelt long in the Land of Promise, the people should introduce corrupt forms of worship and bow down to graven images and should refuse to return to the worship of the true God, the anger of the Lord would be aroused, and they would be carried away captive and scattered among the heathen. "Ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it," he warned them; "ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell." Verses 26-28. This prophecy, fulfilled in part in the time of the judges, met a more complete and literal fulfilment in the captivity of Israel in Assyria and of Judah in Babylon.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 295-296.

2. What prophecy was given of the ultimate dispersion of the people of Israel? Deuteronomy 28:64-65.

NOTE: 'The people who rejected Christ were soon to see their city and their nation destroyed. Their glory would be broken, and scattered as the dust before the wind. And what was it that destroyed the Jews? It was the Rock which, had they built upon it, would have been their security. It was the goodness of God despised, the righteousness spurned, the mercy slighted. Men set themselves in opposition to God, and all that would have been their salvation was turned to their destruction. All that God

ordained unto life they found to be unto death. In the Jews' crucifixion of Christ was involved the destruction of Jerusalem. The blood shed upon Calvary was the weight that sank them to ruin for this world and for the world to come. So it will be in the great final day, when judgment shall fall upon the rejecters of God's grace. Christ, their rock of offence, will then appear to them as an avenging mountain. The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.' *Desire of Ages*, page 600.

'Therefore will I scatter them'

3. Why were the Jews taken into captivity? Daniel 9:5-6.

NOTE: 'Had Israel heeded the messages of the prophets, they would have been spared the humiliation that followed. It was because they had persisted in turning aside from His law that God was compelled to let them go into captivity. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," was His message to them through Hosea. "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee: . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God." Hosea 4:6. In every age, transgression of God's law has been followed by the same result. In the days of Noah, when every principle of right-doing was violated, and iniquity became so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it, the decree went forth, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." Genesis 6:7. In Abraham's day the people of Sodom openly defied God and His law; and there followed the same wickedness, the same corruption, the same unbridled indulgence, that had marked the antediluvian world. The inhabitants of Sodom passed the limits of divine forbearance, and there was kindled against them the fire of God's vengeance. The time preceding the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel was one of similar disobedience and of similar wickedness. God's law was counted as a thing of nought, and this opened the floodgates of iniquity upon Israel. "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land," Hosea declared, "because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." Hosea 4:1, 2.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 297.

4. What particular sin was singled out by God as the reason for their captivity? Jeremiah 17:27. See also Nehemiah 13:17-18.

NOTE: 'Before entering the Promised Land, the Israelites were admonished by Moses to "keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it." Deuteronomy 5:12. The Lord designed that by a faithful observance of the Sabbath command, Israel should keep in mind their accountability to Him as their Creator and their Redeemer. While they kept the Sabbath in the proper spirit, there could exist no idolatry. But should the claims of this precept be set aside as no longer binding, the Creator would be forgotten, and men would worship other gods. "I gave them My Sabbaths," God declared, "to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." But "they despised My judgments, and walked not in My statutes, but polluted My Sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols." Ezekiel 20:12, 16. And in His appeal to them to return to Him, He called their attention anew to the importance of keeping the Sabbath holy. "I am the Lord your God," he said, "walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Verses 19, 20. In His terrible arraignment of Judah for her continual apostasy, the Lord declared, "Thou . . . hast profaned My Sabbaths." The priests, he said, "have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths." "Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads." Ezekiel 22:8, 26, 31.' *Review & Herald*, November 6, 1913.

'I will deliver thee'

5. What tests came to God's people in captivity? Daniel 3:4-6, Daniel 6:6:7.

NOTE: 'Daniel was brought to a test and he purposed in his heart that he would worship the true God, notwithstanding the decree. He here saw that principle was at stake and because of integrity he was cast into the lions' den. But here God did not forget him. All heaven had been watching his case, to see if he would be faithful to his God. When the trial came angels were his companions. They stopped the lions' mouths and delivered him. When the king saw the real object of the wise men, to rid Daniel of his power, then the king was wroth, and destroyed the enemies of Daniel. So it was with his three companions. They were tested in refusing to worship the great image that the king had set up.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 3*, page 95.

6. What purpose does God have in allowing these tests to come to His people? Jeremiah 15:19, 21, Psalm 50:15.

NOTE: 'Many of the exiles suffered persecution. Not a few lost their lives because of their refusal to disregard the Sabbath and to observe the heathen festivals. As idolaters were roused to crush out the truth, the Lord brought His servants face to face with kings and rulers, that they and their people might receive the light. Time after time the greatest monarchs were led to proclaim the supremacy of the God whom their Hebrew captives worshipped.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

'In a strange land'

7. How did the captives express their suffering in captivity? Psalm 137:1-2. Read the whole psalm. Contrast Psalm 126.

NOTE: 'The Lord's merciful kindness is great toward us. He will never leave nor forsake those who trust in Him. If we would think and talk less of our trials, and more of the mercy and goodness of God, we would find ourselves raised above much of our gloom and perplexity. My brethren and sisters, you who feel that you are entering upon a dark path, and like the captives in Babylon must hang your harps upon the willows, let us make trial of cheerful song. You may say, How can I sing, with this dark prospect before me, with this burden of sorrow and bereavement upon my soul? But have earthly sorrows deprived us of

the all-powerful Friend we have in Jesus? Should not the marvellous love of God in the gift of His dear Son be a theme of continual rejoicing? When we bring our petitions to the throne of grace, let us not forget to offer also anthems of thanksgiving. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Psalm 50:23). As long as our Saviour lives, we have cause for unceasing gratitude and praise' *Selected Messages, book 2*, page 268.

8. What especially was hard for them? Psalm 137:4.

NOTE: 'The subjugation of the Israelite state and its mass deportation to a foreign country was an indescribably traumatic experience. The trauma was not simply due to the inconvenience and hardship naturally attending such dislocation and resettlement of an entire people in a strange and foreign land, although these were bitter enough. What hurt much more deeply was the religious implication of the exile. Because of it, the people of God had lost their state; only the priesthood remained to them. No longer could Israel be what other groups were, an entity in which "church" and state were partners. Because of the captivity... Israel had to learn to live under a king who was not circumcised, while it continued to worship under a priest who was. This created a situation unlike that of any other nation under the sun.' Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid*, pages 44-45.

'If thou turn to the LORD'

9. What benefit would come to some from being in captivity? Deuteronomy 4:29-31.

NOTE: 'They were brought into subjection to Babylon, and scattered through the lands of the heathen. In affliction many renewed their faithfulness to His covenant. While they hung their harps upon the willows, and mourned for the holy temple that was laid waste, the light of truth shone out through them, and a knowledge of God was spread among the nations. The heathen systems of sacrifice were a perversion of the system that God had appointed; and many a sincere observer of heathen rites learned from the Hebrews the meaning of the service divinely ordained, and in faith grasped the promise of a Redeemer.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

10. What promises did God make to those who turned to Him in their captivity? Deuteronomy 30:1-6.

NOTE: 'The dark years of destruction and death marking the end of the kingdom of Judah would have brought despair to the stoutest heart had it not been for the encouragements in the prophetic utterances of God's messengers. Through Jeremiah in Jerusalem, through Daniel in the court of Babylon, through Ezekiel on the banks of the Chebar, the Lord in mercy made clear His eternal purpose and gave assurance of His willingness to fulfil to His chosen people the promises recorded in the writings of Moses. That which He had said He would do for those who should prove true to Him, He would surely bring to pass. "The word of God . . . liveth and abideth forever." 1 Peter 1:23.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 464.

'My kingdom is not of this world'

11. What lasting reform was achieved through their captivity? Ezekiel 6:9-10.

NOTE: 'By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. During the centuries that followed, they suffered from the oppression of heathen foes, until the conviction became fixed that their prosperity depended upon their obedience to the law of God.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

12. What did the Jews fail to understand about God's purpose? Acts 1:6. Compare John 18:36.

NOTE: 'Sad to say, even after the Resurrection, some had not absorbed the Master's teaching very well; they continued to ask the old and now obsolete question: "Rabbi, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" These continued to have difficulty with the Redeemer's own description: "My kingship is not of this world; if My kingship were of this world, My servants would fight... but My kingship is not from the world.'" Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 78.

'But with too many of the people obedience was not prompted by love. The motive was selfish. They rendered outward service to God as the means of attaining to national greatness. They did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation to idolatry. In the instruction given through Moses, God had placed restrictions upon their association with idolaters; but this teaching had been misinterpreted. It was intended to prevent them from conforming to the practices of the heathen. But it was used to build up a wall of separation between Israel and all other nations. The Jews looked upon Jerusalem as their heaven, and they were actually jealous lest the Lord should show mercy to the Gentiles.' *Desire of Ages*, page 28.

Lesson 8: 'He shall be great in the sight of the Lord'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.' Matthew 4:8.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 97-108.

LESSON AIM: To show how John broke away from the idea of the chosen nation and developed the church of converted believers.

Introduction

'If the fruit is worthless, the name cannot save the tree from destruction. John declared to the Jews that their standing before God was to be decided by their character and life. Profession was worthless. If their life and character were not in harmony with God's law, they were not His people.' *Desire of Ages*, page 107.

'Repent ye'

1. What was the burden of John's preaching? Matthew 3:1-2.

NOTE: 'Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 145.

2. What is involved in repentance? 1 John 1:9, Psalm 32:5, Ezekiel 33:15, Isaiah 55:7.

NOTE: 'Repentance' translates the Greek word 'metanoia'. The central part of this word is the Greek word 'nous' meaning 'the inner being', the central part of man. 'Meta' denotes a change from one state to a totally different one. True repentance requires a fundamental change of heart. This is a central element in Christianity. When Christendom was set up in the 4th century as a rival to Christianity, repentance was gradually abandoned and replaced with doing penance, performing disagreeable religious chores. This alternative version led to an undue emphasis on the pardon aspect while suppressing the renewal aspect of repentance. Thus pardon was seen as all-sufficient and a change of lifestyle was regarded as unnecessary. Eventually the churches of Christendom came to consist of people barely indistinguishable in conduct from worldlings. 'No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 302.

'Preaching the baptism of repentance'

3. What sign did John use to denote this change of life? Mark 1:4.

NOTE: 'John proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptised them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah's kingdom.' *Desire of Ages*, page 104.

Baptism had been used already as a way of initiating proselytes into the Jewish faith. But John looked at Jews, those who saw themselves as the chosen people and showed that they were unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Without conversion, without a conscious decision to seek a change in the life, they were no better than those outside the Jewish nation.

4. How does the Bible explain the true meaning of baptism? Romans 6:1-4.

NOTE: 'As you arose from the watery grave at the time of your baptism, you professed to be dead, and declared that your life was changed, hid with Christ in God. You claimed to be dead to sin, and cleansed from your hereditary and cultivated traits of evil. In going forward in the rite of baptism, you pledged yourselves before God to remain dead to sin. Your mouth was to remain a sanctified mouth, your tongue a converted tongue. You were to speak of God's goodness, and to praise His holy name. Thus you were to be a great help and blessing to the church.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7*, page 908.

'When you took your baptismal vows, were you dead to sin and to the world, or were you buried in baptism while you were still alive? It is an awful thing to be buried alive.' *Bible Echo*, March 23, 1903.

'The multitude that came forth to be baptised'

5. How did John greet the multitudes that flocked to be baptised? Luke 3:7.

NOTE: 'The Baptist dreaded any mass movement, any wholesale coming. When he saw the multitude coming to his baptism in whole population units, he stretched a net across the path, a net with mesh so fine that it would screen out the "snakes' young", as he called those without repentance. Gone was the old ethnic idea of a "church" embracing a total society; if there was one thing John the Baptist did not encourage, it was the concept of a "visible church", a church embracing a whole society in a sort of preliminary membership by baptism. With John, the sacral system comes to an end and a new system begins.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, pages 56-57.

6. When the people referred to their descent from Abraham, how did John reply? Luke 3:8.

NOTE: 'The Jews had misinterpreted God's promise of eternal favour to Israel: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is His name: If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 31:35-37. The Jews regarded their natural descent from Abraham as giving them a claim to this promise. But they overlooked the conditions which God had specified. Before giving the promise, He had said, "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:33, 34. To a people in whose hearts His law is written, the favour of God is assured. They are one with Him. But the Jews had separated themselves from God. Because of their sins they were suffering under His judgments. This was the cause of their bondage to a heathen nation. Their minds were darkened by

transgression, and because in times past the Lord had shown them so great favour, they excused their sins. They flattered themselves that they were better than other men, and entitled to His blessings.' *Desire of Ages*, page 106.

'Fruits meet for repentance'

7. What did John describe as the evidence of true repentance? Matthew 3:8.

NOTE: 'There are many who give no decided evidence that they are true to their baptismal vows. Their zeal is chilled by formality, worldly ambition, pride, and love of self. Occasionally their feelings are stirred, but they do not fall on the Rock Christ Jesus. They do not come to God with hearts that are broken in repentance and confession. Those who experience the work of true conversion in their lives will reveal the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. O that those who have so little spiritual life would realise that eternal life can be granted only to those who become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust! The power of Christ alone can work the transformation in heart and mind that all must experience who would partake with Him of the new life in the kingdom of heaven. "Except a man be born again," the Saviour has said, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that can lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will lead to watchfulness. It will purify the heart and renew the mind and give us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship.' *Counsels on Health*, page 129.

8. What practical advice did John give to show what these fruits are? Luke 3:10-13. Compare Matthew 5:39-44.

NOTE: 'John's good works were not some specified conduct in connection with "sacrament" or some kind of ritual consisting of prayers and songs. Although there is no evidence that John disapproved of prayers and songs, it is noteworthy that his good works do not smell of incense. They are much earthier, homelier and grander in that they are simply human conduct cleared of the dimension of fallenness, soldier conduct stripped of soldier sin, publican conduct cleansed of publican fault.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 56.

'The soldiers likewise'

9. How did John reach out to those who were not Jews? Luke 3:14.

NOTE: 'With no elaborate arguments or fine-spun theories did John declare his message. Startling and stern, yet full of hope, his voice was heard from the wilderness, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Unlearned peasants and fishermen from the surrounding country; the Roman soldiers from the barracks of Herod; chieftains with their swords at their sides, ready to put down anything that might savour of rebellion; the avaricious tax-gatherers from their toll-booths; and from the Sanhedrim the phylactered priests, all listened as if spellbound; and all went away cut to the heart with a sense of their sins.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 272.

10. How did John even reach out to Herod? Mark 6:18-20.

NOTE: Herod was not himself a Jew, though he ruled over Galilee.

'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.' *Desire of Ages*, page 214.

'There hath not risen a greater than John'

11. How did Jesus explain the importance of John? Matthew 11:11. Compare Luke 1:15.

NOTE: 'On heaven's record of noble men the Saviour declared that there stood not one greater than John the Baptist. The work committed to him was one demanding not only physical energy and endurance, but the highest qualities of mind and soul.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 270.

'Jesus had a very high regard for John the Baptist and his programme, saying that of all who had been born of women he was the greatest. No doubt this high evaluation was due to John's pioneering in the matter of a people of God held together by decision-making. With John the Baptist begins a people not co-extensive with any existing togetherness [e.g. nationality]; with him evolves the format of the New Testament church. He was indeed great.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 54.

12. How did Jesus emphasise His agreement with John that the people of God were not selected by birth? John 8:39-44. Compare John 3:3-5.

NOTE: 'The Pharisees had declared themselves the children of Abraham. Jesus told them that this claim could be established only by doing the works of Abraham. The true children of Abraham would live, as he did, a life of obedience to God. They would not try to kill One who was speaking the truth that was given Him from God. In plotting against Christ, the rabbis were not doing the works of Abraham. A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children... Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character... Jesus denied that the Jews were children of Abraham. He said, "Ye do the deeds of your father"... Their works testified of their relationship to him who was a liar and a murderer. "Ye are of your father the devil," said Jesus.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 466-467.

Lesson 9: 'My kingdom is not of this world'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at Him.' Mark 12:17.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 506-510.

LESSON AIM: To show how Jesus taught that church and state are separate agencies.

Introduction

'The Holy Spirit represents worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey; but Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" John 1:29. In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 77.

'Unto you it is given'

1. In contrast to the Jews who believed that every Jew belonged to the kingdom of God, how did Jesus distinguish between believers and unbelievers? Luke 8:10.

NOTE: 'Although He [Jesus] often spoke to large gatherings, He always maintained a clear-cut distinction between the masses of listeners and His group of disciples. The former He dealt with as candidates, mere candidates, for the position already occupied by the latter... One can divide Jesus' sayings into two columns, one consisting of saying to those who were already of the company, the other of expressions to those who were but candidates for inclusion in that company. His formula is contained in the declaration made to His disciples: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that hearing they may not understand.'" Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 60.

2. How did Jesus show that mere descent from Abraham was insufficient to ensure a place in the kingdom of heaven? John 8:33-44.

NOTE: 'The Pharisees had declared themselves the children of Abraham. Jesus told them that this claim could be established only by doing the works of Abraham. The true children of Abraham would live, as he did, a life of obedience to God. They would not try to kill One who was speaking the truth that was given Him from God. In plotting against Christ, the rabbis were not doing the works of Abraham. A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children... Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character.' *Desire of Ages*, page 466.

'The things that are Caesar's'

3. What attitude did Jesus manifest towards the Roman government? Luke 20:20-25.

NOTE: It was Augustus who had first laid the Jews under tribute. See Luke 2:1. The Jews had never grown accustomed to the situation where they should be ruled over by a government of unbelievers. Thus both the tax and the tax gatherers were hated by the Jews, who had never accepted the situation God had placed them in from the time of the Babylonian captivity, where "church" and state were two entirely different things. Jesus saw no difficulty at all in accepting the rule of an unbelieving government. Indeed, He later told Pilate that his right to govern was 'from above'. See John 19:11. Jesus accepted the principle that God ordains governments, even those composed of unbelievers, for the maintenance of order and the punishment of evil-doers.

'Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which was stamped the name and image of Caesar, [Jesus] declared that, as they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as it did not conflict with their duty to God. But that they should at all times render obedience to God, answering His claims, yet peaceably subject to the laws of the land.' *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, page 43.

4. How did Jesus handle another instance of this problem? Matthew 17:24-27.

NOTE: 'This *didrachma* (a half shekel) was an ancient institution, first mentioned in Exodus 30, which required that every adult male in Israel pay a set fee towards the maintenance of the sanctuary. After falling into disuse during the hectic days of the captivity, it was revived at the return from exile. (Nehemiah 10:32). By Jesus' time, the Roman government had adopted the policy of picking up these contributions and then footing the bill for such repairs or improvements as these moneys warranted. We read in Matthew 17 that someone asked Peter whether his Master was in the habit of paying the *didrachma*, as this temple tax had come to be called. No doubt what prompted this prying question was the presumption that Jesus had scruples against paying the tax to an 'uncircumcised' agency, which by its very handling of the money rendered it unfit for the "holy place". Peter, somewhat embarrassed by the unexpected question, hesitatingly answered in the affirmative. The matter would no doubt have ended there, had not Jesus deliberately reopened it: "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?" Peter replies that it is "from others," that is, from Jews, whom the Roman government knew as strangers. "The sons", that is, the native Romans, were not asked to pay it. Jesus summarised that if it were a tax exacted from strangers, then the children ought not to be billed for it. Then Jesus added, most significantly: "However, not to give offence, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its

mouth, you will find a shekel [a four drachma piece]; take that and give it to them for Me and for yourself.” The astounding thing in this incident is that Jesus put Himself and His disciples in the category of “sons”, rather than strangers, indicating that in the matter of His and their relationship to the existing government, Jesus identified with the citizen, rather than with the Jew.’ Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, pages 62-63.

‘The hour cometh and now is’

5. How did Jesus describe the nature of true worship? John 4:19-24.

NOTE: ‘He declared to her that the time had arrived when the true worshipers need not seek a holy mountain nor sacred temple, but were to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Religion was not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies, but was to be throned in the heart, purifying the life and actuating to good works.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 144.

6. How did Jesus show His disciples that the temple was no longer to be the centre for worship? Matthew 24:1-2.

NOTE: ‘It is significant that, although Jesus predicted the total demolition of the temple at Jerusalem, He did not promise a subsequent restoration, as prophets before Him had... Jerusalem would be destroyed and with it, the last landmark of a sacral order, the last vestige of a “church”-state combination... The fact that He did not feed this ancient hope had everything to do with His being rejected by a society that refused to move forward with Him, because it remained bound to the past and its structures.’ Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 61.

‘To make Him a king’

7. How did Jesus respond to the attempts of the Jews to make Him king? John 6:15.

NOTE: ‘After Christ had fed the five thousand, the people determined to make Him king. Hundreds were ready to rally round His standard; and the enthusiasm ran so high that a purpose was formed to take Him by force, and place Him on the throne. But with an authority they dared not resist, Jesus dismissed the multitude. From this time His popularity appeared to wane, and the disciples began to have a clearer conception of His mysterious character. He had given them many lessons showing the relation in which He stood to His Father; and apparently they were overcoming the hope they had so firmly entertained, that He would reign as a temporal prince in Jerusalem.’ *Review & Herald*, February 7, 1899.

8. How did Jesus respond when people tried to involve Him in affairs normally handled by the state? Luke 12:13-14.

NOTE: ‘Jesus was not to be diverted from His mission. His answer was, “Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?” Jesus could have told this man just what was right. He knew the right in the case; but the brothers were in a quarrel because both were covetous. Christ virtually said, It is not My work to settle controversies of this kind. He came for another purpose, to preach the gospel, and thus to arouse men to a sense of eternal realities.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 253-254.

‘It is enough’

9. How did Jesus explain the nature of His kingdom in relation to the sword? John 18:36.

NOTE: ‘God never compels men to obey Him. Together truth and error take the field. The light shines forth amid moral darkness, and men are left to choose their own leader.’ *Signs of the Times*, May 13, 1897.

10. How did Jesus respond to the efforts of some of His disciples to bear arms? Luke 22:38. Compare Matthew 26:52.

NOTE: A misinterpretation of Christ’s reply to the disciples led to the theology of ‘the two swords’ in the Catholic Church during the Dark Ages. Instead of seeing Christ’s response to the disciples as a condemnation of their action, the Catholic Church interpreted this passage to mean that Christ intended His followers, His Church, to bear two swords! One was, of course, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. The other was the temporal sword, the power of the state. Thus the Catholic Church justified its use of state power to enforce its dogmas upon men. The Reformers continued this view, thus setting up in their turn ‘state churches’ where all citizens were expected, even required, to be members. Attendance at one’s local church was required by law with penalties for those who refused to conform (non-conformists). This led to the controversy between Calvin, who wanted to continue the theology of the two swords, and the Anabaptists, who understood that the sword has no place in the affairs of redeeming grace.

‘The great error of the Romish Church is found in the fact that the Bible is interpreted in the light of the opinions of the “fathers.” Their opinions are regarded as infallible, and the dignitaries of the church assume that it is their prerogative to make others believe as they do, and to use force to compel the conscience. Those who do not agree with them are pronounced heretics. But the word of God is not thus to be interpreted. It is to stand on its own eternal merits, to be read as the word of God, to be obeyed as the voice of God, which declares His will to the people. The will and voice of finite man are not to be interpreted as the voice of God.’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 308.

‘We have no king but Caesar’

11. How did Jesus explain to Pilate the nature of His kingdom? John 18:33-38.

NOTE: ‘Pilate opens the case with the question, “Are You the King of the Jews?” It should not surprise us that Jesus finds it impossible to answer this question with either yes or no; His was a theology that made Him speak of kingship on two levels... The former, He says, is “of this world,” the latter “not of this world.” Hence Jesus’ inability to answer Pilate’s question in either the affirmative or the negative. Jesus says in effect: Not such a king as the Zealots try for, certainly not one who seeks to

unseat the state's king. Did I not give My followers the slip when I saw that they were about to make Me that kind of king? And didn't I have a standing practice of forbidding My disciples to publish Me as the Jews' kind of messiah, because I knew so well their pitiful Zealot propensity to think of the Messiah as a king? But if you are asking whether I am a king on the redemptive level, then the answer is a firm and determined yes.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 73.

12. How did the Jews reveal their inability to conceive of any other kind of kingship than that of the state? John 19:14-15.

NOTE: 'The Jews were just as incapable of digesting the concept of two kinds of kingship as Pilate was: their claim, "we have no king but Caesar," shows just how unable their theology rendered them. No king but Caesar? As though it were impossible to have both Caesar as their earthly king and Christ as their spiritual king.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 74.

'In a voice that was heard far and near, Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" But from profane, blasphemous lips went forth the words, "We have no king but Caesar." Thus by choosing a heathen ruler, the Jewish nation had withdrawn from the theocracy. They had rejected God as their king. Henceforth they had no deliverer. They had no king but Caesar. To this the priests and teachers had led the people. For this, with the fearful results that followed, they were responsible. A nation's sin and a nation's ruin were due to the religious leaders.' *Desire of Ages*, page 737.

Lesson 10: 'All one in Christ'

MEMORY VERSE: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' Galatians 3:28-29.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 259-261.

LESSON AIM: To study the struggle the early church had with sacralism both in the church and outside.

Introduction

'The New Testament advanced the theory, and fleshed it out in practice, that no already existing belonging either helped or hindered a prospective member of the body of Christ. It was this innovation that caused the New Testament church to turn its face towards humanity itself in a mission that paid no attention to lines already drawn, to the creation of a church in which there was "neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free."' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 79.

'In all the world'

1. How did Christ describe the mission of His disciples? Matthew 24:14, Acts 1:8.

NOTE: 'Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the executors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life. You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. You have seen My labours for Israel. And although My people would not come to Me that they might have life, although priests and rulers have done unto Me as they listed, although they have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to Me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles, to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 27.

2. How are we shown that the apostles struggled to accept this idea? Acts 11:1-3.

NOTE: 'When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to those assembled, they were surprised and offended. They feared that such a course, which looked to them presumptuous, would have the effect of counteracting his own teaching. When they next saw Peter they met him with severe censure, saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 141.

'I should not call any man common or unclean.'

3. How did God seek to change Peter's attitude towards the Gentiles? Acts 10:10-16.

NOTE: 'This vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God, that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation. As yet none of the disciples had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In their minds the middle wall of partition, broken down by the death of Christ, still existed, and their labours had been confined to the Jews, for they had looked upon the Gentiles as excluded from the blessings of the gospel. Now the Lord was seeking to teach Peter the world-wide extent of the divine plan. Many of the Gentiles had been interested listeners to the preaching of Peter and the other apostles, and many of the Greek Jews had become believers in Christ, but the conversion of Cornelius was to be the first of importance among the Gentiles. The time had come for an entirely new phase of work to be entered upon by the church of Christ. The door that many of the Jewish converts had closed against the Gentiles was now to be thrown open. And the Gentiles who accepted the gospel were to be regarded as on an equality with the Jewish disciples, without the necessity of observing the rite of circumcision.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 135-136.

4. What lesson did Peter learn from His vision? Acts 10:28. Compare verse 14

NOTE: 'Peter laid the whole matter before them. He related his experience in regard to the vision and pleaded that it admonished him to observe no longer the ceremonial distinction of circumcision and uncircumcision, nor to look upon the Gentiles as unclean. He told them of the command given him to go to the Gentiles, of the coming of the messengers, of his journey to Caesarea, and of the meeting with Cornelius. He recounted the substance of his interview with the centurion, in which the latter had told him of the vision by which he had been directed to send for Peter. "As I began to speak," he said, in relating his experience, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" On hearing this account, the brethren were silenced. Convinced that Peter's course was in direct fulfilment of the plan of God, and that their prejudices and exclusiveness were utterly contrary to the spirit of the gospel, they glorified God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Thus, without controversy, prejudice was broken down, the exclusiveness established by the custom of ages was abandoned, and the way was opened for the gospel to be proclaimed to the Gentiles.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 141-142.

'Except ye be circumcised'

5. What dispute arose over the terms whereby the Gentiles might be accepted into the kingdom of heaven? Acts 15:1, 5.

NOTE: 'The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. From the result of the apostles' labours among the Gentiles it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message... Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jews, and it was there that the greatest exclusiveness and bigotry were found. The Jewish Christians living within sight of the temple naturally allowed their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 189, 197.

6. What understanding was reached about the place of the Gentiles in the church? Acts 15:13-19, 24.

NOTE: 'James seems to have been chosen as the one to announce the decision arrived at by the council. It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, should not be urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them. James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ. The Gentile converts, however, were to give up the customs that were inconsistent with the principles of Christianity.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 195.

'They took him and brought him'

7. What happened at Athens when Paul tried to preach about God? Acts 17:18-20.

NOTE: It is important to understand that the Areopagus was the highest court in Athens. Paul was on trial for his preaching. Paul was not preaching an additional god. If he were doing this, it might have been accepted. But Paul was preaching the one God, the only God, the God that brings the worship of all other gods to an end. This was too much for Athens. 'The Stoics and the Epicureans encountered him; but they, and all others who came in contact with him, soon saw that he had a fund of knowledge even greater than their own. His intellectual power commanded the respect and attention of the more intelligent and learned; while his earnest, logical reasoning, and his power of oratory, held the promiscuous audience. Thus the apostle stood undaunted, meeting his opposers on their own ground, matching logic with their logic, and philosophy with their philosophy. They reminded him of Socrates, a great philosopher, who was condemned to death because he was a setter forth of strange gods. Paul was counselled not to endanger his life in the same way. But the apostle's discourse riveted the attention of the people; and his unaffected wisdom commanded their admiration and respect. He was not silenced by the science or irony of the savants; and, after bandying many words with him and satisfying themselves that he was determined to accomplish his errand among them, and tell his story at all hazards, they decided to give him a fair opportunity of doing so. They accordingly conducted him to Mars' Hill. This place was the highest on the Athenian coast, and its recollection and associations were such as to cause it to be regarded with superstitious awe and reverence, that with some amounted to dread. There courts of justice had been held to determine upon criminal cases, and to decide difficult religious questions.' *Redemption or The Teachings of Paul and His Mission to the Gentiles*, page 55.

8. How did Paul try to assure them that the God he preached of was already worshipped by them? Acts 17:23.

NOTE: 'Athens had its publicly espoused religion, its altars displayed in public places and erected at public expense. It also had its list of officially recognised objects of worship. Athens too was always ready to add names to its list of recognised deities. To make sure no object of worship was being slighted, it had even raised up an altar to "The Unknown God." One could pick and choose in Athens. But here too, as in Rome, the seemingly liberal policy was actually very intolerant. Athens frowned on the idea of a God who demands the whole stage... Although Paul's clever device worked for a brief while, the

Athenians were not so dull that they did not realise that he was after all introducing a new and unlisted God... They hustled Paul off, not too gently we may assume, to Mars Hill, the place where such cases were customarily tried and punishment pronounced.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 17.

'No small stir'

9. What problem did Paul encounter at Ephesus? Acts 19:26-27.

NOTE: 'Once a year, special ceremonies were held at Ephesus in honour of the goddess Diana. These attracted great numbers of people from all parts of the province. Throughout this period, festivities were conducted with the utmost pomp and splendour. This gala season was a trying time for those who had newly come to the faith. The company of believers who met in the school of Tyrannus were an inharmonious note in the festive chorus, and ridicule, reproach, and insult were freely heaped upon them. Paul's labours had given the heathen worship a telling blow, in consequence of which there was a perceptible falling off in the attendance at the national festival and in the enthusiasm of the worshipers. The influence of his teachings extended far beyond the actual converts to the faith. Many who had not openly accepted the new doctrines became so far enlightened as to lose all confidence in their heathen gods.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 291-292.

10. How did the people of Ephesus react to Paul's preaching an alternative religion? Acts 19:29-34..

NOTE: 'The city of Ephesus as shown in Acts 19 is typical of the sacral society. Here a whole city chants the religious phrase "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" in endless repetition... For two whole hours the Ephesians chanted the phrase that their Diana was illustrious. No Ephesian so much as thought of staying indoors, much less of substituting one syllable in the chant of adulation. Ephesus too was sacral; all Ephesians shared in the same religion, in which Diana was the favourite deity... It is important to notice what brought the Ephesians out that day was that it had come to their notice that there was a man in the city who posed a threat to its religious unity. He was gaining converts for another loyalty. The preacher had come but recently, and there was every indication that he would be on his way before long. Nor had he made any large number of converts. Nevertheless the threat to the sacral order, small though that threat was, was enough to bring sacral Ephesus into turmoil and its usual activities to a standstill.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 13.

'Let a man examine himself'

11. How did the Corinthians church by its practices begin to break down the concept of the church as a community of believers? 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

NOTE: 'The Corinthians... had perverted the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, patterning in a great degree after idolatrous feasts. They came together to celebrate the sufferings and death of Christ, but turned the occasion into a period of feasting and selfish enjoyment. It had become customary, before partaking of the communion, to unite in a social meal... The public religious feasts of the Greeks had been conducted in this way, and it was by following the counsels of false teachers that the Christians had been led to imitate their example. These teachers had begun by assuring them that it was not wrong to attend idolatrous feasts, and had finally introduced similar practices into the Christian church.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pages 170-171.

12. How did Paul emphasise that only those who truly understand the significance of the Lord's Supper may partake? 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. See 1 Corinthians 10:21.

NOTE: 'The early church had its solemn transactions: principally baptism and the Lord's Supper with the institution of foot-washing not far behind. Baptism was primarily a badge of belonging; the Lord's Supper was a memorial. These solemn transactions took the place of the sacramental ceremonies to which converts to the Christian faith had been accustomed in the sacral societies from which they had come. The danger inherent in sacrament-like performances soon became painfully real: that Christian ceremonies would revert to pre-Christian significance, that is, would become again a sign of a membership not dependent on decision... [a sign of] a tribal togetherness instead.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 81.

'The apostle's words of warning to the Corinthian church are applicable to all time, and are specially adapted to the wants of our day... A mere profession of faith in Christ, and a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not constitute a Christian. A religion which seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or which permits any hurtful self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ. It is in harmony with the spirit of the world, and is opposed to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Festivals and scenes of amusement, in which professed members of the Christian church imitate the customs and enjoy the pleasures of the world, constitute a virtual union with the enemies of God.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 169.

Lesson 11: 'He that is higher than the highest'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.' Acts 5:29.

STUDY HELP: *Christian Service*, pages 155-166.

LESSON AIM: To show the conflict between the sacralist Jews and the early church.

Introduction

‘The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His word. We are to receive this word as supreme authority. We are to recognise human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s word must be recognised as above all human legislation.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 68.

‘They commanded them’

1. Before leaving His disciples, what command did Jesus give them? Mark 16:15.

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

2. What counter-command did the Jewish leaders give to the apostles? Acts 4:18.

NOTE: ‘Such is the treatment which the servants of Christ receive because they teach truths that are not in harmony with the doctrines of a world-loving church... Have they not met, in the priests of the church, the same spirit that Christ encountered in the Pharisees? They have been forbidden to preach the truth. They have been brought before councils, and scourged in the synagogues, subjected to the stripes of reproach and falsehood, presented to the people as heretics, men not fit to be at large. The church authorities, like the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, have brought them to Pilate, to pronounce sentence against them, and have caused them to be thrust into prison. But all this is only a small matter in comparison with what is to be. The most bitter and cruel persecution always comes from those who have the form of religion without the spirit and power of godliness. There is nothing at which religious prejudice will hesitate.’ *Historical Sketches*, page 196.

‘We cannot but speak’

3. What reply did Peter and John make to this command? Acts 4:19-20.

NOTE: ‘We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ’s name, advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 69.

4. What did the Jewish rulers do to the apostles because of their refusal to obey their command? Acts 5:17-18.

NOTE: ‘Hitherto all the efforts made to suppress this new teaching had been in vain; but now both Sadducees and Pharisees determined that the work of the disciples should be stopped, for it was proving them guilty of the death of Jesus. Filled with indignation, the priests laid violent hands on Peter and John, and put them in the common prison. The leaders in the Jewish nation had signally failed of fulfilling God’s purpose for His chosen people. Those whom the Lord had made the depositaries of truth had proved unfaithful to their trust, and God chose others to do His work. In their blindness these leaders now gave full sway to what they called righteous indignation against the ones who were setting aside their cherished doctrines. They would not admit even the possibility that they themselves did not rightly understand the word, or that they had misinterpreted or misapplied the Scriptures. They acted like men who had lost their reason. What right have these teachers, they said, some of them mere fishermen, to present ideas contrary to the doctrines that we have taught the people? Being determined to suppress the teaching of these ideas, they imprisoned those who were presenting them.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 78.

‘The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors’

5. When they were imprisoned, how did God intervene? Acts 5:19-20.

NOTE: ‘The God of heaven, the mighty Ruler of the universe, took this matter into His own hands; for men were warring against His work. He showed them plainly that there is a ruler above man, whose authority must be respected. The Lord sent His angel by night to open the prison doors, and he brought forth these men whom God had commissioned to do His work. The rulers said, Speak not “at all nor teach in the name of Jesus;” but the heavenly messenger sent by God said, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”’ *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 713.

‘Here once again is demonstrated the fact that men have no right to interfere with the free exercise of religion, and that when the laws of men conflict with the law and Word of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. God Himself has set the seal of His approval on such a course. John Bunyan was imprisoned for twelve years for daring to preach the gospel contrary to law.’ *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, revised ed., page 480.

6. Who is higher than the powers of earth? Ecclesiastes 5:8.

NOTE: 'In attempting to defend the right of civil government to enforce religious observances by law, some still ask, "Shall we not obey the powers that be?" We answer, "Yes, when they are in harmony with the higher powers that be. God made His law for all the universe. He created man; He gives the bounteous provisions of nature, and holds our breath and life in His hand. He is to be recognised, His law honoured, before all the great men and the highest earthly powers.' *Bible Readings for the Home Circle, revised ed.*, page 480.

'Did we not straitly command you?'

7. When they were called before the Sanhedrin again, what question did the high priest put to them? Acts 5:28.

NOTE: 'Obedience is to be rendered to all human governments, in subordination to the will of God. These governments are a recognised necessity, in the nature of the case, and their existence is manifestly in accordance with the divine will. Hence the presumption is always in favour of the authority of civil law, and any refusal to obey must be based on the moral proof that obedience will be sin... It is still true that obedience to human law often involves sin against God and man. There are cases so clear that no one can question the duty to refuse obedience. In all times and in all lands such cases have arisen... It is too obvious to need discussion, that the law of God, the great principle of benevolence is supreme, and that "we ought to obey God rather than man" in any case of conflict between human law and the divine.' James Fairchild, *Moral Philosophy*, pages 178-181.

8. What reply did the apostles give? Acts 5:29.

NOTE: 'The adherents of truth are now called upon to choose between disregarding a plain requirement of God's Word or forfeiting their liberty. If we yield the Word of God and accept human customs and traditions, we may still be permitted to live among men, to buy and sell, and have our rights respected. But if we maintain our loyalty to God it must be at the sacrifice of our rights among men, for the enemies of God's law have leagued together to crush out independent judgment in matters of religious faith and control the consciences of men.' *Last Day Events*, page 141.

'Ready to kill him'

9. What charges were later brought against Paul? Acts 24:5-6.

NOTE: 'In his speech against Paul, Tertullus charged that he was a pestilent fellow, who created sedition among the Jews throughout the world, and who was consequently guilty of treason against the emperor; that he was a leader of the sect of Nazarenes, and chargeable with heresy against the laws of Moses; and that he had profaned the temple, virtually an offence not only against the Jewish but the Roman law, which protected the Jews in their religious worship. He then falsely stated that Lysias, the commandant of the garrison, had violently taken Paul from the Jews as they were about to judge him by their ecclesiastical law, and had thus improperly forced them to bring the matter before Felix. These lying statements were skilfully designed to induce the procurator to deliver Paul over to the Jewish court. All the charges were vehemently supported by the Jews present, who made no effort to conceal their hatred against the prisoner.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 237.

10. In their hatred of Paul, what measures were the Jews willing to take? Acts 21:30-31, Acts 22:22, Acts 23:12-14, Acts 25:2-3.

NOTE: 'The Jews thus sought to give to their diabolical plan the sanction of religion. Having fortified themselves by their dreadful oath, they came to the chief priests and members of the Sanhedrim, and made known their purpose. It was proposed to request that Paul be again brought before the court as if for a further investigation of his case, and that the assassins would lie in wait and murder him while on his way from the fortress. Such was the horrible crime masked under a show of religious zeal. Instead of rebuking the Satanic scheme, the priests and rulers eagerly acceded to it. Paul had spoken the truth when he compared Ananias to a whited sepulchre.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 225.

'Them which have the rule over you'

11. What lesson may we learn from the experiences of the apostles? 2 Timothy 3:12.

NOTE: 'All who in that evil day would fearlessly serve God according to the dictates of conscience, will need courage, firmness, and a knowledge of God and His word; for those who are true to God will be persecuted, their motives will be impugned, their best efforts misinterpreted, and their names cast out as evil. Satan will work with all his deceptive power to influence the heart and becloud the understanding, to make evil appear good, and good evil. The stronger and purer the faith of God's people, and the firmer their determination to obey Him, the more fiercely will Satan strive to stir up against them the rage of those who, while claiming to be righteous, trample upon the law of God. It will require the firmest trust, the most heroic purpose, to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 431.

12. What promise may God's people depend on in times of persecution? Hebrews 13:5-7.

NOTE: 'God desires His people to prepare for the soon-coming crisis. Prepared or unprepared, they must all meet it; and those only who have brought their lives into conformity to the divine standard, will stand firm at that time of test and trial. When secular rulers unite with ministers of religion to dictate in matters of conscience, then it will be seen who really fear and serve God. When the darkness is deepest, the light of a godlike character will shine the brightest. When every other trust fails, then it will be seen who have an abiding trust in Jehovah. And while the enemies of truth are on every side, watching the Lord's

servants for evil, God will watch over them for good. He will be to them as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 431.

Lesson 12: ‘The mystery of iniquity’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3

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

LESSON AIM: To examine what happened when some Christians went back to a union of church and state.

Introduction

‘The union of church and state was formed, out of which was developed “the beast”, or Papacy, of the Apocalypse, which made war with the saints and overcame them. A like course cannot fail to produce like results today.’ *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, revised edition, page 487.

‘A falling away’

1. What warning did Paul give about developments in the church after his death? Acts 20:29-30.

NOTE: ‘Now he [Paul] brings before them another class: “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:30-31). In all ages of the world there have been men who think they have a work to do for the Lord, and show no respect for those whom the Lord has been using. They do not make right applications of Scripture, they wrest the Scriptures to sustain their own ideas. Whatever may be the claims of those who draw away from the body to proclaim theories of their own invention, they are in Satan’s service, to get up some new device to divert souls from the truth for this time.’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 1*, page 353.

‘The Scriptures foretell a great apostasy, which even in the days of the apostles had begun to manifest itself among certain false brethren in the church, and which finally was to develop into a “falling away,” and the revelation of “that man of sin, . . . the son of perdition,” of whom Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7. In fulfilment of these predictions, it is a matter of historical record that following the death of the last of the apostles of Jesus, some members of the Christian Church began to depart from the simplicity of the truth as taught by Christ; and gradually these church members were led to unite with the world in heathen practices. As the years passed by, and the Church increased in numbers and in popularity, there were many who became less and still less strict in their obedience to Bible teaching, until finally, in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ, the greater number of those who claimed to be Christians were in reality not living in harmony with the teachings of Christ. For many centuries thereafter an apostate form of Christianity held sway. The truth was suppressed and lost sight of, and ignorance prevailed.’ *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 241.

2. What particular development did Paul warn against? 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

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

‘Showing himself that he is God’

3. How was the ‘man of sin’ prophesied to behave? 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

NOTE: ‘Satan once endeavoured to form a compromise with Christ. He came to the Son of God in the wilderness of temptation, and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, offered to give all into His hands if He would but acknowledge the supremacy of the prince of darkness. Christ rebuked the presumptuous tempter and forced him to depart. But Satan meets with greater success in presenting the same temptations to man. To secure worldly gains and honours, the church was led to seek the favour and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan, the bishop of Rome. It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts

of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled "Lord God the Pope", and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men. The same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.' *Great Controversy*, page 50.

4. How was this union of church and state pictured in the prophecy given to John? Revelation 13:1-2.

NOTE: In Bible prophecy a 'beast' (the Greek word means a wild, ferocious beast; this is an entirely different word from that used in Revelation 4:7) is a symbol for a power that persecutes God's people. Among the powers symbolised by beasts were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and, of course, Satan himself. All these powers were major persecutors of God's people.

'In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, "like unto a leopard," to which the dragon gave "his power, and his seat, and great authority." This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire.' *Great Controversy*, page 439.

'To make war with the saints'

5. How did this union of church and state treat the true believers? Revelation 13:7-8. Compare Daniel 7:21 & 25.

NOTE: Here is how a famous doctor of the Catholic Church explained this persecution: 'When a man misbelieves in matters of the faith, he is to be returned to the true faith by instruction; if he refuses to believe but wishes instead to hold to his wicked error, then he is to be brought to justice as a heretic and burned. But in that case secular justice must come to the aid of the Holy Church; for when a man is condemned as a heretic by the examination of the Holy Church, then the Holy Church must hand him over to lay justice and this lay justice must then burn him, seeing that spiritual justice ought never to put anyone to death.' *Corpus Documentorum Inquisitionis Haereticae Pravitatis Neerlandicae, volume 1*, page 143. It should be clear that the state is an arm of the church, the two being united. But by this technique, the Catholic Church is able to deny responsibility for the many martyrs who died as a result of such inquisitions. The word 'heretic' comes from a Greek word which means to stand before alternatives and make up your own mind which to choose. In a sacral society, this is forbidden.

'Secular power has proved a satanic gift to the church, and ecclesiastical power has proved an engine of tyranny in the hands of the state.' Schaff, *Church and State*, page 11.

6. What particular law did the Roman church induce the Emperor Constantine to pass? .

Answer: 'Let all the judges and townspeople, and the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven.' Constantine, *Corpus Juris Civilis Cod. book 3, tit. 12,3*.

NOTE: 'The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of "the man of sin" foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will... In the early part of the fourth century the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was revered by his pagan subjects and was honoured by Christians; it was the emperor's policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans and thus advance the power and glory of the church.' *Great Controversy*, pages 49-50, 53.

'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills'

7. For how long were true believers oppressed by this union of church and state? Revelation 13:5. Compare Revelation 12:6, Revelation 11:2-3 and Daniel 7:25.

NOTE: 'In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's axe. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus: "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." Luke 21:16, 17. Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days." Revelation 12:6.' *Great Controversy*, page 54.

8. How did God watch over His people during this fearful time? Revelation 12:13-14.

NOTE: 'Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains, in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed, the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand

years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith. God had provided for His people a sanctuary of awful grandeur, befitting the mighty truths committed to their trust. To those faithful exiles the mountains were an emblem of the immutable righteousness of Jehovah. They pointed their children to the heights towering above them in unchanging majesty, and spoke to them of Him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, whose word is as enduring as the everlasting hills. God had set fast the mountains and girded them with strength; no arm but that of Infinite Power could move them out of their place. In like manner He had established His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and upon earth. The arm of man might reach his fellow men and destroy their lives; but that arm could as readily uproot the mountains from their foundations, and hurl them into the sea, as it could change one precept of the law of Jehovah, or blot out one of His promises to those who do His will. In their fidelity to His law, God's servants should be as firm as the unchanging hills. The mountains that girded their lowly valleys were a constant witness to God's creative power, and a never-failing assurance of His protecting care. Those pilgrims learned to love the silent symbols of Jehovah's presence. They indulged no repining because of the hardships of their lot; they were never lonely amid the mountain solitudes. They thanked God that He had provided for them an asylum from the wrath and cruelty of men. They rejoiced in their freedom to worship before Him. Often when pursued by their enemies, the strength of the hills proved a sure defence. From many a lofty cliff they chanted the praise of God, and the armies of Rome could not silence their songs of thanksgiving.' *Great Controversy*, pages 65-66.

'He that leadeth into captivity'

9. How does the prophecy express the prayers of those who laid down their lives for the truth? Revelation 6:9-10.

NOTE: "The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchres of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"' *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 451.

10. What relief was granted to the faithful suffering church? Revelation 13:10.

NOTE: "Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." And, says the prophet, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." And again: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." The forty and two months are the same as the "time and times and the dividing of time," three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7, the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.'" *Great Controversy*, page 439.

'It was not until the French Revolution that the hybrid (i.e. the union of church and state) received its mortal wound. The French Revolution ushered in many of the ideas for which the rival church (i.e. the church that believed in being separate from the state) had agonised, but it did so in a mood altogether different from that of those who had in earlier times pioneered for separation of church and state.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, page 246.

'His deadly wound was healed'

11. Was the separation of church and state brought about by the French Revolution to be permanent? Revelation 13:3.

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

12. How does the prophet see God's faithful people during the healing of the deadly wound? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: "We have seen that the beast is tough. Therefore the question is: will it heal itself of its deadly wound, rise to its feet once more and prowl the earth again?... It is in keeping with the mood of coming to the end of this study that we glance at the last book of the Bible. In it we encounter a prophet who lets his eye range over what is to occur on the earth in the last days. What does he see? Cosmic victory for Christ? Hardly that: the battle of the ages is still raging as fiercely as ever. Does he see a continuation of pagan sacralism, which hustles off to a lonely island those who, like the writer of the Apocalypse, pose a problem to the monolithic society? Not that either, for in the final scene that John envisions, paganism has disappeared from the earth. What the lone visionary on Patmos does see is a world directed by a pseudo-Christ, known as Antichrist. It is a world bound together by a sacramental tie, visibly identifiable by the sacramental sign on the hand and the forehead of the rank and file. This sacramental sign assures uniformity in thought and deed. Without this badge of massive sameness, it will be impossible to buy or to sell, that is, impossible to live. And John sees a 'remnant', a minority that rejects the common sacramental symbol, trying to be faithful to the Lamb in a monolithic society.' Verduin, *Anatomy of a Hybrid*, pages 254-255.

Lesson 13: 'Blessed are they'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.' Luke 6:28.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 439-450.

LESSON AIM: To examine what prophecy foretells about the final revival of sacral religion.

Introduction

'If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls "My holy day," you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labour on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.' *Review and Herald*, July 13, 1897.

'The seal of the living God'

1. By what act will God identify those who are faithful to Him? Revelation 7:1-3.

NOTE: 'A mark is placed upon every one of God's people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin. God declares, "I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezekiel 20:12. Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads, it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved, just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, that we may know what is coming.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 287.

2. How does God identify Himself to the final generation? Revelation 14:7. Compare Exodus 20:11.

NOTE: This message of warning quotes from the 4th Commandment, with a notable change. In the 4th Commandment, the Lord is identified as the One who is six days made "the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that in them is." This message repeats this identification of the true God, but changes the last phrase for 'the fountains of waters.' Since this is a message announcing the beginning of God's judgement, it is appropriate to remind men that God created those fountains of waters that brought judgement upon an earlier and equally evil generation. See Genesis 7:11.

'Here are they'

3. How are these saints of God distinguished from the rest of the world? Revelation 14:12. Contrast verse 9.

NOTE: 'The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character. As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ. It is obedience to the principles of the commandments of God that moulds the character after the divine similitude.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 287.

"The faith of Jesus." It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 172.

Since the final issue will be whether people will obey the commandments of men or the commandments of God, it is worth considering which of the Ten Commandments could be selected as the one that all mankind will be commanded to break. Which commandment is the one that will be easiest and most practical to oblige mankind to break? A little consideration will show that the 4th is by far the most practical choice, since this is the one for which there is already a long-standing substitute. Already in the past many states have sought to enforce the observance of Sunday by law. In many countries, these laws still remain, ready to be enforced.

4. Why can it be said that the 4th Commandment contains the seal of God? Read Exodus 20:8-11.

NOTE: 'The seal of God's law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God's property. So the children of God in this age will bear the signature God has appointed. They will place themselves in harmony with God's holy law.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 287.

'If any man worship the beast and his image'

5. What penalties will be imposed on those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast? Revelation 13:15-17.

NOTE: 'The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast. In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be

forbidden to buy or sell. Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the characteristics of a lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of a dragon and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan. The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day. There is a time coming when commandment-keepers can neither buy nor sell. Make haste to dig out your buried talents. If God has entrusted you with money, show yourselves faithful to your trust; unwrap your napkin, and send your talents to the exchangers, that when Christ shall come, He may receive His own with interest. In the last extremity, before this work shall close, thousands will be cheerfully laid upon the altar. Men and women will feel it a blessed privilege to share in the work of preparing souls to stand in the great day of God, and they will give hundreds as readily as dollars are given now. If the love of Christ were burning in the hearts of His professed people, we would see the same spirit manifested today. Did they but realise how near is the end of all work for the salvation of souls, they would sacrifice their possessions as freely as did the members of the early church. They would work for the advancement of God's cause as earnestly as worldly men labour to acquire riches. Tact and skill would be exercised, and earnest and unselfish labour put forth to acquire means, not to hoard, but to pour into the treasury of the Lord.' *Maranatha*, page 183.

6. How does the Bible describe the fate of those who chose sacral religion in the last days? Revelation 14:9-11.

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

7. What is meant by 'the wine of the wrath of God'? Revelation 15:1. Read Revelation 16.

NOTE: 'A book has been given us to guide our feet through the perils of this dark world to heaven. It tells us how we can escape the wrath of God, and also tells of the sufferings of Christ for us, the great sacrifice that has been made that we might be saved and enjoy the presence of God forever. And if any come short at last, having heard the truth as they have in this land of light, it will be their own fault; they will be without excuse. The word of God tells us how we may become perfect Christians and escape the seven last plagues.' *Testimonies, volume 1*, page 125.

'I beheld another beast'

8. What power joins with the beast to enforce the worship of the beast? Revelation 13:11. Notice verse 10.

NOTE: Notice that this second beast is rising at the time when the first beast was being taken into captivity. 'The beast with lamblike horns was seen "coming up out of the earth." Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World, that turbulent sea of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." It must be sought in the Western Continent. What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America. Again and again the thought, almost the exact words, of the sacred writer has been unconsciously employed by the orator and the historian in describing the rise and growth of this nation. The beast was seen "coming up out of the earth;" and, according to the translators, the word here rendered "coming up" literally signifies "to grow or spring up as a plant." And, as we have seen, the nation must arise in territory previously unoccupied. A prominent writer, describing the rise of the United States, speaks of "the mystery of her coming forth from vacancy," and says: "Like a silent seed we grew into empire." G. A. Townsend, *The New World Compared With the Old*, page 462. A European journal in 1850 spoke of the United States as a wonderful empire, which was "emerging," and "amid the silence of the earth daily adding to its power and pride." *The Dublin Nation*.' *Great Controversy*, page 440.

9. How will the United States enforce a sacral form of worship? Revelation 13:12-14.

NOTE: 'The beast with lamblike horns "spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed; . . . saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." Revelation 13:11-14. The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The "speaking" of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak "as a dragon" and exercise "all the power of the first beast" plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopard-like beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.' *Great Controversy*, page 442.

'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of'

10. What is essential in order to begin religious persecution?

Answer: The control of the civil power by the religious leaders or a union of religious and civil power.

NOTE: 'The state cannot afford to permit religious liberty. We hear a great deal about religious tolerance, but we are only tolerant insofar as we are not interested. A person may be tolerant toward a religion if he is not religious... Intolerance means fervour and zeal. The best the state can do is to establish a limited religious liberty; but beyond a certain degree of tolerance the state cannot afford to admit the doctrine.' Monsignor Russell (Roman Catholic), quoted in *Washington Post*, May 5, 1910.

11. When James and John sought the death of the Samaritans who had rejected Christ, what did Christ say to them? Luke 9:55-56.

NOTE: 'Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let everyone enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself. Let every man use his own judgement, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Abhor every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason nor persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force a man into it. If love will not compel him to come, leave him to God, the Judge of all.' John Wesley.

'Blessed are ye'

12. How did Jesus describe those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake? Luke 6:22-23.

NOTE: 'Not with sorrow, but with rejoicing, should they meet persecution. Each fiery trial is God's agent for their refining. Each is fitting them for their work as co-labourers with Him. Each conflict has its place in the great battle for righteousness, and each will add to the joy of their final triumph. Having this in view, the test of their faith and patience will be cheerfully accepted rather than dreaded and avoided. Anxious to fulfil their obligation to the world, fixing their desire upon the approval of God, His servants are to fulfil every duty, irrespective of the fear or the favour of men.' *Desire of Ages*, page 306.

13. What attitude should the Christian take to his persecutors? Luke 6:27-28.

NOTE: Jesus 'taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them despitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, page 29.

Reference has been made to *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. These quotations have been taken from the revised and enlarged edition first published in the second decade of the twentieth century.

References were also made to the book *Anatomy of a Hybrid* by Leonard Verduin. The 'hybrid' of the title resulted from the union of Christianity with the power of the state. This book is a Bible study of the relationship between church and state, and forms a companion to his better-known book, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, which was a recommended book for ministerial reading in the 1960s. *Anatomy of a Hybrid* was published in 1976 by Christian Hymnary Publishers, Box 7159, Sarasota, FL34278, U.S.A.

One or two notes were taken from *The History of Israel and Judah*, by Alfred Edersheim, published by the Religious Tract Society in 1885.

Any uncredited notes are the responsibility of the compiler of these lessons.