

General Introduction

'It will do you good to frequently review the closing scenes in the life of our Redeemer. Here, beset with temptations as He was, we may all learn lessons of the utmost importance to us. It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of His earthly life. By thus contemplating His teachings and sufferings, and the infinite sacrifice made by Him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Saviour.

If we would be saved at last we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross. Christ suffered humiliation to save us from everlasting disgrace. He consented to have scorn, mockery, and abuse fall upon Him in order to shield us. It was our transgression that gathered the veil of darkness about His divine soul and extorted the cry from Him, as of one smitten and forsaken of God. He bore our sorrows; He was put to grief for our sins. He made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him. Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of Christ upon the cross.

The mighty argument of the cross will convict of sin. The divine love of God for sinners, expressed in the gift of His Son to suffer shame and death that they might be ennobled and endowed with everlasting life, is the study of a lifetime. I ask you to study anew the cross of Christ. If all the proud and vainglorious, whose hearts are panting for the applause of men and for distinction above their fellows, could rightly estimate the value of the highest earthly glory in contrast with the value of the Son of God, rejected, despised, spit upon, by the very ones whom He came to redeem, how insignificant would appear all the honour that finite man can bestow.

It requires a constant, earnest, and vigilant effort to watch and control self, to keep Jesus prominent and self out of sight.'

Lift Him Up, page 240.

Compiler's Foreword: In these lessons, we will study the closing events of Christ's life and ministry from the standpoint of many of those involved in these events. The old spiritual poses the question: 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' Perhaps, as we think of those who were there, we shall recognise something of ourselves in the way they thought and acted.

'They were all there that day. The friends of Jesus and His enemies.

The 'church people', as well as those who never went to church.

The priests, the scribes, the greedy Sadducees, the hypocrites, and the proud Pharisees, they were all there.

The people who were always talking about the church and praying in public, they were there.

The unbelievers, the gamblers, the harlots and their customers, they were there.

Simon of Cyrene, and the soldiers, they were there.

Peter was there, and John, and Andrew, and the other disciples, they were all there.

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

When I think how they crucified my Lord."

Were **you** there when they crucified my Lord?

When we consider who were there, and when we are honest with ourselves, we know that we were there, and that we helped to put Jesus on His cross!

Every attitude present on that hilltop that day is present in our midst now!

Every emotion that tugged at human hearts then tugs at human hearts now.

Every face that was there is here too.

Every voice that shouted then is shouting still.

Every human being was represented on Calvary.

Every sin was in a nail, or a spear, or a thorn,

And pardon for them all in the blood that was shed.'

Peter Marshall, *Mr Jones, Meet the Master*, pages 114-116.

Lesson 1: September 28-October 4 'He was accused of the chief priests and elders'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none.' Mark 14:55.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 698-710.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 26:59-66, Mark 14:55-64, Luke 22:66-71, John 18:19-24.

LESSON AIM: To study the trial of Jesus before the Jews.

Introduction

‘There must... be a pretence of justice. It was necessary that there should be the form of a legal trial. This the authorities were determined to hasten. They knew the regard in which Jesus was held by the people, and feared that if the arrest were noised abroad, a rescue would be attempted. Again, if the trial and execution were not brought about at once, there would be a week’s delay on account of the celebration of the Passover. This might defeat their plans.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 703.

‘In secret have I said nothing’

1. Why was the arrest of Jesus illegal under Jewish law? Consider John 8:3-11, Acts 23:26-30.

NOTE: ‘It was illegal...for the Temple Guard, acting officially as the instrument of the High Priest, to effect the arrest. That should have been left to the voluntary action of the witnesses.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 16.

2. How did Jesus express His protest against this illegality? Matthew 26:55. Compare John 18:20.

NOTE: ‘The official dignity of the Jewish leaders had not prevented them from joining in the pursuit of Jesus. His arrest was too important a matter to be trusted to subordinates; the wily priests and elders had joined the temple police and the rabble in following Judas to Gethsemane. What a company for those dignitaries to unite with, a mob that was eager for excitement, and armed with all kinds of implements, as if in pursuit of a wild beast! Turning to the priests and elders, Christ fixed upon them His searching glance. The words He spoke they would never forget as long as life should last. They were as the sharp arrows of the Almighty. With dignity He said: You come out against Me with swords and staves as you would against a thief or a robber. Day by day I sat teaching in the temple. You had every opportunity of laying hands upon Me, and you did nothing. The night is better suited to your work. “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.”’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 696-697.

‘The chief priests and all the Council’

3. When did the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin take place? Mark 14:55. Compare Mark 14:68 and Mark 15:1.

NOTE: ‘It was illegal to try a capital charge (Trial for Life) by night. Only “trials for money” could be conducted after sunset.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 16.

‘The Sanhedrin had pronounced Jesus worthy of death; but it was contrary to the Jewish law to try a prisoner by night. In legal condemnation nothing could be done except in the light of day and before a full session of the council. Notwithstanding this, the Saviour was now treated as a condemned criminal.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 710.

4. How are we shown that Caiaphas, the High Priest, had already decided to condemn Jesus, even before His trial? John 11:47-51.

NOTE: ‘[Caiaphas] spoke with great authority and assurance: “Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Even if Jesus were innocent, urged the high priest, He must be put out of the way. He was troublesome, drawing the people to Himself, and lessening the authority of the rulers. He was only one; it was better that He should die than that the authority of the rulers should be weakened. If the people were to lose confidence in their rulers, the national power would be destroyed. Caiaphas urged that after this miracle the followers of Jesus would likely rise in revolt. The Romans will then come, he said, and will close our temple, and abolish our laws, destroying us as a nation. What is the life of this Galilean worth in comparison with the life of the nation? If He stands in the way of Israel’s well-being, is it not doing God a service to remove Him? Better that one man perish than that the whole nation be destroyed... The policy he advocated was based on a principle borrowed from heathenism. Among the heathen, the dim consciousness that one was to die for the human race had led to the offering of human sacrifices. So Caiaphas proposed by the sacrifice of Jesus to save the guilty nation, not from transgression, but in transgression, that they might continue in sin. And by his reasoning he thought to silence the remonstrances of those who might dare to say that as yet nothing worthy of death had been found in Jesus.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 539-540.

‘Many bare false witness’

5. What problem did the Sanhedrin face when witnesses were produced to testify against Jesus? Mark 14:55-56.

NOTE: ‘False witnesses had been bribed to accuse Jesus of inciting rebellion and seeking to establish a separate government. But their testimony proved to be vague and contradictory. Under examination they falsified their own statements.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 705.

6. What was the role of witnesses in a Jewish trial? Deuteronomy 17:6-7.

NOTE: An important principle was that no one could be found guilty on the testimony of a single witness. Two or three witnesses at least had to testify to the guilt of the accused. If their testimony was accepted as truthful by the judge, those witnesses were required to lead out in carrying out the judge’s sentence. If not, the false witnesses suffered the penalty of the law. Before guilt could be established, diligent enquiry must be made. Only if the accusation was true and the guilt certain, could the court proceed to condemn the accused.

7. What warnings does the Bible give against false witnesses? Exodus 20:16, Deuteronomy 19:16-21.

NOTE: ‘There were three classes of testimony recognised by the Law: 1. A vain testimony. 2. A standing testimony. 3. An adequate testimony. Now there was a practical distinction between these three classes of evidence. A “vain testimony” was

testimony obviously irrelevant or worthless, and immediately recognised by the judges as such. A “standing testimony” was evidence of a more serious kind to be accepted provisionally, until confirmed or otherwise. An “adequate testimony” was evidence in which the witnesses “agreed together”. “The least discordancy between the evidence of witnesses” (says the distinguished Jewish writer, Salvador) “was held to destroy its value.” It is clear, therefore, that whatever may have been the subject matter of the preliminary witnesses referred to by the two Evangelists [Gospel writers], it did not get beyond the second and provisional stage. This can only mean that it was either demonstrably contrary to the experience and knowledge of the Court, or it was invalidated on technical grounds. Mark’s statement that it did not “agree together” strongly indicates the latter.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 18.

‘Two false witnesses’

8. What final accusation was laid against Jesus by two witnesses? Mark 14:57-59. Compare Matthew 26:60-61.

NOTE: ‘The Romans had engaged in rebuilding and embellishing the temple, and they took great pride in it; any contempt shown to it would be sure to excite their indignation. Here Romans and Jews, Pharisees and Sadducees, could meet; for all held the temple in great veneration. On this point two witnesses were found whose testimony was not so contradictory as that of the others had been. One of them, who had been bribed to accuse Jesus, declared, “This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” Thus Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy. Even as misrepresented by the false witnesses, His words contained nothing which would be regarded by the Romans as a crime worthy of death.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 705.

9. What had Jesus actually said? John 2:18-21. Read from verse 13 for the context.

NOTE: ‘In these words His meaning was twofold. He referred not only to the destruction of the Jewish temple and worship, but to His own death, the destruction of the temple of His body. This the Jews were already plotting. As the priests and rulers returned to the temple, they had proposed to kill Jesus, and thus rid themselves of the troubler. Yet when He set before them their purpose, they did not understand Him. They took His words as applying only to the temple at Jerusalem, and with indignation exclaimed, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?” Now they felt that Jesus had justified their unbelief, and they were confirmed in their rejection of Him...As referring to the temple at Jerusalem, the Saviour’s words, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” had a deeper meaning than the hearers perceived. Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour’s death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 164-165.

10. What problem arose with this testimony? Mark 14:59.

NOTE: ‘Both men declared that they had heard the Prisoner use certain words which, if substantiated, involved the double offence of sorcery and sacrilege. The penalty for sorcery was death. The penalty for sacrilege was stoning and exposure of the body. From the standpoint of the enemies of Jesus a more fatal charge could hardly have been laid to His account. *Yet still the testimony was overthrown.* Now why was that?... Two things emerge from this unquestionably historic fact. In the first place Caiaphas was clearly not all-powerful to work his will in that assembly. There were evidently very strong influences in the Council Chamber in favour of a rigorous observance of the law, particularly in the crucial matter of the witnesses... Any serious flaw in the accusation might easily have led to the compulsory release of the Prisoner... The very fact, too, that the testimony was being sifted so rigorously implies a corresponding cautiousness of statement by the witnesses themselves. Under the Jewish system of jurisprudence, weighted as it undoubtedly was to lean in favour of the accused, it was a very dangerous thing to be a witness in a “trial for life”. The penalty for uttering a false testimony was death.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 20. [Emphasis in original.]

‘Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’

11. When it was clear that they could not produce witnesses to provide evidence against Him, how did the High Priest challenge Jesus? Mark 14:60.

NOTE: ‘It is clear that after the hearing of the witnesses and the final rejection of their testimony, the whole conduct of the case began to take on an unquestionably illegal form. The illegality consisted in the President of the Court attempting to supply, by direct questioning of the Prisoner, the necessary grounds for a conviction which the witnesses themselves had been unable to produce... In itself the question was perhaps not objectionable. As an accused man, Christ undoubtedly had the right to bring forward any facts or explanations in His defence. Hitherto He had maintained complete silence. It was appropriate that He should be asked if He had anything to say bearing on the evidence. It is the unveiled hostility to the Prisoner which is so significant, and which instinctively warns us of what is to follow.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 25.

12. When Christ refused to answer his question, what challenge did the High Priest make to Jesus? Matthew 26:63.

NOTE: ‘In the next moment, the High Priest seems to have thrown all pretence at legality to the winds. Standing in his place, in the centre of the tribunal, Caiaphas applied to Christ the most solemn form of oath known to the Hebrew Constitution, the famous Oath of the Testimony. “I adjure thee by the living God” (Matthew 26:63). To this, Christ, as a pious and law-abiding Jew, had no alternative but to answer. “If [says the Mishna] one shall say, I adjure you by the Almighty, by Sabaoth, by the

Gracious and Merciful, by the Long-suffering, by the Compassionate, or by any of the Divine titles, behold they are bound to answer.” Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 25.

‘I AM’

13. What reply did Jesus give to this command? Mark 14:62. Compare Matthew 26:64, Luke 22:70.

NOTE: ‘To this appeal Christ could not remain silent. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until directly questioned. He knew that to answer now would make His death certain. But the appeal was made by the highest acknowledged authority of the nation, and in the name of the Most High. Christ would not fail to show proper respect for the law. More than this, His own relation to the Father was called in question. He must plainly declare His character and mission.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 706.

‘As Mr Baring Gould has pointed out, these answers are really identical. The formulae “Thou hast said” or “Ye say that I am”, which to modern ears sound evasive, had no such connotation to the contemporary Jewish mind. “Thou sayest” was the traditional form in which a cultivated Jew replied to a question of grave or sad import. Courtesy forbade a direct “yes” or “no”.’ Morison, *Who Moved The Stone?* page 26.

14. What was the response to Christ’s answer? Mark 14:63-65.

NOTE: ‘A high priest was not to rend his garments. By the Levitical law, this was prohibited under sentence of death. Under no circumstances, on no occasion, was the priest to rend his robe. It was the custom among the Jews for the garments to be rent at the death of friends, but this custom the priests were not to observe. Express command had been given by Christ to Moses concerning this. Leviticus 10:6. Everything worn by the priest was to be whole and without blemish. By those beautiful official garments was represented the character of the great antitype, Jesus Christ. Nothing but perfection, in dress and attitude, in word and spirit, could be acceptable to God. He is holy, and His glory and perfection must be represented by the earthly service. Nothing but perfection could properly represent the sacredness of the heavenly service. Finite man might rend his own heart by showing a contrite and humble spirit. This God would discern. But no rent must be made in the priestly robes, for this would mar the representation of heavenly things. The high priest who dared to appear in holy office, and engage in the service of the sanctuary, with a rent robe, was looked upon as having severed himself from God. By rending his garment he cut himself off from being a representative character. He was no longer accepted by God as an officiating priest. This course of action, as exhibited by Caiaphas, showed human passion, human imperfection. By rending his garments, Caiaphas made of no effect the law of God, to follow the tradition of men. A man-made law provided that in case of blasphemy a priest might rend his garments in horror at the sin, and be guiltless. Thus the law of God was made void by the laws of men. Each action of the high priest was watched with interest by the people; and Caiaphas thought for effect to display his piety. But in this act, designed as an accusation against Christ, he was reviling the One of whom God had said, “My name is in Him.” Exodus 23:21. He himself was committing blasphemy. Standing under the condemnation of God, he pronounced sentence upon Christ as a blasphemer.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 708-709.

Lesson 2: October 5-11 ‘Judas, one of the twelve’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘The way of transgressors is hard.’ Proverbs 13:15, last part.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, page 558.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: John 12:1-8, Acts 1:15-20.

LESSON AIM: To study the experience of Judas.

Introduction

‘Judas professed to be a disciple of Christ, but he possessed only a form of godliness. He was not insensible to the beauty of the character of Christ; and often, as he listened to the Saviour’s words, conviction came to him, but he would not humble his heart or confess his sins. By resisting the divine influence he dishonoured the Master whom he professed to love.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 558.

‘Judas had the bag’

1. What was Judas’s responsibility among the disciples? John 13:29.

NOTE: ‘Judas was one of the twelve; but he had not been striving to overcome his natural traits of character in accordance with the light that was constantly shining upon him. He had a high opinion of his executive ability, and looked upon himself as superior in financial management to his fellow disciples. Constantly he strove to exalt himself, and by his business ability he had gained the confidence of the eleven... He was eager to put into the bag all he could obtain; and when something that he did not think essential was bought, he would say, Why is this waste? Why was not the cost of it put into the bag that I carry for the poor?’ *Review & Herald*, August 7, 1900.

2. How did Judas carry out his responsibility? John 12:6.

NOTE: 'As with Ananias and Sapphira, so it was with Judas. His covetousness led him to steal from the Lord's treasury. He carried the bag containing the gifts made by Christ's followers to sustain the work, and he appropriated sums of money which he never allowed to appear on the account. He reasoned that his labours were not sufficiently appreciated, and therefore that it was right for him to pay himself in accordance with his own ideas. This principle, acted upon, perverted his conscience.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 13, page 189.*

'Why, when Christ knew the plague spot in his heart, was Judas permitted to remain among the disciples? When Christ knew him to be dishonest and avaricious, why was the bag still entrusted to him? The Lord permits men to remain in positions of trust that their hearts may be tested and their true character shown. The propensity to do wrong will be tried, and the defects revealed. If an avaricious spirit is cherished, circumstances will reveal the inward corruption.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 20, page 146.*

'Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him'

3. What incident sparked Judas's decision to betray Jesus? John 12:1-3.

NOTE: 'Simon had been healed of the leprosy, and it was this that had drawn him to Jesus. He desired to show his gratitude, and at Christ's last visit to Bethany he made a feast for the Saviour and His disciples. At the table the Saviour sat with Simon... on one side, and Lazarus on the other. Martha served at the table, but Mary was earnestly listening to every word from the lips of Jesus. In His mercy, Jesus had pardoned her sins, He had called forth her beloved brother from the grave, and Mary's heart was filled with gratitude. She had heard Jesus speak of His approaching death, and in her deep love and sorrow she had longed to show Him honour. At great personal sacrifice she had purchased an alabaster box of "ointment of spikenard, very costly," with which to anoint His body. But now many were declaring that He was about to be crowned king. Her grief was turned to joy, and she was eager to be first in honouring her Lord. Breaking her box of ointment, she poured its contents upon the head and feet of Jesus; then, as she knelt weeping, moistening them with her tears, she wiped His feet with her long, flowing hair.' *Conflict & Courage, page 305.*

4. How did Judas comment on Mary's action? John 12:4-5. Notice Matthew 26:8-9.

NOTE: 'Now the act of Mary was in such marked contrast to his selfishness that he was put to shame; and according to his custom, he sought to assign a worthy motive for his objection to her gift. Turning to the disciples, he asked, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." Judas had no heart for the poor. Had Mary's ointment been sold, and the proceeds fallen into his possession, the poor would have received no benefit.' *Desire of Ages, page 559.*

5. How did Christ respond to Judas's words? John 12:7-8, Matthew 26:10-13.

NOTE: 'Mary heard the words of criticism. Her heart trembled within her. She feared that her sister would reproach her for extravagance. The Master, too, might think her improvident. Without apology or excuse she was about to shrink away, when the voice of her Lord was heard, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her?" He saw that she was embarrassed and distressed. He knew that in this act of service she had expressed her gratitude for the forgiveness of her sins, and He brought relief to her mind. Lifting His voice above the murmur of criticism, He said, "She hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying.'" *Desire of Ages, page 560.*

'Thirty pieces of silver'

6. What was Judas's response to Christ's rebuke? Matthew 26:14-16.

NOTE: 'By commending the action that Judas had so severely condemned, Christ rebuked Judas. This should have brought him to his senses. He should have been led to investigate his motives, and to confess that his judgment of Mary's action had been wrong. But his past experience had not been one of repentance and confession. His narrow, selfish ideas had often been rebuked by Christ in a general way. In His teachings Christ had presented the danger of selfishness and avarice. [Luke 12:15] But Judas had not benefited by the instruction given. He did not take Christ's words into his heart, engraving them on his character... The words spoken by Christ as He rebuked him for criticising Mary's action rankled in his heart. He was not humbled, but provoked, by the reproof. He said to himself, "I will be revenged for this reproof." By betraying Christ, he thought to obtain a large sum of money. He went directly from the supper to the chief priests, and agreed to deliver Christ into their hands. The priests were greatly rejoiced, "and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.'" *Review & Herald, August 7, 1900.*

7. What Bible prophecy was Judas fulfilling? Zechariah 11:12.

NOTE: 'In prophetic vision Zechariah had looked down the ages and seen the trial of God's dear Son. The act of Judas is thus described: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.'" *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3, page 126.*

8. Why did the chief priests need the help of Judas in dealing with Jesus? Luke 22:6.

NOTE: 'Judas was to find an opportunity of betraying Him in the absence of the multitude, for the priests knew that the people were Christ's friends. Had it not been for this, they would, they thought, have accomplished their purpose long before.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 20, page 147.*

‘One of you is a devil’

9. How did Jesus reveal that He knew Judas’s character? John 6:70-71.

NOTE: ‘In all that Christ said to His disciples, there was something with which, in heart, Judas disagreed. Under his influence the leaven of disaffection was fast doing its work. The disciples did not see the real agency in all this; but Jesus saw that Satan was communicating his attributes to Judas, and thus opening up a channel through which to influence the other disciples. This, a year before the betrayal, Christ declared. “Have not I chosen you twelve,” He said, “and one of you is a devil?” John 6:70.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 720.

10. How did Jesus show Judas that He knew of the plot to betray Him? John 13:26-30, Matthew 26:21-25.

NOTE: ‘Judas the betrayer was present at the sacramental service. He received from Jesus the emblems of His broken body and His spilled blood. He heard the words, “This do in remembrance of Me.” And sitting there in the very presence of the Lamb of God, the betrayer brooded upon his own dark purposes, and cherished his sullen, revengeful thoughts. At the feet washing, Christ had given convincing proof that He understood the character of Judas. “Ye are not all clean” (John 13:11), He said. These words convinced the false disciple that Christ read his secret purpose. Now Christ spoke out more plainly. As they were seated at the table He said, looking upon His disciples, “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.”... With the most painful emotion, one after another inquired, “Lord, is it I?” But Judas sat silent. John in deep distress at last inquired, “Lord, who is it?” And Jesus answered, “He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” The disciples had searched one another’s faces closely as they asked, “Lord, is it I?” And now the silence of Judas drew all eyes to him. Amid the confusion of questions and expressions of astonishment, Judas had not heard the words of Jesus in answer to John’s question. But now, to escape the scrutiny of the disciples, he asked as they had done, “Master, is it I?” Jesus solemnly replied, “Thou hast said.” In surprise and confusion at the exposure of his purpose, Judas rose hastily to leave the room. “Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. . . . He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.” Night it was to the traitor as he turned away from Christ into the outer darkness.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 653-654.

‘Friend, wherefore art thou come?’

11. How did Judas identify Jesus to those who came to arrest Him? Mark 14:43-46.

NOTE: ‘Judas the betrayer did not forget the part he was to act. When the mob entered the garden, he had led the way, closely followed by the high priest. To the pursuers of Jesus he had given a sign, saying, “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast.” Matthew 26:48. Now he pretends to have no part with them. Coming close to Jesus, he takes His hand as a familiar friend. With the words, “Hail, Master,” he kisses Him repeatedly, and appears to weep as if in sympathy with Him in His peril.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 695.

12. What were Jesus’ words to Judas? Matthew 26:50.

NOTE: ‘Jesus said to him, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” His voice trembled with sorrow as he addressed the deluded Judas: “Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” This most touching appeal should have roused the conscience of the betrayer, and touched his stubborn heart; but honour, fidelity, and human tenderness had utterly forsaken him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to the control of Satan, and he had no power to resist him. Jesus did not reject the traitor’s kiss. In this He gives us an example of forbearance, love, and pity, that is without a parallel.’ *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, page 103.

‘I have betrayed the innocent blood’

13. What was Judas’s reaction to the condemnation of Jesus? Matthew 27:3-4.

NOTE: ‘As the trial drew to a close, Judas could endure the torture of his guilty conscience no longer. Suddenly a hoarse voice rang through the hall, sending a thrill of terror to all hearts: He is innocent; spare Him, O Caiaphas! The tall form of Judas was now seen pressing through the startled throng. His face was pale and haggard, and great drops of sweat stood on his forehead. Rushing to the throne of judgment, he threw down before the high priest the pieces of silver that had been the price of his Lord’s betrayal. Eagerly grasping the robe of Caiaphas, he implored him to release Jesus, declaring that He had done nothing worthy of death. Caiaphas angrily shook him off, but was confused, and knew not what to say. The perfidy of the priests was revealed. It was evident that they had bribed the disciple to betray his Master. “I have sinned,” again cried Judas, “in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” But the high priest, regaining his self-possession, answered with scorn, “What is that to us? See thou to that.” Matthew 27:4. The priests had been willing to make Judas their tool; but they despised his baseness. When he turned to them with confession, they spurned him.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 721-722.

14. When the priests rejected Judas’s gesture, what did he do? Matthew 27:5-10. Compare Acts 1:15-20, Zechariah 11:13.

NOTE: ‘Judas saw that his entreaties were in vain, and he rushed from the hall exclaiming, It is too late! It is too late! He felt that he could not live to see Jesus crucified, and in despair went out and hanged himself. Later that same day, on the road from Pilate’s hall to Calvary, there came an interruption to the shouts and jeers of the wicked throng who were leading Jesus to the place of crucifixion. As they passed a retired spot, they saw at the foot of a lifeless tree, the body of Judas. It was a most

revolting sight. His weight had broken the cord by which he had hanged himself to the tree. In falling, his body had been horribly mangled, and dogs were now devouring it. His remains were immediately buried out of sight; but there was less mockery among the throng, and many a pale face revealed the thoughts within. Retribution seemed already visiting those who were guilty of the blood of Jesus.' *Desire of Ages*, page 722.

Lesson 3: October 12-18 **'Pontius Pilate the governor'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.' Revelation 1:7.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 723-738.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 27:11-26, Mark 15:1-15, Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28-19:16.

LESSON AIM: To study the part played by Pontius Pilate in the trial and condemnation of Christ.

Introduction

'Pilate longed to deliver Jesus. But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honour. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another. The current sets strongly in the wrong direction, and he who compromises with evil is swept away into the thick darkness of guilt.' *Desire of Ages*, page 738.

'I have suffered many things this day in a dream'

1. What kind of man was Pilate? Luke 13:1.

NOTE: Pilate was from a military family and had served in the legions in Germany. While in Rome, he had married Claudia Procula, the illegitimate daughter of the Emperor Tiberius' third wife, and perhaps this connection with the imperial family led to him being appointed Procurator of Judaea in AD 26, obtaining the unusual privilege of taking his wife with him. Several provocative incidents during his period of office are recorded by secular historians. He sent his legions carrying their legionary standards (the 'eagles') into Jerusalem, despite Jewish feelings about graven images. The Jews practically besieged his residence in Caesarea for six days and nights and Pilate had to give in when he realised that the only alternative was a massacre of the protestors. Later Pilate raided the temple treasury for funds to build an aqueduct which would provide a water supply for Jerusalem. When the Jews revolted against this use of sacred funds for secular purposes, Pilate provoked a bloody incident with many casualties by sending soldiers disguised as civilians into the rioting mob, armed with clubs. On another occasion he installed votive shields in the Herodian palace (his official residence in Jerusalem) and only a strong rebuke from the Emperor Tiberius after a letter of protest from the chief priests and rulers caused Pilate to give way and remove them. Luke 13:1 mentions a further incident unrecorded in secular history but totally in character with the above-mentioned incidents. From such records emerges the picture of an insensitive, overbearing, provocative and stubborn man, whose behaviour during the trial of Christ seems rather out of character. ('Votive shields: special wall decorations bearing religious inscriptions.)

2. What incident affected Pilate's behaviour during the trial of Jesus? Matthew 27:19.

NOTE: 'What is the explanation of this apparently inconsistent behaviour of a man who normally had a very strong will and who did not readily brook opposition to it? Why does Pilate, the tyrant of secular history, appear as Pilate the irresolute in the pages of the Gospels?' Morison, *Who Moved The Stone*, page 47.

'Pilate was not left to act blindly. A message from God warned him from the deed he was about to commit. In answer to Christ's prayer, the wife of Pilate had been visited by an angel from heaven, and in a dream she had beheld the Saviour and conversed with Him. Pilate's wife was not a Jew, but as she looked upon Jesus in her dream, she had no doubt of His character or mission. She knew Him to be the Prince of God. She saw Him on trial in the judgment hall. She saw the hands tightly bound as the hands of a criminal. She saw Herod and his soldiers doing their dreadful work. She heard the priests and rulers, filled with envy and malice, madly accusing. She heard the words, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die." She saw Pilate give Jesus to the scourging, after he had declared, "I find no fault in Him." She heard the condemnation pronounced by Pilate, and saw him give Christ up to His murderers. She saw the cross uplifted on Calvary. She saw the earth wrapped in darkness, and heard the mysterious cry, "It is finished." Still another scene met her gaze. She saw Christ seated upon the great white cloud, while the earth reeled in space, and His murderers fled from the presence of His glory. With a cry of horror she awoke, and at once wrote to Pilate words of warning.' *Desire of Ages*, page 732.

'Have thou nothing to do with that just man'

3. How are we shown that Pilate did not want to be involved in the trial and condemnation of Jesus? John 18:31, first part.

NOTE: 'Pilate beheld, in the accused, a man bearing the marks of violence, but with a serene and noble countenance and dignified bearing. Many cases had been tried before the Roman governor, but never before had there stood in his presence a

man like this. He discovered no trace of crime in His face; and something in the prisoner's appearance excited his sympathy and respect. He turned to the priests, who stood just without the door, and asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They were not prepared for this question. They had not designed to state the particulars of the alleged crime of Jesus. They had expected that Pilate would, without delay, confirm their decision against the Saviour. However they answered him that they had tried the prisoner according to their law and found Him deserving of death. Said they, "If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him up unto thee." But Pilate was not satisfied with the explanation of the Jews, and reminded them of their inability to execute the law. He intimated that if their judgment only was necessary to procure his condemnation, it was useless to bring the prisoner to him. Said he, "Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law." *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 3, pages 128-129.

4. What other attempt did Pilate make to shift the responsibility for trying Jesus? Luke 23:5-7.

NOTE: 'When he heard that Christ was from Galilee, he decided to send Him to Herod, the ruler of that province, who was then in Jerusalem. By this course, Pilate thought to shift the responsibility of the trial from himself to Herod. He also thought this a good opportunity to heal an old quarrel between himself and Herod [Luke 23:12]. And so it proved. The two magistrates made friends over the trial of the Saviour.' *Desire of Ages*, page 728.

'Whom will ye that I release?'

5. What further attempt did Pilate make to ensure the acquittal of Jesus? John 18:39. Compare Matthew 27:15-21.

NOTE: 'Bar-Abbas', which simply means 'son of the father', was probably an alias. (A later Jewish rebel called himself Bar-Kocheba', which means 'son of the star.) An old tradition has it that Barabbas's real name was Jesus, which was a common Jewish name, being the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua. (Compare Peter whose real name was Simon Bar-Jonas.)

'[Pilate] had one idea paramount in his mind – to get Christ acquitted, somehow, and at all costs. We see this motif running through everything – the attempt to shift the matter to Herod, the thrice-acclaimed innocence of the Prisoner, the washing of hands – the last desperate attempt to substitute Barabbas.' Morison, *Who Moved The Stone*, page 47.

6. What final gesture did Pilate make to absolve himself of responsibility for the condemnation of Jesus? Matthew 27:24.

NOTE: "'When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.'" Matthew 27:24. In vain Pilate tried to free himself from the guilt of condemning Jesus. Had he acted promptly and firmly at the first, carrying out his convictions of right, his will would not have been overborne by the mob; they would not have presumed to dictate to him. His wavering and indecision proved his ruin. He saw that he could not release Jesus, and yet retain his own position and honour. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. Yielding to the demands of the mob, he again scourged Jesus, and delivered Him to be crucified. But in spite of his precautions, the very thing he dreaded afterward came upon him. His honours were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life.' *The Story of Jesus*, page 137.

'I have found no cause of death in Him'

7. When it was clear that Pilate could not avoid the trial of Jesus, what conclusion did he reach after interrogating Jesus? Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22.

NOTE: 'He shrank from delivering an innocent man to the most ignominious and cruel death that could be inflicted. After the roar of voices had ceased, he turned to the people, saying, "Why, what evil hath He done?" But the case had gone too far for argument. It was not evidence of Christ's innocence that they wanted, but His condemnation. Still Pilate endeavoured to save Him. "He said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 733.

8. What charge did the Jews against Jesus in accusing Him before Pilate? Luke 23:1-2 and compare John 18:29-33.

NOTE: 'Pilate came out and put the formal question to the Jews: "What accusation do you bring against this man?" This was the definite opening of the Roman trial, for it was an essential part of the Roman system that a public *Accusatio* should be made, followed by the *Interrogatio* of the judge, and the *Excusatio* of the prisoner. [Jesus' refusal to speak made this part of the trial difficult. John 19:9-10, Matthew 27:14.] It is obvious even upon a cursory reading that there is a gap in John's version following the words "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." In no conceivable way could Pilate have passed directly from this evasive and resentful answer to his leading question to Jesus: "Art thou then a king?" There must have been some intervening conversation to have led up to it. Fortunately the missing sentence has been furnished by Luke.' Morison, *Who Moved The Stone*, page 54.

Faced with Pilate's refusal to accept the verdict of the Jewish court, the Jewish leaders were clearly disconcerted and had to improvise a charge which would have weight under Roman law. Christ's wise answer to the catch-question put to Him concerning tribute money [Matthew 22:16-21] was recalled and initially they thought to pervert His answer in order to accuse Him. But Christ's answer had been given publicly and thus many witnesses might come forward to show that the chief priests were giving false witness. Therefore they offered the alternative charge that Jesus had claimed to be "Christ a King."

'If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend'

9. What pressure did the Jews bring to bear on Pilate when he indicated that he planned to acquit Jesus? John 19:12.

NOTE: 'This was touching Pilate in a weak point. He was under suspicion by the Roman government, and he knew that such a report would be ruin to him. [Remind yourself of the note under Question 1.] He knew that if the Jews were thwarted, their rage would be turned against him. They would leave nothing undone to accomplish their revenge. He had before him an example of the persistence with which they sought the life of One whom they hated without reason.' *Desire of Ages*, page 737.

10. What was also making Pilate afraid? John 19:7-8. Compare Matthew 27:19.

NOTE: 'Pilate was startled. He had no correct idea of Christ and His mission; but he had an indistinct faith in God and in beings superior to humanity. A thought that had once before passed through his mind now took more definite shape. He questioned whether it might not be a divine being that stood before him, clad in the purple robe of mockery, and crowned with thorns.' *Desire of Ages*, page 736.

'When he had said this, he went out'

11. What opportunity had Pilate been given and had allowed to pass? John 18:33-38.

NOTE: 'Hoping to gain the truth from Him and to escape the tumult of the crowd, Pilate took Jesus aside with him, and again questioned, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus did not directly answer this question. He knew that the Holy Spirit was striving with Pilate, and He gave him opportunity to acknowledge his conviction. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," He asked, "or did others tell it thee of Me?" That is, was it the accusations of the priests, or a desire to receive light from Christ, that prompted Pilate's question? Pilate understood Christ's meaning; but pride arose in his heart. He would not acknowledge the conviction that pressed upon him. "Am I a Jew?" he said. "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done?" Pilate's golden opportunity had passed. Yet Jesus did not leave him without further light. While He did not directly answer Pilate's question, He plainly stated His own mission. He gave Pilate to understand that He was not seeking an earthly throne. "My kingdom is not of this world," He said; "if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." Christ affirmed that His word was in itself a key which would unlock the mystery to those who were prepared to receive it. It had a self-commending power, and this was the secret of the spread of His kingdom of truth. He desired Pilate to understand that only by receiving and appropriating truth could his ruined nature be reconstructed. Pilate had a desire to know the truth. His mind was confused. He eagerly grasped the words of the Saviour, and his heart was stirred with a great longing to know what it really was, and how he could obtain it. "What is truth?" he inquired. But he did not wait for an answer.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 726-727.

12. How did Pilate show that he was acting, not according to principle, but out of expediency? Luke 23:22.

NOTE: 'Here Pilate showed his weakness. He had declared that Jesus was innocent, yet he was willing for Him to be scourged to pacify His accusers. He would sacrifice justice and principle in order to compromise with the mob. This placed him at a disadvantage. The crowd presumed upon his indecision, and clamoured the more for the life of the prisoner. If at the first Pilate had stood firm, refusing to condemn a man whom he found guiltless, he would have broken the fatal chain that was to bind him in remorse and guilt as long as he lived. Had he carried out his convictions of right, the Jews would not have presumed to dictate to him. Christ would have been put to death, but the guilt would not have rested upon Pilate. But Pilate had taken step after step in the violation of his conscience. He had excused himself from judging with justice and equity, and he now found himself almost helpless in the hands of the priests and rulers. His wavering and indecision proved his ruin.' *Desire of Ages*, page 731.

13. When will Pilate see Jesus again? Revelation 1:7.

NOTE: '[Christ] looked forward to the time when their positions would be reversed, when He would sit on the right hand of God, clothed with power, when all, Pilate, Caiaphas, and those who mocked and derided Him, would stand before Him. When He comes in the clouds of heaven, the whole world will be cited before Him. Those who pierced Him will look upon Him. The sentence will be passed on those who have not received Him.' *Manuscript Releases*, volume 12, page 402.

Lesson 4: October 19-25

'A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.' Isaiah 53:5.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 222-227.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 53.

LESSON AIM: To meditate on the prophecy of Isaiah 53.

Introduction

'Christ in His ministry had opened the minds of His disciples to these prophecies; "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. Peter in preaching Christ had produced his evidence from the Old Testament. Stephen had pursued the same course. And Paul also in his ministry appealed to the scriptures foretelling the birth, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. By the inspired testimony of Moses and the prophets he clearly proved the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah and showed that from the days of Adam it was the voice of Christ which had been speaking through patriarchs and prophets.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 221.

'He was despised and rejected'

1. How had Isaiah foretold the attitude men would take towards Christ when He was condemned and crucified? Isaiah 53:1-3.

NOTE: 'Christ suffered humiliation to save us from everlasting disgrace. He consented to have scorn, mockery, and abuse fall upon Him in order to shield us. It was our transgression that gathered the veil of darkness about His divine soul and extorted the cry from Him, as of one smitten and forsaken of God. He bore our sorrows; He was put to grief for our sins. He made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him. Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of Christ upon the cross. The mighty argument of the cross will convict of sin. The divine love of God for sinners, expressed in the gift of His Son to suffer shame and death that they might be ennobled and endowed with everlasting life, is the study of a lifetime. I ask you to study anew the cross of Christ. If all the proud and vainglorious, whose hearts are panting for the applause of men and for distinction above their fellows, could rightly estimate the value of the highest earthly glory in contrast with the value of the Son of God, rejected, despised, spit upon, by the very ones whom He came to redeem, how insignificant would appear all the honour that finite man can bestow.' *Lift Him Up*, page 240.

2. How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled? John 18:38-40, John 19:13-15, Matthew 27:22-25.

NOTE: 'In rejecting Christ, the Jews were hardening their hearts, and giving themselves into the power of Satan so that it would be impossible for them to accept His grace. So it is now. If the love of God is not appreciated and does not become an abiding principle to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost. The Lord can give no greater manifestation of His love than He has given. If the love of Jesus does not subdue the heart, there are no means by which we can be reached.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 236.

'We did esteem Him smitten of God'

3. How did Isaiah foretell the attitude of the Jews towards His sufferings? Isaiah 53:4.

NOTE: 'It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God, as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner. Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" was looked upon by the Jews as "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" and they hid their faces from Him. Isaiah 53:4, 3.' *Desire of Ages*, page 471.

4. How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled? Matthew 27:39-43.

NOTE: 'When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven's King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory, a crown within a crown. In place of that old purple kingly robe, He will be clothed in raiment of whitest white, "so as no fuller on earth can white them." Mark 9:3. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Revelation 19:16. Those who mocked and smote Him will be there. The priests and rulers will behold again the scene in the judgment hall. Every circumstance will appear before them, as if written in letters of fire. Then those who prayed, "His blood be on us, and on our children," will receive the answer to their prayer. Then the whole world will know and understand. They will realise who and what they, poor, feeble, finite beings, have been warring against. In awful agony and horror they will cry to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:16, 17.' *Desire of Ages*, page 739.

'Surely He hath borne our griefs'

5. How did Isaiah explain the reason for Christ's sufferings? Isaiah 53:5-6.

NOTE: "'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.'" Isaiah 53:5. Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 25.

6. How did the apostles explain the reason for Christ's sufferings? 1 Corinthians 15:3, Galatians 1:3-4, 1 John 2:2.

NOTE: 'I then saw the glorious Redeemer, beautiful and lovely; that He left the realms of glory, and came to this dark and lonely world, to give His precious life and die, the just for the unjust. He bore the cruel mocking and scourging, wore the plaited crown of thorns, and sweat great drops of blood in the garden, while the burden of the sins of the whole world was upon Him. The angel asked, "What for?" Oh, I saw and knew that it was for us; for our sins He suffered all this, that by His precious blood He might redeem us unto God!' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 106.

'He opened not His mouth'

7. How did Isaiah foresee the demeanour of Christ before His accusers? Isaiah 53:7.

NOTE: 'Patiently Jesus listened to the conflicting testimonies. No word did He utter in self-defence. At last His accusers were entangled, confused, and maddened. The trial was making no headway; it seemed that their plottings were to fail. Caiaphas was desperate. One last resort remained; Christ must be forced to condemn Himself. The high priest started from the judgment seat, his face contorted with passion, his voice and demeanour plainly indicating that, were it in his power, he would strike down the prisoner before him. "Answerest Thou nothing?" he exclaimed; "what is it which these witness against Thee?" Jesus held His peace. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Isaiah 53:7.' *Desire of Ages*, page 706.

8. What was Christ's response when accused? Matthew 26:62-63, Matthew 27:13-14.

NOTE: 'Pilate was confused. Seeing that Jesus made no answer to His accusers, Pilate said to Him, "Answerest Thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against Thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing." Standing behind Pilate, in view of all in the court, Christ heard the abuse; but to all the false charges against Him He answered not a word. His whole bearing gave evidence of conscious innocence. He stood unmoved by the fury of the waves that beat about Him. It was as if the heavy surges of wrath, rising higher and higher, like the waves of the boisterous ocean, broke about Him, but did not touch Him. He stood silent, but His silence was eloquence. It was as a light shining from the inner to the outer man. Pilate was astonished at His bearing. Does this Man disregard the proceedings because He does not care to save His life? he asked himself. As he looked at Jesus, bearing insult and mockery without retaliation, he felt that He could not be as unrighteous and unjust as were the clamouring priests.' *Desire of Ages*, page 726.

'He was cut off out of the land of the living'

9. How did Isaiah foresee that Christ, though innocent, would be condemned to death? Isaiah 53:8.

NOTE: 'The Saviour contrasted His own manner of work with the methods of His accusers. For months they had hunted Him, striving to entrap Him and bring Him before a secret tribunal, where they might obtain by perjury what it was impossible to gain by fair means. Now they were carrying out their purpose. The midnight seizure by a mob, the mockery and abuse before He was condemned, or even accused, was their manner of work, not His. Their action was in violation of the law. Their own rules declared that every man should be treated as innocent until proved guilty. By their own rules the priests stood condemned. Turning upon His questioner, Jesus said, "Why askest thou Me?" Had not the priests and rulers sent spies to watch His movements, and report His every word? Had not these been present at every gathering of the people, and carried to the priests information of all His sayings and doings? "Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them," replied Jesus; "behold, they know what I said." Annas was silenced by the decision of the answer. Fearing that Christ would say something regarding his course of action that he would prefer to keep covered up, he said nothing more to Him at this time. One of his officers, filled with wrath as he saw Annas silenced, struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Answerest Thou the high priest so?" Christ calmly replied, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?" He spoke no burning words of retaliation. His calm answer came from a heart sinless, patient, and gentle, that would not be provoked.' *Desire of Ages*, pages, 699-700.

10. How were Isaiah's words fulfilled? Mark 14:63-64, John 18:29-32, Mark 15:15.

NOTE: 'Only by His death could the world be saved. Like a grain of wheat, the Son of man must be cast into the ground and die, and be buried out of sight; but He was to live again. Christ presented His future, illustrating it by the things of nature, that the disciples might understand. The true result of His mission was to be reached by His death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." When the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it springs up, and bears fruit. So the death of Christ would result in fruit for the kingdom of God. In accordance with the law of the vegetable kingdom, life was to be the result of His death. Those who till the soil have the illustration ever before them. Year by year man preserves his supply of grain by apparently throwing away the choicest part. For a time it must be hidden under the furrow, to be watched over by the Lord. Then appears the blade, then the ear, and then the corn in the ear. But this development cannot take place unless the grain is buried out of sight, hidden, and to all appearance, lost. The seed buried in the ground produces fruit, and in turn this is planted. Thus the harvest is multiplied. So the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary will bear fruit unto eternal life. The contemplation of this sacrifice will be the glory of those who, as the fruit of it, will live through the eternal ages. The grain of wheat that preserves its own life can produce no fruit. It abides alone. Christ could, if He chose, save Himself from death. But should He do this, He must abide alone. He could bring no sons and daughters to God. Only by yielding up His life could He impart life to humanity. Only by falling into the ground to die could He become the seed of that vast harvest, the great multitude that out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, are redeemed to God.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 622-623.

'With the rich in His death'

11. How did Isaiah foretell that Christ would be put to death with the wicked? Isaiah 53:9, first part.

12. How were Isaiah's words brought to pass? Luke 23:32-33.

NOTE: 'To make the death of Jesus as shameful as possible, two thieves were crucified with Him, one on each side. The thieves were taken by force, and after much resistance on their part, their arms were thrust back and nailed to their crosses. But Jesus meekly submitted. He needed no one to force His arms back upon the cross. While the thieves were cursing their executioners, the Saviour in agony prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It was not merely agony of body which Christ endured; the sins of the whole world were upon Him.' *Early Writings*, page 176.

13. What prophecy was made about Christ's body in death? Isaiah 53:9.

14. How was this prophecy fulfilled? Matthew 27:57-60.

NOTE: 'Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus came to the help of the disciples. Both these men were members of the Sanhedrin, and were acquainted with Pilate. Both were men of wealth and influence. They were determined that the body of Jesus should have an honourable burial. Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus. For the first time, Pilate learned that Jesus was really dead. Conflicting reports had reached him in regard to the events attending the crucifixion, but the knowledge of Christ's death had been purposely kept from him. Pilate had been warned by the priests and rulers against deception by Christ's disciples in regard to His body. Upon hearing Joseph's request, he therefore sent for the centurion who had charge at the cross, and learned for a certainty of the death of Jesus. He also drew from him an account of the scenes of Calvary, confirming the testimony of Joseph. The request of Joseph was granted. While John was troubled about the burial of his Master, Joseph returned with Pilate's order for the body of Christ; and Nicodemus came bringing a costly mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a hundred pounds' weight, for His embalming. The most honoured in all Jerusalem could not have been shown more respect in death. The disciples were astonished to see these wealthy rulers as much interested as they themselves in the burial of their Lord.' *Desire of Ages*, page 773.

Lesson 5: October 26-November 1 'Likewise said all the disciples'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I looked on My right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know Me: refuge failed Me; no man cared for My soul.' Psalm 142:4.

STUDY HELP: *Early Writings*, pages 167-168.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Mark 14:27-31, 47-50, 66-72, Luke 23:49-56, John 19:25-27, 38-42.

LESSON AIM: To study the actions of the disciples during the time of Christ's trial and condemnation.

Introduction

'Although Christ plainly told them what would be His fate, they were not prepared to change their ideas. They were unwilling to believe the disagreeable truths that He opened to them, were unwilling to give up the thought that Christ would be a conqueror. They would not harbour the idea that He would be rejected and treated as a slave by His enemies. Not believing the words of Christ, they did not comprehend the words of the prophets, and thought them out of harmony with the words of Christ. We marvel that they could not comprehend these things; for as we stand this side of the cross, we see clearly how the predictions of prophets were fulfilled to the letter. Because they did not believe the words that Christ spoke to them (and He always spoke truth and never deceived them), they were unprepared for the trying scenes through which they were called to pass.' *Signs of the Times*, July 9, 1896.

'Jesus took the twelve disciples apart'

1. How did Jesus try to prepare the disciples for the coming crisis? Matthew 20:17-19. Compare Matthew 16:21-22.

NOTE: 'Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centred should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready.' *Great Controversy*, page 594.

2. What question was obsessing the minds of the disciples? Matthew 20:20-24. Compare Matthew 18:1, Mark 9:33-34, Luke 22:24.

NOTE: 'The Christian must lay aside all self-seeking. The hypocrisy of the Pharisees was the product of self-seeking. The glorification of self was the object of their lives. It was this that led them to pervert and misapply the Scriptures, and blinded them to the purpose of Christ's mission. This subtle evil even the disciples were in danger of cherishing. It was this that prompted the strife as to who would be the greatest. It was this that came between them and Christ, making them so little in sympathy with His mission of self-sacrifice, so slow to comprehend the mystery of redemption. As heaven, if left to complete its work, will cause corruption and decay, so does the spirit of self-seeking, cherished, work the defilement and ruin of the soul. Yet among the followers of our Lord today, as of old, how widespread is this subtle, deceptive sin! How often our service to Christ, our communion with one another, is marred by the secret desire to exalt self! Only the power of God can banish self-seeking. This change is the sign of His work. When the faith we accept destroys self-seeking and pretence, when it leads us to seek God's glory and not our own, we may know that it is of the right order. "Father, glorify Thy name" was the key-note of Christ's life, and if we follow Him, this will be the key-note of our life.' *Signs of the Times*, March 19, 1902

'Yet will I not deny Thee'

3. What declaration of loyalty had all the disciples made? Matthew 26:35.

NOTE: "Likewise also said they all." Mark 14:29, 30, 31. In their self-confidence they denied the repeated statement of Him who knew. They were unprepared for the test; when temptation should overtake them, they would understand their own weakness.' *Desire of Ages*, page 673.

4. When the crisis came, how did all the disciples react? Matthew 26:56, last part.

NOTE: 'The disciples were terrified as they saw Jesus permit Himself to be taken and bound. They were offended that He should suffer this humiliation to Himself and them. They could not understand His conduct, and they blamed Him for submitting to the mob. In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, "they all forsook Him, and fled." But Christ had foretold this desertion, "Behold," He had said, "the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." John 16:32.' *Desire of Ages*, page 697.

'And findeth them asleep'

5. When Jesus went to Gethsemane, what request did He make of His disciples? Matthew 26:36, Luke 22:40.

NOTE: 'The human heart longs for sympathy in suffering. This longing Christ felt to the very depths of His being. In the supreme agony of His soul He came to His disciples with a yearning desire to hear some words of comfort from those whom He had so often blessed and comforted, and shielded in sorrow and distress. The One who had always had words of sympathy for them was now suffering superhuman agony, and He longed to know that they were praying for Him and for themselves.' *Desire of Ages*, page 687.

6. When He returned to them, what did Jesus find? Luke 22:45.

NOTE: 'Rising with painful effort, He staggered to the place where He had left His companions. But He "findeth them asleep." Had He found them praying, He would have been relieved. Had they been seeking refuge in God, that satanic agencies might not prevail over them, He would have been comforted by their steadfast faith. But they had not heeded the repeated warning, "Watch and pray." At first they had been much troubled to see their Master, usually so calm and dignified, wrestling with a sorrow that was beyond comprehension. They had prayed as they heard the strong cries of the sufferer. They did not intend to forsake their Lord, but they seemed paralysed by a stupor which they might have shaken off if they had continued pleading with God. They did not realise the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation. Just before He bent His footsteps to the garden, Jesus had said to the disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night." They had given Him the strongest assurance that they would go with Him to prison and to death. And poor, self-sufficient Peter had added, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." Mark 14:27, 29. But the disciples trusted to themselves. They did not look to the mighty Helper as Christ had counselled them to do. Thus when the Saviour was most in need of their sympathy and prayers, they were found asleep. Even Peter was sleeping.' *Desire of Ages*, page 688

'Lest ye enter into temptation'

7. What words of counsel did Jesus give to the disciples? Matthew 26:41, Luke 22:46.

NOTE: 'The disciples awakened at the voice of Jesus, but they hardly knew Him, His face was so changed by anguish. Addressing Peter, Jesus said, "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." The weakness of His disciples awakened the sympathy of Jesus. He feared that they would not be able to endure the test which would come upon them in His betrayal and death. He did not reprove them, but said, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Even in His great agony, He was seeking to excuse their weakness. "The spirit truly is ready," He said, "but the flesh is weak.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 689.

8. What words of reproach did Jesus address to them? Matthew 26:45.

NOTE: 'Again the disciples in their weariness yield to the strange stupor that overpowers them. Again Jesus finds them sleeping. Looking sorrowfully upon them He says, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 694.

‘Ye shall be scattered’

9. When the party came to arrest Jesus, what was the initial reaction of the disciples? Luke 22:49.

NOTE: ‘The disciples had thought that their Master would not suffer Himself to be taken. For the same power that had caused the mob to fall as dead men could keep them helpless, until Jesus and His companions should escape. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 696.

10. How did the disciples react when Jesus was arrested? Mark 14:50.

NOTE: ‘The disciples were terrified as they saw Jesus permit Himself to be taken and bound. They were offended that He should suffer this humiliation to Himself and them. They could not understand His conduct, and they blamed Him for submitting to the mob. In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, “they all forsook Him, and fled.” But Christ had foretold this desertion, “Behold,” He had said, “the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” John 16:32.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 697.

‘Their words seemed to them as idle tales’

11. What was the reaction of the disciples to the news of Christ’s resurrection? Luke 24:10-11.

NOTE: ‘The day that was a day of rejoicing to all heaven was to the disciples a day of uncertainty, confusion, and perplexity. Their unbelief in the testimony of the women gives evidence of how low their faith had sunk. The news of Christ’s resurrection was so different from what they had anticipated that they could not believe it. It was too good to be true, they thought. They had heard so much of the doctrines and the so-called scientific theories of the Sadducees that the impression made on their minds in regard to the resurrection was vague. They scarcely knew what the resurrection from the dead could mean. They were unable to take in the great subject.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 790.

12. When the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples, what was their frame of mind? John 20:19, first part.

NOTE: ‘On reaching Jerusalem the two disciples [who had met Jesus on the road to Emmaus] enter at the eastern gate, which is open at night on festal occasions. The houses are dark and silent, but the travellers make their way through the narrow streets by the light of the rising moon. They go to the upper chamber where Jesus spent the hours of the last evening before His death. Here they know that their brethren are to be found. Late as it is, they know that the disciples will not sleep till they learn for a certainty what has become of the body of their Lord. They find the door of the chamber securely barred. They knock for admission, but no answer comes. All is still. Then they give their names. The door is carefully unbarred, they enter, and Another, unseen, enters with them. Then the door is again fastened, to keep out spies.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 802.

13. How did Jesus greet the disciples? John 20:19, last part-21.

NOTE: “Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.” Faith and joy took the place of unbelief, and with feelings which no words could express they acknowledged their risen Saviour. At the birth of Jesus the angel announced, Peace on earth, and good will to men. And now at His first appearance to the disciples after His resurrection, the Saviour addressed them with the blessed words, “Peace be unto you.” Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears. He waits for us to open the door of the heart to Him, and say, Abide with us. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” Revelation 3:20.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 803.

Lesson 6: November 2-8

‘I have prayed for thee’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ Luke 22:31-32.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 710-713.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Luke 22:31-62.

LESSON AIM: To study the part Peter played in the closing scenes of Christ’s life.

Introduction

‘When Peter said he would follow his Lord to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it; but he did not know himself. Hidden in his heart were elements of evil that circumstances would fan into life. Unless he was made conscious of his danger, these would prove his eternal ruin. The Saviour saw in him a self-love and assurance that would overbear even his love for Christ. Much of infirmity, of unmortified sin, carelessness of spirit, unsanctified temper, heedlessness in entering into temptation, had been revealed in his experience.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 673.

‘Thou art the Christ’

1. At a time when many of Christ's disciples deserted Him because of His unpopular teachings, what declaration of faith in Christ did Peter make? John 6:66-69.

NOTE: 'Notwithstanding the faith of many had utterly failed, and the power of the priests and rulers was mighty against them, the brave disciple thus boldly declared his belief. Jesus saw, in this acknowledgment, the living principle that would animate the hearts of His believers in coming ages. It is the mysterious working of God's Spirit upon the human heart, that elevates the humble mind to a knowledge above all earthly wisdom, an acquaintance with the sacred truths of God.' *Redemption: or The Miracles of Christ the Mighty One*, page 65.

2. What great insight was revealed to Peter? Matthew 16:15-17.

NOTE: 'The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer's faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 11:8. Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" and the fact that Peter discerned the glory of Christ was an evidence that he had been "taught of God." Psalm 25:14; John 6:45. Ah, indeed, "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 412.

3. How did Jesus explain that, despite his confident expression of faith, Peter was not suitable to be the foundation of His church? Matthew 16:18. Compare 1 Peter 2:6-8, Isaiah 8:14.

NOTE: 'The name Peter means a stone, but Christ did not refer to Peter as the rock. He spoke of a rock altogether stable and immovable. He referred to the words Peter had spoken: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and He said, "I say unto thee, . . . upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Truth, the Life, the Light of the world, was to be the foundation of the Christian church.' *Youth's Instructor*, June 15, 1899.

There is a play on words in the Greek, which is untranslatable in English. Jesus had earlier nicknamed Simon 'Cephas', which translates into Greek as *Petros*, a word that means a piece of rock or a stone. When Jesus spoke of the rock on which He would build His church, the Lord chose to use, not the word *petros*, but *petra*, which means rock, rather than a piece of rock. While it makes perfect sense to build a structure on a foundation of rock, it would be the height of folly to build a permanent structure on a piece of rock or stone that might shift under stress.

'Yet will I never be offended'

4. When Jesus warned the disciples that one of them would betray Him, what confident assertion did Peter make? Matthew 26:33. Compare verse 35.

NOTE: 'Now Peter feels that he must speak, and assure his Master that he will never be guilty of forsaking his Lord. "Though all men should be offended because of Thee," he says, "yet will I never be offended." Peter did not realise that in this very assertion he was refusing caution and reproof from Christ. The time had come when silence was eloquence, when to think in quietness was far better than any speech he could have made. But Peter knew so little of his own heart that he denied the truthfulness of Christ's statement.' *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1897.

5. How did Jesus express His special care for Peter? Luke 22:31-32.

NOTE: 'Bold, aggressive, and self-confident, quick to perceive and forward to act, prompt in retaliation yet generous in forgiving, Peter often erred, and often received reproof. Nor were his warm-hearted loyalty and devotion to Christ the less decidedly recognised and commended. Patiently, with discriminating love, the Saviour dealt with His impetuous disciple, seeking to check his self-confidence, and to teach him humility, obedience, and trust. But only in part was the lesson learned. Over and over again was given the warning, "Thou shalt . . . deny that thou knowest Me." It was the grieved, loving heart of the disciple that spoke out in the avowal, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death." When in the judgment hall the words of denial had been spoken; when Peter's love and loyalty, awakened under the Saviour's glance of pity and love and sorrow, had sent him forth to the garden where Christ had wept and prayed; when his tears of remorse dropped upon the sod that had been moistened with the blood drops of His agony, then the Saviour's words, "I have prayed for thee" were a stay to his soul. Christ, though foreseeing his sin, had not abandoned him to despair.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 313.

'It is enough'

6. What special precaution had Peter and another disciple made? Luke 22:38.

NOTE: 'The method of Peter was the sword. The method of Christ was the cross. Peter sought revenge. Christ sought reconciliation. Peter cried, "Give me a sword, and we can advance the kingdom." Christ cried, "Give Me a cross, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.'" Peter Marshall, *The First Easter*, page 25.

7. To what use did Peter put his sword? John 18:10. Compare Luke 22:38.

NOTE: 'The disciples had thought that their Master would not suffer Himself to be taken. For the same power that had caused the mob to fall as dead men could keep them helpless, until Jesus and His companions should escape. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his anger rashly drew

his sword and tried to defend his Master, but he only cut off an ear of the high priest's servant. When Jesus saw what was done, He released His hands, though held firmly by the Roman soldiers, and saying, "Suffer ye thus far," He touched the wounded ear, and it was instantly made whole.' *Desire of Ages*, page 696.

8. What rebuke did Jesus give because of this action? Matthew 26:52. Compare John 18:11.

NOTE: 'They expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower. Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 34.

'Peter followed Him afar off'

9. What did Peter later do after Jesus was arrested? John 18:15, Luke 22:54-55.

NOTE: 'After deserting their Master in the garden, two of the disciples had ventured to follow, at a distance, the mob that had Jesus in charge. These disciples were Peter and John. The priests recognised John as a well-known disciple of Jesus, and admitted him to the hall, hoping that as he witnessed the humiliation of his Leader, he would scorn the idea of such a one being the Son of God. John spoke in favour of Peter, and gained an entrance for him also. In the court a fire had been kindled; for it was the coldest hour of the night, being just before the dawn. A company drew about the fire, and Peter presumptuously took his place with them. He did not wish to be recognised as a disciple of Jesus. By mingling carelessly with the crowd, he hoped to be taken for one of those who had brought Jesus to the hall.' *Desire of Ages*, page 710.

10. When challenged, how did Peter respond? Matthew 26:69-74.

NOTE: 'When he ventured into the hall, and a maid said: "This man was also with Him," he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean." It was then that with cursing and swearing, Peter denied his Lord. How this cut to the heart of Jesus! There was the Man of sorrows, surrounded by His enemies, accused by false witnesses, buffeted and insulted by the mob, but the denial of Peter cut deeper than all the mockings of His foes.' *Review & Herald*, July 12, 1892.

'Peter went out and wept bitterly'

11. What had brought Peter to his senses? Luke 22:61-62.

NOTE: 'Then the Lord turned, and looked on Peter with a look of pitying compassion mingled with grief, and that look broke Peter's heart. He remembered what Jesus had said to him, that before the cock should crow he would deny Him thrice, and he went out from the judgment-hall in shame and grief. He hurried to the garden of Gethsemane, and prostrated himself on the very spot where Jesus had prayed in agony, where the bloody sweat had bedewed the soil, and there he wept bitterly. Jesus saw the anguish of his heart, and forgave Peter for his sin. Thus it is whenever a sinner draws nigh to God in repentance and contrition of soul, Jesus draws nigh to him; for when a soul repents, it is an evidence that Jesus is drawing him to Himself.' *Review & Herald*, July 12, 1892.

12. How did Jesus repair the damage caused by Peter's denial? John 21:15-19.

NOTE: 'For every denial Jesus asked a pledge of love. Three times the question: "Simon, lovest thou Me?" Three times the answer, and then the restoration, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep, feed My sheep." "And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."' Peter Marshall, *The First Easter*, page 100.

'The Saviour's manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson for him and his brethren. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him had never faltered. And as the apostle should take up the work of ministering the word to others, he was to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Remembering his own weakness and failure, he was to deal with the sheep and lambs committed to his care as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 516.

'Tell His disciples and Peter'

13. What special message was sent to Peter on the morning of the Resurrection of Christ? Mark 16:7.

NOTE: 'Since the death of Christ, Peter had been bowed down with remorse. His shameful denial of the Lord, and the Saviour's look of love and anguish, were ever before him. Of all the disciples he had suffered most bitterly. To him the assurance is given that his repentance is accepted and his sin forgiven. He is mentioned by name.' *Desire of Ages*, page 793.

'It was not John, the one who watched with Him in the judgment hall, who stood beside His cross, and who of the Twelve was first at the tomb, it was not John, but Peter, that was mentioned by Christ after His resurrection. "Tell His disciples and Peter," the angel said, "that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him." Mark 16:7.' *Education*, page 90.

14. What was Peter's response to Mary Magdalene's report of the empty tomb? John 20:3-8.

NOTE: 'Breathlessly Mary blurted out: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." The two men were shocked; they too started running, but John outran Peter. And when they stooped down and saw what was in the sepulchre, they believed. Believed *what*? Not, as Mary thought, that Jesus' body had been stolen. But that

Jesus of Nazareth was alive! John and Peter, as they went into the grave in the garden that first Easter morning, did not know *what to think* – until they saw what was inside the grave – *and then they believed.* Marshall, *The First Easter*, page 76.

Lesson 7: November 9-15 **‘The other disciple, whom Jesus loved’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.’ 1 John 4:14.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 539-545.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 20:2-8, 1 John 1:1-4.

LESSON AIM: To study the part John played in the closing scenes of Christ’s life.

Introduction

‘John is distinguished above the other apostles as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” John 21:20. He seems to have enjoyed to a pre-eminent degree the friendship of Christ, and he received many tokens of the Saviour’s confidence and love. He was one of the three permitted to witness Christ’s glory upon the mount of transfiguration and His agony in Gethsemane, and it was to his care that our Lord confided His mother in those last hours of anguish upon the cross.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 539.

‘Boanerges’

1. What nickname had Jesus given to John and his brother James? Mark 3:17.

NOTE: ‘John did not naturally possess the loveliness of character that his later experience revealed. By nature he had serious defects. He was not only proud, self-assertive, and ambitious for honour, but impetuous, and resentful under injury. He and his brother were called “sons of thunder.” Evil temper, the desire for revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. But beneath all this the divine Teacher discerned the ardent, sincere, loving heart. Jesus rebuked this self-seeking, disappointed his ambitions, tested his faith. But He revealed to him that for which his soul longed, the beauty of holiness, the transforming power of love.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 539.

2. What example are we given of this side of John’s character? Luke 9:51-55.

NOTE: ‘The defects in John’s character came strongly to the front on several occasions during his personal association with the Saviour. At one time Christ sent messengers before Him into a village of the Samaritans, requesting the people to prepare refreshments for Him and His disciples. But when the Saviour approached the town, He appeared to be desirous of passing on toward Jerusalem. This aroused the envy of the Samaritans, and instead of inviting Him to tarry with them, they withheld the courtesies which they would have given to a common wayfarer. Jesus never urges His presence upon any, and the Samaritans lost the blessing which would have been granted them had they solicited Him to be their guest. The disciples knew that it was the purpose of Christ to bless the Samaritans by His presence; and the coldness, jealousy, and disrespect shown to their Master filled them with surprise and indignation. James and John especially were aroused. That He whom they so highly revered should be thus treated, seemed to them a wrong too great to be passed over without immediate punishment. In their zeal they said, “Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” referring to the destruction of the Samaritan captains and their companies sent out to take the prophet Elijah. They were surprised to see that Jesus was pained by their words, and still more surprised as His rebuke fell upon their ears: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Luke 9:54-56.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 540.

‘Desiring a certain thing of Him’

3. How did the ambition of John and his brother once manifest itself? Matthew 20:20-21.

NOTE: ‘On another occasion James and John presented through their mother a petition requesting that they might be permitted to occupy the highest positions of honour in Christ’s kingdom. Notwithstanding Christ’s repeated instruction concerning the nature of His kingdom, these young disciples still cherished the hope for a Messiah who would take His throne and kingly power in accordance with the desires of men. The mother, coveting with them the place of honour in this kingdom for her sons, asked, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.”’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 541.

4. What challenge did Jesus give to John and his brother and how did they reply? Matthew 20:22.

NOTE: ‘But the Saviour answered, “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?” They recalled His mysterious words pointing to trial and suffering, yet answered confidently, “We are able.” They would count it highest honour to prove their loyalty by sharing all that was to befall their Lord. “Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with,” Christ declared, before Him a cross instead of a throne, two malefactors His companions at His right hand and at His left. James and John were to be sharers with their Master in suffering, the one, destined to swift-coming death by the sword [Acts 12:1-2]; the other, longest of all the disciples to follow his Master in labour and reproach and persecution. “But to sit on My right hand, and on

My left," He continued, "is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Matthew 20:21-23.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 542.

'The disciple whom Jesus loved'

5. How was John described after he had spent three years with Jesus? John 20:2.

NOTE: 'The lessons of Christ, setting forth meekness and humility and love as essential to growth in grace and a fitness for His work, were of the highest value to John. He treasured every lesson and constantly sought to bring his life into harmony with the divine pattern. John had begun to discern the glory of Christ, not the worldly pomp and power for which he had been taught to hope, but "the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14. The depth and fervour of John's affection for his Master was not the cause of Christ's love for him, but the effect of that love. John desired to become like Jesus, and under the transforming influence of the love of Christ he did become meek and lowly. Self was hid in Jesus. Above all his companions, John yielded himself to the power of that wondrous life. He says, "The life was manifested, and we have seen it." "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." 1 John 1:2; John 1:16. John knew the Saviour by an experimental knowledge. His Master's lessons were graven on his soul. When he testified of the Saviour's grace, his simple language was eloquent with the love that pervaded his whole being. It was John's deep love for Christ which led him always to desire to be close by His side. The Saviour loved all the Twelve, but John's was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child's confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Saviour's deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to the people.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 544-545.

6. What place was taken by John at the Last Supper? John 13:23.

NOTE: 'John, who leaned upon the bosom of Christ, says, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." If we can individually say this from the heart, we are indeed rich in faith, living on the promises of God. Amid our trials, disappointments, bereavements, and afflictions, we are to learn that God is love, and that he that dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we [in heaven?] in this world." We have reason ever to thank God that He knows all the storms, disappointments, and trials that come upon his people. He follows them through every experience, with tender, pitying love, and expresses His desire to heal our wounds, and restore unto us the joy of His salvation.' *Signs of the Times*, August 28, 1893. [Parentheses in original.]

'Went in with Jesus'

7. When Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, what did John decide to do? John 18:15.

NOTE: 'After deserting their Master in the garden, two of the disciples had ventured to follow, at a distance, the mob that had Jesus in charge. These disciples were Peter and John. The priests recognised John as a well-known disciple of Jesus, and admitted him to the hall, hoping that as he witnessed the humiliation of his Leader, he would scorn the idea of such a one being the Son of God. John spoke in favour of Peter, and gained an entrance for him also.' *Desire of Ages*, page 710.

8. Where was John while Jesus was crucified? John 19:26-27.

NOTE: 'Christ, bearing the sin of the world, seemed to be deserted; but He was not wholly left alone. John stood close by the cross. Mary had fainted in her anguish, and John had taken her to his house, away from the harrowing scene. But he saw that the end was near, and he brought her again to the cross. Even in His dying hour, Christ remembered His mother. He saw her distress, and He said to her, "Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." This thoughtful care lifted a weight from Mary's mind; she would no longer be obliged to choose her own home, and run the risk of offending her relatives; for Christ's wish was law. Christ knew what she most needed, the tender sympathy of one who loved her because she loved Jesus.' *Review & Herald*, December 28, 1897.

'Yet went he not in'

9. When Mary Magdalene brought the news that the body of Jesus was missing, what did John and Peter do? John 20:2-3.

NOTE: 'Mary Magdalene was a young woman; the two others were the mothers of grown men. Arrived in the public highway, it must have become clear that someone ought to run ahead and inform the disciples. Mary Magdalene, as the youngest and most agile of the party, would almost certainly volunteer, leaving the older women to follow at their own pace. A few moments later we read of a breathless and obviously distressed girl knocking at the door of a certain house in Jerusalem and delivering her historic message: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid Him." Such was the message, in all its primitive despair and urgency, which Mary Magdalene brought to the disciples Peter and John.' Frank Morison: *Who Moved The Stone*, pages 178-179.

10. How did John's behaviour at the empty tomb differ from Peter's? John 20:4-8.

NOTE: John was the younger of the two and therefore reached the tomb first. But John's hesitancy, on arriving at the tomb, contrasts with Peter's characteristic impulsiveness.

'John, as the younger, outran Peter. Reaching the Sepulchre first, and stooping down, "he seeth" the linen clothes, but, from his position, not the napkin which lay apart by itself. If reverence and awe prevented John from entering the Sepulchre, his impulsive companion, who arrived immediately after him, thought of nothing else than the immediate clearing up of the

mystery. As he entered the Sepulchre, he “steadfastly (intently) beholds” in one place the linen swathes that had bound the sacred limbs, and in another the napkin that had been about His head. There was no sign of haste, but all was orderly, leaving the impression of One who had leisurely divested Himself of what no longer befitted Him. Soon “the other disciple” followed Peter. The effect of what he saw was that he now believed in his heart that the Master was risen.’ Alfred Edersheim: *Jesus the Messiah*, page 630.

‘It is well for us to remember that the stone was rolled away from the door, not to permit Christ to come out, but to enable the disciples to go in. Notice what it was they saw. They saw the linen clothes lying, not unwound and carefully folded, . . . not thrown aside as is a covering when one arises from bed, but lying there on the stone slab in the shape of the body. True, the napkin had been removed and folded, but the grave-clothes were lying there, mute but eloquent evidence that a living organism had come out. The grave clothes lay like . . . a glove from which the hand has been removed, the fingers of which still retain the shape of the hand. In that manner, the grave-clothes were lying, collapsed a little, slightly deflated, because there was between the rolls of bandages a considerable weight of spices, but there lay the linen cloth that had been wound around the body of Christ. It was when they saw *that*, that the disciples believed.’ Peter Marshall: *Mr Jones, Meet The Master*, pages 125-126.

‘We know that his testimony is true’

11. What testimony was John able to give of His faith in Jesus? 1 John 1:1-4.

NOTE: ‘The apostle John did much to confirm and strengthen the faith of the believers. He bore a testimony which his adversaries could not controvert and which helped his brethren to meet with courage and loyalty the trials that came upon them. When the faith of the Christians would seem to waver under the fierce opposition they were forced to meet, the old, tried servant of Jesus would repeat with power and eloquence the story of the crucified and risen Saviour. He steadfastly maintained his faith, and from his lips came ever the same glad message: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” 1 John 1:1-3.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 568.

12. How may we know that John’s testimony is reliable? John 21:24-25.

NOTE: ‘John lived to be very old. He witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of the stately temple. The last survivor of the disciples who had been intimately connected with the Saviour, his message had great influence in setting forth the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. No one could doubt his sincerity, and through his teachings many were led to turn from unbelief. The rulers of the Jews were filled with bitter hatred against John for his unwavering fidelity to the cause of Christ. They declared that their efforts against the Christians would avail nothing so long as John’s testimony kept ringing in the ears of the people. In order that the miracles and teachings of Jesus might be forgotten, the voice of the bold witness must be silenced.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 569.

Lesson 8: November 16-22

‘Women looking on’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.’ Proverbs 31:10.

STUDY HELP: *Daughters of God*, pages 67-71.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Luke 8:1-3, Mark 15:40-41, 47, Mark 16:1-8.

LESSON AIM: To study the part His women disciples played in the closing scenes of Christ’s life.

Introduction

‘During the years of Christ’s ministry on earth, godly women assisted in the work that the Saviour and His disciples were carrying forward. If those who were opposing this work could have found anything out of the regular order in the conduct of these women, it would have closed the work at once. But while women were labouring with Christ and the apostles, the entire work was conducted on so high a plane as to be above the shadow of a suspicion. No occasion for any accusation could be found. The minds of all were directed to the Scriptures, rather than to individuals.’ *Evangelism*, page 67.

‘Many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance’

1. What are we told about Christ’s women followers? Matthew 27:55-56.

NOTE: During Christ’s ministry, we hear very little about these women followers of Christ, apart from their names, until the closing scenes of His life, when they come forward with practical love and support, while the disciples cower in fear and forsake their Master.

2. What practical help did these women provide during Christ’s ministry? Luke 8:2-3.

NOTE: We are told that Judas acted as treasurer for Jesus and His disciples. [John 13:29.] Since one of these women followers of Christ, who supported His ministry was the wife of Herod’s steward, it is likely that ‘the bag’ sometimes contained

substantial sums, which Jesus would certainly want to be used for the relief of the poor. Judas, however, secretly appropriated some of these means for personal use. [John 12:6.]

‘Bethany’

3. Which women in particular offered their home as a refuge for Jesus? Matthew 21:17, Mark 11:11-12, John 12:1.

NOTE: ‘Jesus had often found the rest that His weary human nature required at the house of Lazarus, in Bethany. His first visit there was when He and His disciples were weary from a toilsome journey on foot from Jericho to Jerusalem. They tarried as guests at the quiet home of Lazarus, and were ministered unto by his sisters, Martha and Mary.’ *Daughters of God*, page 57.

‘The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples, and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household, away from the suspicion and jealousy of the angry Pharisees. Here He found a sincere welcome, and pure, holy friendship. Here He could speak with simplicity and perfect freedom, knowing that His words would be understood and treasured.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 524.

It seems that during that last week of His earthly life Jesus slept at Bethany.

4. What experience had taken place in Bethany not long before Christ’s crucifixion? John 12:1-8. Note verse 7.

NOTE: ‘He read the object of Mary in her costly offering. Though she had been very sinful, her repentance was sincere, and Jesus, while reproving her guilt, had pitied her weakness and forgiven her. Mary’s heart was filled with gratitude at the compassion of Jesus. Seven times she had heard His stern rebuke to the demons which then controlled her heart and mind, and she had listened to His strong cries to His Father on her behalf. She knew how offensive everything impure was to the unsullied mind of Christ, and she overcame her sin in the strength of her Saviour. She was transformed, a partaker of the divine nature. Mary had offered her gift in the grateful homage of her heart, and Jesus explained her motive and vindicated her deed. “Let her alone,” He said, “Why,” He asked, “trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon Me.” He justified her work to all present as evincing her gratitude to Him for lifting her from a life of shame to one of purity, and teaching her to believe in Him. Said He, “Against the day of My burying hath she kept this.” The ointment so sacredly kept to anoint the dead body of her Lord she had poured upon His head in the belief that He was about to be lifted to a throne in Jerusalem.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 377.

‘Many women were there beholding’

5. When all the disciples but John were absent from the scene of Christ’s crucifixion, who among His followers were present? John 19:25, Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:55-56.

NOTE: These accounts name these women followers in different ways but, putting the various accounts together, we can be certain that by the cross stood Mary, the mother of the Lord and also of James and Joses, His brothers, Mary’s sister, who is unnamed in John’s Gospel but whom some think to be Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Matthew speaks of “many women” so, possibly, others of His female followers were present also. One of these was probably Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward [see Luke 24:10]. Another may well have been Susanna [see Luke 8:3]. (Clearly ‘Mary’ [the Greek equivalent of ‘Miriam’] was a popular name in those days.)

6. How long did these women followers remain at the scene? Luke 23:55.

NOTE: ‘The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 774.

‘According to the commandment’

7. What task did these women plan to undertake? Luke 23:56-24:1.

NOTE: ‘Luke, in his account of the Saviour’s burial, speaks of the women who were with Him at His crucifixion, and says: “They returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” Luke 23:56. The Saviour was buried on Friday, the sixth day of the week. The women prepared spices and ointments with which to embalm their Lord, and laid them aside, until the Sabbath was past. Not even the work of embalming the body of Jesus would they do upon the Sabbath day.’ *The Story of Jesus*, page 157.

8. How did these women spend the Sabbath which followed the crucifixion? Luke 23:56.

NOTE: ““And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” Luke 23:56. That was a never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath to the sorrowing disciples, and also to the priests, rulers, scribes, and people. At the setting of the sun on the evening of the preparation day the trumpets sounded, signifying that the Sabbath had begun. The Passover was observed as it had been for centuries, while He to whom it pointed had been slain by wicked hands, and lay in Joseph’s tomb. On the Sabbath the courts of the temple were filled with worshipers. The high priest from Golgotha was there, splendidly robed in his sacerdotal garments. White-turbaned priests, full of activity, performed their duties. But some present were not at rest as the blood of bulls and goats was offered for sin. They were not conscious that type had met antitype, that an infinite Sacrifice had been made for the sins of the world. They knew not that there was no further value in the performance of the ritual service... Many minds were busy with thoughts started by the scenes of Calvary. From the

crucifixion to the resurrection many sleepless eyes were constantly searching the prophecies, some to learn the full meaning of the feast they were then celebrating, some to find evidence that Jesus was not what He claimed to be; and others with sorrowful hearts were searching for proofs that He was the true Messiah. Though searching with different objects in view, all were convicted of the same truth, that prophecy had been fulfilled in the events of the past few days, and that the Crucified One was the world's Redeemer. Many who at that time united in the service never again took part in the paschal rites. Many even of the priests were convicted of the true character of Jesus. Their searching of the prophecies had not been in vain, and after His resurrection they acknowledged Him as the Son of God.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 774-775.

'Very early in the morning'

9. When did the women come to complete their task of preparing the body of Christ for burial? Luke 24:1. Compare John 20:1, Mark 16:1-2.

NOTE: 'The women who had stood by the cross of Christ waited and watched for the hours of the Sabbath to pass. On the first day of the week, very early, they made their way to the tomb, taking with them precious spices to anoint the Saviour's body. They did not think about His rising from the dead. The sun of their hope had set, and night had settled down on their hearts. As they walked, they recounted Christ's works of mercy and His words of comfort. But they remembered not His words, "I will see you again." John 16:22.' *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

10. What did the women find when they reached the tomb? Mark 16:3-5.

NOTE: 'Ignorant of what was even then taking place, they drew near the garden, saying as they went, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" They knew that they could not remove the stone, yet they kept on their way. And lo, the heavens were suddenly alight with glory that came not from the rising sun. The earth trembled. They saw that the great stone was rolled away. The grave was empty. . . A light was shining about the tomb, but the body of Jesus was not there. As they lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid.' *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

'He is risen'

11. What message was given to the women and what was their reaction? Mark 16:6-8.

NOTE: 'They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps. "Fear not ye," he said; "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead." Again they look into the tomb, and again they hear the wonderful news. Another angel in human form is there, and he says, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." He is risen, He is risen! The women repeat the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. The Saviour is living, and not dead. They remember now that when speaking of His death He said that He would rise again. What a day is this to the world! Quickly the women departed from the sepulchre "with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.'" *Desire of Ages*, pages 788-789.

12. What reception did their story receive from the disciples? Luke 24:10-11. Compare Mark 16:10-11.

NOTE: 'The hearts of the disciples were so full of grief that they did not believe the angels' message or the words of Christ Himself.' *Desire of Ages*, page 794.

Lesson 9: November 23-29

'For fear of the Jews'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.' Matthew 10:32.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, page 104.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 3:1-21, John 7:45-52, John 19:38-42.

LESSON AIM: To study Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and their role in the events surrounding Christ's death.

Introduction

'Neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had openly accepted the Saviour while He was living. They knew that such a step would exclude them from the Sanhedrin, and they hoped to protect Him by their influence in its councils. For a time they had seemed

to succeed; but the wily priests, seeing their favour to Christ, had thwarted their plans. In their absence Jesus had been condemned and delivered to be crucified.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 327.

'The same came to Jesus by night'

1. Who was Nicodemus? John 3:1.

NOTE: 'Nicodemus held a high position of trust in the Jewish nation. He was highly educated, and possessed talents of no ordinary character, and he was an honoured member of the national council [the Sanhedrin]. With others, he had been stirred by the teaching of Jesus. Though rich, learned, and honoured, he had been strangely attracted by the humble Nazarene. The lessons that had fallen from the Saviour's lips had greatly impressed him, and he desired to learn more of these wonderful truths.' *Desire of Ages*, page 167.

2. How did Nicodemus first encounter Jesus? John 3:2.

NOTE: 'He greatly desired an interview with Jesus, but shrank from seeking Him openly. It would be too humiliating for a ruler of the Jews to acknowledge himself in sympathy with a teacher as yet so little known. And should his visit come to the knowledge of the Sanhedrin, it would draw upon him their scorn and denunciation. He resolved upon a secret interview, excusing this on the ground that if he were to go openly, others might follow his example. Learning by special inquiry the Saviour's place of retirement in the Mount of Olives, he waited until the city was hushed in slumber, and then sought Him.' *Desire of Ages*, page 168

'Except a man be born again'

3. What was the topic of the discussion between Christ and Nicodemus? John 3:3-8.

NOTE: 'In His infinite wisdom [Jesus] saw before Him a seeker after truth. He knew the object of this visit, and with a desire to deepen the conviction already resting upon His listener's mind, He came directly to the point, saying solemnly, yet kindly, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3, margin. Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 168-171.

4. How did Nicodemus show his ignorance of this subject? John 3:9-10.

NOTE: 'Nicodemus was astonished as well as indignant at these words. He regarded himself as not only an intellectual, but a pious and religious man. He could not harmonise this doctrine of conversion with his understanding of what constituted religion. He could not explain to his own satisfaction the science of conversion; but Jesus showed him, by a figure, that it could not be explained by any of his precise methods. Jesus pointed out to him the fact that he could not see the wind, yet he could discern its action. He might never be able to explain the process of conversion, but he would be able to discern its effect. He heard the sound of the wind which bloweth where it listeth, and he could see the result of its action. The operating agency was not revealed to view. No human reasoning of the most learned man can define the operations of the Holy Spirit upon human minds and characters; yet they can see the effects upon the life and actions. He was not willing to admit truth, because he could not understand all that was connected with the operation of the power of God; and yet he accepted the facts of nature, although he could not explain or even comprehend them. Like other men of all ages, he was looking to forms and precise ceremonies as more essential to religion than the deep movings of the Spirit of God.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 292.

'Art thou also of Galilee?'

5. When the chief priests and Pharisees made plans to arrest Jesus, how did Nicodemus make his protest? John 7:50-51.

NOTE: 'The priests and rulers proceeded to lay plans for arresting Jesus. It was urged that if He were longer left at liberty, He would draw the people away from the established leaders, and the only safe course was to silence Him without delay. In the full tide of their discussion, they were suddenly checked. Nicodemus questioned, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"' *Desire of Ages*, page 460.

'Jesus had unfolded to him the plan of salvation and His mission to the world, yet still Nicodemus had hesitated. He hid the truth in his heart, and for three years there was little apparent fruit. But while Nicodemus had not publicly acknowledged Christ, he had in the Sanhedrin council repeatedly thwarted the schemes of the priests to destroy Him. When at last Christ had been lifted up on the cross, Nicodemus remembered the words that He had spoken to him in the night interview on the Mount of Olives, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14); and he saw in Jesus the world's Redeemer.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 104.

6. What contemptuous response was given to him by the chief priests? John 7:52.

NOTE: 'Silence fell on the assembly. The words of Nicodemus came home to their consciences. They could not condemn a man unheard. But it was not for this reason alone that the haughty rulers remained silent, gazing at him who had dared to speak in favour of justice. They were startled and chagrined that one of their own number had been so far impressed by the character

of Jesus as to speak a word in His defence. Recovering from their astonishment, they addressed Nicodemus with cutting sarcasm, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." *Desire of Ages*, page 460.

'For fear of the Jews'

7. What other wealthy Jew was a disciple of Jesus? John 19:38, first part. Compare John 12:42-43.

NOTE: 'Joseph was a disciple of Christ, but in the past he had not identified himself with Him for fear of the Jews.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 12*, page 419.

'They concealed their true convictions for fear of persecution. They dared not express their true feelings and faith. Many were convinced that He was the Messiah, long looked for and greatly desired, yet they dared not express their convictions. There was dissension among the people concerning Him. Some denounced Him as a deceiver, while some ventured to express their favour toward Him, saying that He was a good man. But this was as far as they ventured to go. They had not moral courage in the face of the denunciations uttered against Him to say, I believe Him to be the world's Redeemer. They dared not give utterance to the conviction that He was the divine Son of God, and that they were dependent on Him alone for salvation. Many were silent, and uttered no opinion concerning Him; and even some of the chief rulers who believed in Him did not confess Him.' *Review & Herald*, July 7, 1896.

8. What are we told of Joseph's reputation and position? Mark 15:43, first part, Luke 23:50.

NOTE: Joseph is described as 'an honourable counsellor' who was 'a good man and a just.' He was looking for the kingdom of God. He 'had not consented to the counsel and deed' of those who conspired to bring about Christ's condemnation and death. He was accounted 'a disciple of Jesus' but his fear of the Jewish leaders had caused him to conceal his belief in Christ.

'The truth is everything to us, or it is nothing. Let those who want to make a name in the world, go with the world; but let those who would serve God, obey God, and not man. In the great conflict between faith and unbelief, the whole Christian world will be involved. All will take sides. Some may not apparently engage in the conflict on either side. They may not appear to take sides against the truth, but they will not come out boldly for Christ, through fear of losing property or suffering reproach. All such are numbered with the enemies of Christ; for Christ says, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad."' *Review & Herald*, February 7, 1893.

'Joseph went in boldly unto Pilate'

9. What courageous action did Joseph make after the crucifixion of Jesus? Matthew 27:57-58. Compare Mark 15:43.

NOTE: 'Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and influential councillor of the Jews and a true disciple of Jesus, went privately yet boldly to Pilate and begged from him the Saviour's body. He dared not go openly, because of the hatred of the Jews.' *Early Writings*, page 180.

10. What provision did Joseph of Arimathea make for the body of Christ? Matthew 27:59-60.

NOTE: 'Gently and reverently they removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the cross. Their tears of sympathy fell fast as they looked upon His bruised and lacerated form. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn in a rock. This he was reserving for himself; but it was near Calvary, and he now prepared it for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the Redeemer was borne to the tomb.' *Desire of Ages*, page 774.

'There came also Nicodemus'

11. Who also appeared to help in the burial of Jesus? John 19:39, first part.

NOTE: 'Joseph and Nicodemus watched every development at the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ. Not an action escaped them. These men were diligent searchers of the Scriptures, and they were deeply indignant as they saw this man, whom the judges had pronounced to be entirely without fault, placed in the centre of two thieves, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." This instruction had been given by the chief priests and rulers, that by his position all might judge that Christ was the most notorious of the three.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 5*, page 1107.

'On that Sabbath, when Christ lay in the grave, Nicodemus had opportunity for reflection. A clearer light now illuminated his mind, and the words which Jesus had spoken to him were no longer mysterious. He felt that he had lost much by not connecting himself with the Saviour during His life. Now he recalled the events of Calvary. The prayer of Christ for His murderers and His answer to the petition of the dying thief spoke to the heart of the learned councillor. Again he looked upon the Saviour in His agony; again he heard that last cry, "It is finished," spoken like the words of a conqueror. Again he beheld the reeling earth, the darkened heavens, the rent veil, the shivered rocks, and his faith was forever established. The very event that destroyed the hopes of the disciples convinced Joseph and Nicodemus of the divinity of Jesus. Their fears were overcome by the courage of a firm and unwavering faith.' *Conflict and Courage*, page 327.

12. What work did these two members of the Sanhedrin perform for the body of Jesus? John 19:39-40.

NOTE: 'Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus offered not their gift of love to Jesus in His life. With bitter tears they brought their costly spices for His cold, unconscious form.' *Conflict and Courage*, page 306.

'When the Jews were trying to destroy the infant church, Nicodemus came forward in its defence. No longer cautious and questioning, he encouraged the faith of the disciples and used his wealth in helping to sustain the church at Jerusalem and in advancing the work of the gospel. Those who in other days had paid him reverence, now scorned and persecuted him, and he became poor in this world's goods; yet he faltered not in the defence of his faith.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 105.

Lesson 10: November 30-December 6

‘Mary Magdalene’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ Luke 5:32.

STUDY HELP: *Daughters of God*, pages 68-71.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Luke 7:36-8:2, John 20:1-18.

LESSON AIM: To study the part played by Mary Magdalene in the events connected with Christ’s death and resurrection.

Introduction

‘When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realised. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulchre. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 309.

‘Out of whom went seven devils’

1. What are we told of the background of Mary Magdalene? Luke 8:1-2.

NOTE: ‘Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 568.

2. What was the reaction of the Jewish leaders to Christ’s work of casting out devils? Matthew 9:34.

NOTE: ‘As Christ redoubled his efforts, manifesting His love in works of mercy, in pouring a flood of light upon a sin-stricken world, because the Pharisees could not controvert His doctrine, they threatened, hunted, and persecuted the Son of God. The people rejoiced in the wonderful works that Christ was doing; but the Pharisees, under the training and discipline of Satan, were so blinded that they charged Christ with casting out devils through the prince of devils. What a terrible pass for men to come to who profess to be the children of God! Those who begin to criticise and judge others know not to what lengths they will be led.’ *Signs of the Times*, December 17, 1894.

‘For she is a sinner’

3. How was Mary regarded by the Pharisees who knew her? Luke 7:37-39.

NOTE: ‘Mary was looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had made her thus. He saw that she had great capabilities for good. He saw the better phase of her character, and knew that through His grace she would become a partaker of the divine nature, and would purify her soul by obeying the truth. Christ might have extinguished every spark of hope in Mary’s soul, but He did not. The Heart-searcher read the motives that led to her actions, and He also saw the spirit that prompted Simon’s words. “Seest thou this woman?” He said to him. “She is a sinner; I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.”’ *Daughters of God*, page 239.

‘The Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were the beginning of a new life. Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, was the last at the Saviour’s tomb and the first whom He greeted in the morning of His resurrection.’ *Thoughts From The Mount Of Blessing*, page 129.

4. What act of love did Mary carry out, and how did Jesus regard it? John 12:3, Matthew 26:13.

NOTE: ‘Mary knew not the full significance of her deed of love. She could not answer her accusers. She could not explain why she had chosen that occasion for anointing Jesus. The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings. Inspiration stoops to give no reason. An unseen presence, it speaks to mind and soul, and moves the heart to action. It is its own justification. Christ told Mary the meaning of her act, and in this He gave her more than He had received. “In that she hath poured this ointment on My body,” He said, “she did it for My burial.” As the alabaster box was broken, and filled the whole house with its fragrance, so Christ was to die, His body was to be broken; but He was to rise from the tomb, and the fragrance of His life was to fill the earth. Christ “hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” Ephesians 5:2. “Verily I say unto you,” Christ declared, “Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.” Looking into the future, the Saviour spoke with certainty concerning His gospel. It was to be preached throughout the world. And as far as the gospel extended, Mary’s gift would shed its fragrance, and hearts would be blessed through her unstudied act. Kingdoms would rise and fall; the names of monarchs and conquerors would be forgotten; but this woman’s deed would be

immortalised upon the pages of sacred history. Until time should be no more, that broken alabaster box would tell the story of the abundant love of God for a fallen race.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 560-563.

'There stood by the cross'

5. When the disciples forsook Jesus and fled, where was Mary Magdalene when the Lord was crucified? John 19:25. Compare Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40.

NOTE: 'She is there among the brave and faithful women, who stood afar off, beholding all that was taking place at the hill Calvary. It was she who induced the others to draw nearer and nearer till they stood at the base of the cross to which the Saviour was nailed; she who desired to moisten His lips with the myrrh and vinegar; she who bathed His feet with the holy water of her tears as they lowered His body from the cross; she who followed the little procession to the garden of Joseph of Arimathaea, and saw the place where her Lord was laid.' Thomas E. Miller: *Portraits of Women of the New Testament*, page 145.

6. What was the great need of Christ's heart as he hung on the cross? Psalm 69:20.

NOTE: 'When Jesus was thought to be dying beneath the burden of the cross, many women, who, though not believers in Christ, were touched with pity for His sufferings, broke forth into a mournful wailing. When Jesus revived, He looked upon them with tender compassion. He knew they were not lamenting Him because He was a teacher sent from God, but from motives of common humanity. He looked upon the weeping women and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, but weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children." Jesus did not despise their tears, but the sympathy which they expressed wakened a deeper chord of sympathy in His own heart for them. He forgot His own grief in contemplating the future fate of Jerusalem. Only a short time ago the people had cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." How blindly had they invoked the doom they were soon to realise! Many of the very women who were weeping about Jesus were to perish with their children in the siege of Jerusalem.' *Daughters of God*, page 67.

'There was Mary Magdalene'

7. Who remained sitting beside the tomb after Joseph and Nicodemus had finished their task? Matthew 27:61. Compare Matthew 28:1.

NOTE: 'The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved. "And they returned, . . . and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23:56.' *Desire of Ages*, page 774.

8. What special reason did Mary have for loving Jesus? Luke 7:47-48. Compare Luke 8:2.

NOTE: 'He who wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus and gave back to Martha and Mary their buried brother; who pardoned Mary Magdalene; who remembered His mother when He was hanging in agony upon the cross; who appeared to the weeping women and made them His messengers to spread the first glad tidings of a risen Saviour, He is woman's best friend today and is ready to aid her in all the relations of life.' *The Adventist Home*, page 204.

'Cometh Mary Magdalene early'

9. Who was first at the tomb when the Sabbath had passed? John 20:1. Compare Matthew 28:1, Mark 15:1.

NOTE: These two women [Matthew 27:61] had seen that Jesus' body had been prepared for burial and had lingered at the tomb, reluctant to leave their Master. Matthew's account of the Resurrection morning does not mention that they came with spices, as the other women did; John's account, likewise, does not suggest that Mary Magdalene came with the group of women bearing spices, but that she arrived earlier.

'The Sabbath is passed; and early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it is yet dark, Mary Magdalene is at the sepulchre. Other women are to meet her there, but Mary is the first at the tomb.' *Youth's Instructor*, July 21, 1898.

'The women had not all come to the tomb from the same direction. Mary Magdalene was the first to reach the place; and upon seeing that the stone was removed, she hurried away to tell the disciples.' *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

10. What was Mary's reaction when she found the empty tomb? John 20:2.

NOTE: 'Mary Magdalene was the first to reach the place; and upon seeing that the stone was removed, she hurried away to tell the disciples. . . . Mary had not heard the good news. She went to Peter and John with the sorrowful message, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." The disciples hurried to the tomb, and found it as Mary had said.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 788, 789.

'Knew not that it was Jesus'

11. After Peter and John had left, what did Mary do? John 20:11-13.

NOTE: 'Mary had followed John and Peter to the tomb; when they returned to Jerusalem, she remained. As she looked into the empty tomb, grief filled her heart. Looking in, she saw the two angels, one at the head and the other at the foot where Jesus had

lain. "Woman, why weepest thou?" they asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she answered, "and I know not where they have laid Him." *Desire of Ages*, page 789.

'Jesus cares for the weak and feeble in their simplicity, and would quicken their life by His own heart beats. If all had strong assurance, in what would the babe differ from those of more advanced experience? The word of God is rich in pearls of promises; but there are weak and trembling souls, who dare not venture to think that they are bringing forth fruit meet for repentance, and who fail to appropriate the promise; yet they are precious in the sight of the Lord. Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ, yet she stood weeping and lamenting, crying, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895.

12. What special privilege was given to Mary? John 20:14-18. Compare Mark 16:9.

NOTE: 'Then she turned away, even from the angels, thinking that she must find someone who could tell her what had been done with the body of Jesus. Another voice addressed her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Through her tear-dimmed eyes, Mary saw the form of a man, and thinking that it was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." If this rich man's tomb was thought too honourable a burial place for Jesus, she herself would provide a place for Him. There was a grave that Christ's own voice had made vacant, the grave where Lazarus had lain. Might she not there find a burial place for her Lord? She felt that to care for His precious crucified body would be a great consolation to her in her grief. But now in His own familiar voice Jesus said to her, "Mary." Now she knew that it was not a stranger who was addressing her, and turning she saw before her the living Christ. In her joy she forgot that He had been crucified. Springing toward Him, as if to embrace His feet, she said, "Rabboni." But Christ raised His hand, saying, Detain Me not; "for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." And Mary went her way to the disciples with the joyful message.' *Desire of Ages*, page 790.

'The Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were the beginning of a new life. Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, was the last at the Saviour's tomb and the first whom He greeted in the morning of His resurrection. It was Saul of Tarsus, one of the most determined enemies of the gospel, who became Paul the devoted minister of Christ. Beneath an appearance of hatred and contempt, even beneath crime and degradation, may be hidden a soul that the grace of Christ will rescue to shine as a jewel in the Redeemer's crown.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 129.

Lesson 11: December 7-13 'He is risen'

MEMORY VERSE: 'He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.' Matthew 28:6, first part.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 779-789.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-13, Luke 24:1-9, John 20:1.

LESSON AIM: To study the events on the morning of the Resurrection.

Introduction

'How many are still doing what these disciples did! How many echo Mary's despairing cry, "They have taken away the Lord, . . . and we know not where they have laid Him"! To how many might the Saviour's words be spoken, "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to them, but they do not understand. Oh that the bowed head might be lifted, that the eyes might be opened to behold Him, that the ears might listen to His voice! "Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen." Bid them look not to Joseph's new tomb, that was closed with a great stone, and sealed with the Roman seal. Christ is not there. Look not to the empty sepulchre. Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless. Jesus lives, and because He lives, we shall live also. From grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, Christ is risen! He lives to make intercession for us. Grasp this hope, and it will hold the soul like a sure, tried anchor. Believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God.' *Desire of Ages*, page 794.

'Make it as sure as ye can'

1. What precaution had been taken by chief priests and Pharisees regarding the tomb of Jesus? Matthew 27:62-66.

NOTE: 'These priests had tried to believe Jesus a deceiver; but it was in vain. Some of them had stood by the grave of Lazarus, and had seen the dead brought back to life. They trembled for fear that Christ would Himself rise from the dead, and again appear before them. They had heard Him declare that He had power to lay down His life and to take it again. They remembered that He had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2:19. Judas had told them the words spoken by Jesus to the disciples while on the last journey to Jerusalem: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again." Matthew 20:18, 19. When they heard these words, they had mocked and ridiculed. But now they remembered that Christ's predictions had so far been fulfilled. He had said that He would rise again the third day, and who could say that this also would not come to pass? They longed to shut out these thoughts, but they could not. Like their father, the devil, they believed and trembled. . . Pilate said unto

them, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." Matthew 27:65. The priests gave directions for securing the sepulchre. A great stone had been placed before the opening. Across this stone they placed cords, securing the ends to the solid rock, and sealing them with the Roman seal. The stone could not be moved without breaking the seal. A guard of one hundred soldiers was then stationed around the sepulchre to prevent it from being tampered with. The priests did all they could to keep Christ's body where it had been laid. He was sealed as securely in His tomb as if He were to remain there through all time.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 777-778.

2. What happened to these guards on the day of Christ's resurrection? Matthew 28:2-4.

NOTE: 'Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth. The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee. They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulchre, "I am the resurrection, and the life." As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.' *Desire of Ages*, page 779.

'Who shall roll us away the stone?'

3. When the women were coming to the tomb early on the first day of the week, what dilemma were they discussing? Mark 16:3. Compare Matthew 27:60.

NOTE: 'The women who had stood by the cross of Christ waited and watched for the hours of the Sabbath to pass. On the first day of the week, very early, they made their way to the tomb, taking with them precious spices to anoint the Saviour's body. They did not think about His rising from the dead. The sun of their hope had set, and night had settled down on their hearts. As they walked, they recounted Christ's works of mercy and His words of comfort. But they remembered not His words, "I will see you again." John 16:22. Ignorant of what was even then taking place, they drew near the garden, saying as they went, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" They knew that they could not remove the stone, yet they kept on their way.' *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

'The question as to how they were to remove this stone must of necessity have been a source of considerable perplexity to the women. Two of them at least had witnessed the interment and knew roughly how things stood. The stone, which is known to have been large and of considerable weight, was their great difficulty. When, therefore, we find in the earliest record, the Gospel of Mark, the words, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" we can hardly avoid feeling that this preoccupation of the women with the question of the stone is not only a psychological necessity of the problem, but a definitely historical element in the situation right up to the moment of their arrival at the grave.' Morison, *Who Moved The Stone*, page 76.

4. What did they find when they arrived at the tomb? Mark 16:4. Compare Luke 24:2, John 20:1.

NOTE: 'As they neared the garden, they were surprised to see the heavens beautifully lighted up, and the earth trembling beneath their feet. They hastened to the sepulchre, and were astonished to find that the stone was rolled away from the door, and that the Roman guard were not there.' *Redemption*, page 17.

'The stone was rolled away'

5. When they entered the tomb, what discovery did they make? Luke 24:3.

NOTE: 'They noticed a light shining about the tomb, and, looking in, saw that it was empty.' *Redemption*, page 17.

'The essence of their discovery was that the tomb had in some way been disturbed and that, contrary to their expectations, the body of Jesus was no longer there. Luke summarises the consistent testimony of the Synoptic writers upon this point when he says: "they found not the body.'" Morison, *Who Moved The Stone*, page 77.

6. Who then encountered them? Luke 24:4. Compare Mark 16:5.

NOTE: 'As they lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid.' *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

'He is risen'

7. What news was given to the women? Matthew 28:5-6. Compare Mark 16:6, Luke 24:5-8.

NOTE: 'They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps. "Fear not ye," he said; "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." . . . Again they look into the tomb, and again they hear the wonderful news. Another angel in human form is there, and he says, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 788.

8. What were the women told to do? Matthew 28:7. Compare Mark 16:7.

NOTE: “And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.” . . . He is risen, He is risen! The women repeat the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. The Saviour is living, and not dead. They remember now that when speaking of His death He said that He would rise again. What a day is this to the world! Quickly the women departed from the sepulchre “with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.” *Desire of Ages*, page 789.

‘His disciples stole him away’

9. What did the guards do when they had recovered? Matthew 28:11.

NOTE: ‘At sight of the angels and the glorified Saviour the Roman guard had fainted and become as dead men. When the heavenly train was hidden from their view, they arose to their feet, and as quickly as their trembling limbs could carry them, made their way to the gate of the garden. Staggering like drunken men, they hurried on to the city, telling those whom they met the wonderful news. They were making their way to Pilate, but their report had been carried to the Jewish authorities, and the chief priests and rulers sent for them to be brought first into their presence. A strange appearance those soldiers presented. Trembling with fear, their faces colourless, they bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ. The soldiers told all, just as they had seen it; they had not had time to think or speak anything but the truth. With painful utterance they said, It was the Son of God who was crucified; we have heard an angel proclaiming Him as the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 781.

10. What did the chief priests decide to do when they heard the report of the guards? Matthew 28:12-15.

NOTE: ‘The faces of the priests were as those of the dead. Caiaphas tried to speak. His lips moved, but they uttered no sound. The soldiers were about to leave the council room, when a voice stayed them. Caiaphas had at last found speech. Wait, wait, he said. Tell no one the things you have seen. A lying report was then given to the soldiers. “Say ye,” said the priests, “His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.” Here the priests overreached themselves. How could the soldiers say that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept? If they were asleep, how could they know? And if the disciples had been proved guilty of stealing Christ’s body, would not the priests have been first to condemn them? Or if the sentinels had slept at the tomb, would not the priests have been foremost in accusing them to Pilate? The soldiers were horrified at the thought of bringing upon themselves the charge of sleeping at their post. This was an offence punishable with death. Should they bear false witness, deceiving the people, and placing their own lives in peril? Had they not kept their weary watch with sleepless vigilance? How could they stand the trial, even for the sake of money, if they perjured themselves? In order to silence the testimony they feared, the priests promised to secure the safety of the guard, saying that Pilate would not desire to have such a report circulated any more than they did. The Roman soldiers sold their integrity to the Jews for money. They came in before the priests burdened with a most startling message of truth; they went out with a burden of money, and on their tongues a lying report which had been framed for them by the priests.’ *Desire of Ages*, pages 781-782.

‘Neither believed they them’

11. What was the reaction of the disciples to the news that Jesus had risen? Luke 24:11.

NOTE: ‘As they heard this appointment, so definitely given, the disciples began to think of Christ’s words to them foretelling His resurrection. But even now they did not rejoice. They could not cast off their doubt and perplexity. Even when the women declared that they had seen the Lord, the disciples would not believe. They thought them under an illusion.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 794.

12. What further testimony that the Lord was risen was not believed by the disciples? Mark 16:12-13. Read Luke 24:13-33 and note verses 22-25.

NOTE: ‘Trouble seemed crowding upon trouble. On the sixth day of the week they had seen their Master die; on the first day of the next week they found themselves deprived of His body, and they were accused of having stolen it away for the sake of deceiving the people. They despaired of ever correcting the false impressions that were gaining ground against them. They feared the enmity of the priests and the wrath of the people. They longed for the presence of Jesus, who had helped them in every perplexity. Often they repeated the words, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” Lonely and sick at heart they remembered His words, “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” Luke 24:21; 23:31. They met together in the upper chamber, and closed and fastened the doors, knowing that the fate of their beloved Teacher might at any time be theirs. And all the time they might have been rejoicing in the knowledge of a risen Saviour.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 794.

Lesson 12: December 14-20
‘If Christ be not risen’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.’ 1 Corinthians 15:14.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 320-321.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 15.

LESSON AIM: To study the importance of the Resurrection of Christ.

Introduction

‘The very efforts made to prevent Christ’s resurrection are the most convincing arguments in its proof. The greater the number of soldiers placed around the tomb, the stronger would be the testimony that He had risen. Hundreds of years before the death of Christ, the Holy Spirit had declared through the psalmist, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed. . . . He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” Psalm 2:1-4. Roman guards and Roman arms were powerless to confine the Lord of life within the tomb.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 778.

‘This Jesus hath God raised up’

1. What was the first public testimony to the Resurrection? Acts 2:29-32.

NOTE: ‘By nightfall [on Resurrection Day] the essential facts must have been known in Jerusalem, not only to those in high places, but as a quiver of rumour throughout the whole city. Men setting out to walk to a distant village that evening apparently knew sufficient of the details to declare that “certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb”. [Luke 24:22] Within twenty-four hours at most the story must have been public property. Explanation was met by counter-explanation, charge by counter-charge. And high above all these vulgar wranglings came the sinister suggestion: “The disciples have stolen the body.” [Matthew 28:13] If that can be assumed we can understand why it was that seven weeks later when, upon the initiative of the disciples themselves, the whole question of the Resurrection was brought into the sharpest focus and lifted to the level of a great national and political controversy, no recognised leader of the Christians thought it necessary to bring forward the evidence of the women. The reason for this very significant silence seems to be clear. *The physical fact for which the women alone could vouch did not stand in need of any proof or argument.* It was notorious, and had been so already for seven weeks.’ Morison: *Who Moved The Stone?* pages 122-123. [Emphasis in original.]

2. What was the response to Peter’s testimony to the resurrection? Acts 2:37.

NOTE: ‘Some of those who listened to the apostles had taken an active part in the condemnation and death of Christ. Their voices had mingled with the rabble in calling for His crucifixion. When Jesus and Barabbas stood before them in the judgment hall and Pilate asked, “Whom will ye that I release unto you?” they had shouted, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Matthew 27:17; John 18:40. When Pilate delivered Christ to them, saying, “Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him;” “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person,” they had cried, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” John 19:6; Matthew 27:24, 25. Now they heard the disciples declaring that it was the Son of God who had been crucified. Priests and rulers trembled. Conviction and anguish seized the people. “They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Among those who listened to the disciples were devout Jews, who were sincere in their belief. The power that accompanied the words of the speaker convinced them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 42-43.

‘He was seen of James’

3. To whom did the risen Christ make a special appearance? 1 Corinthians 15:7.

4. What had been the attitude of James and the other brothers of the Lord to Christ during His ministry? John 7:5.

NOTE: ‘His brothers, as the sons of Joseph were called, sided with the rabbis. They insisted that the traditions must be heeded, as if they were the requirements of God. They even regarded the precepts of men more highly than the word of God, and they were greatly annoyed at the clear penetration of Jesus in distinguishing between the false and the true. His strict obedience to the law of God they condemned as stubbornness. They were surprised at the knowledge and wisdom He showed in answering the rabbis. They knew that He had not received instruction from the wise men, yet they could not but see that He was an instructor to them. They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that He had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 86.

5. What change took place in James and his brothers after the Resurrection? Acts 1:14. Compare Acts 12:17, Acts 15:13, Galatians 1:19, Galatians 2:9.

NOTE: ‘How did it come about that this man, whose coldness and even hostility towards Christ during the living Ministry is written plainly in the earliest record – whose whole training and sympathies led him to incline towards the official and priestly view – is found in the inner circle and councils of the Christians? . . . He was outside the original circle of the apostles and their friends. He could have had few, if any, illusions concerning his own brother. He stood just sufficiently far apart to be an impartial witness, and yet so near to Christ that, had the priests been able to command his allegiance, his influence might have changed the face of history. But they could not, and they slew him in the end.* It is said that the Christians inscribed upon his monument the words: “He hath been a true witness both to Jews and Greeks that Jesus is Christ.” Having regard to who he was, it might almost be said that his testimony is unique.’ Morison: *Who Moved The Stone?* pages 128, 131.

*Josephus, the Jewish historian, records the martyrdom of James in 62 AD as follows: ‘Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he [the high priest] assembled the Sanhedrin of Judges and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called ‘Christ’; whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.’

‘He was seen of me also’

6. What testimony to the Resurrection was given by Paul? 1 Corinthians 15:8, Galatians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. Compare Acts 9:3-6.

NOTE: ‘In the glorious Being who stood before him he saw the Crucified One. Upon the soul of the stricken Jew the image of the Saviour’s countenance was imprinted forever. The words spoken struck home to his heart with appalling force. Into the darkened chambers of his mind there poured a flood of light, revealing the ignorance and error of his former life and his present need of the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Saul now saw that in persecuting the followers of Jesus he had in reality been doing the work of Satan. He saw that his convictions of right and of his own duty had been based largely on his implicit confidence in the priests and rulers. He had believed them when they told him that the story of the resurrection was an artful fabrication of the disciples. Now that Jesus Himself stood revealed, Saul was convinced of the truthfulness of the claims made by the disciples. In that hour of heavenly illumination Saul’s mind acted with remarkable rapidity. The prophetic records of Holy Writ were opened to his understanding. He saw that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, had been foretold by the prophets and proved Him to be the promised Messiah. Stephen’s sermon at the time of his martyrdom was brought forcibly to Saul’s mind, and he realised that the martyr had indeed beheld “the glory of God” when he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” Acts 7:55, 56. The priests had pronounced these words blasphemy, but Saul now knew them to be truth.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 115.

7. What had been Paul’s attitude to Christ before this revelation? Acts 26:8-9.

NOTE: ‘[Saul] was zealous in persecuting the church of God, hunting them, seizing them in their houses, and delivering them to those who would slay them. Saul was a man of ability and education; his zeal and learning caused him to be highly esteemed by the Jews, while he was feared by many of the disciples of Christ. His talents were effectively employed by Satan in carrying forward his rebellion against the Son of God, and those who believed in Him.’ *Early Writing*, page 199.

‘When Saul was really convinced that he had seen the risen Jesus the immense and overpowering significance of the empty tomb swept for the first time into his mind. It was as though the great stone itself had crashed into and carried away his last defences. He saw that if the disciples were not deceivers, they then were *right* – right through the whole range and gamut of their claim. He realised why you could not associate a martyrdom so glorious as that of Stephen with a vulgar deception involving connivance with the abduction of a corpse. He began to understand why Peter was so sure, and why everyone connected with the movement was so unaccountably joyous and so immovably convinced. . . . The vacancy of the tomb was an historic fact – fixed and unalterable. Its authority grew rather than declined with the passing of the years.’ Morison: *Who Moved The Stone?* page 144.

8. To which other witnesses did Paul appeal? 1 Corinthians 15:6.

‘We have testified’

9. How did Paul explain the importance of belief in the Resurrection of Christ to Christianity? 1 Corinthians 15:14-15.

NOTE: ‘It is an undeniable fact that the hope of immortal blessedness at death has led to a widespread neglect of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection. This tendency was remarked by Dr. Adam Clarke, who said: “The doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now! How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! So apostles preached, and so primitive Christians believed; so we preach, and so our hearers believe. There is not a doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!” *Commentary*, remarks on I Corinthians 15, paragraph 3. This has continued until the glorious truth of the resurrection has been almost wholly obscured and lost sight of by the Christian world. Thus a leading religious writer, commenting on the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, says: “For all practical purposes of comfort the doctrine of the blessed immortality of the righteous takes the place for us of any doubtful doctrine of the Lord’s second coming. At our death the Lord comes for us. That is what we are to wait and watch for. The dead are already passed into glory. They do not wait for the trump for their judgment and blessedness.” But when about to leave His disciples, Jesus did not tell them that they would soon come to Him. “I go to prepare a place for you,” He said. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” John 14:2, 3.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 547-548.

10. How does Paul explain that the resurrected body is different from the mortal body? 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 53. But consider Luke 24:36-43.

NOTE: ‘The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The countenance of the risen Saviour, His manner, His speech, were all familiar to His disciples. As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again. We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus. They may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured, in this mortal life, and they rise in perfect health and symmetry; yet in the glorified body their identity will be perfectly preserved. Then shall we know even as also we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12. In the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, we shall recognise the lineaments of those we love.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 804.

‘If the dead rise not’

11. If we deny the bodily resurrection of Christ, what effect does this have on other Christian beliefs? 1 Corinthians 15:16-19.

NOTE: 'The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul has opened the way for the artful working of Satan through modern Spiritualism; and besides the Romish errors, purgatory, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, etc., which have sprung from this source, it has led many Protestants to deny the resurrection and the Judgment, and has given rise to the revolting heresy of eternal torment, and the dangerous delusion of Universalism.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 235.

12. How does Paul link the resurrection of Christ with the blessed hope of the Christian? 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

NOTE: 'The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first fruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God.' *Great Controversy*, page 399.

'In this scene of the resurrection of the Son of God is given a lively image of the glory that will be revealed at the general resurrection of the just at the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Then the dead that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth to life; and not only the earth, but the heavens themselves, shall be shaken. A few graves were opened at the resurrection of Christ; but at His second coming all the precious dead, from righteous Abel to the last saint that dies, shall awake to glorious, immortal life.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 5*, page 1110.

13. What description does Paul give of the resurrection of those who sleep in Jesus? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

NOTE: 'At the Saviour's resurrection a few graves were opened, but at His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.' *Desire of Ages*, page 787.

Lesson 13: December 21-27 **'Jesus Christ and Him crucified'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.' 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

STUDY HELP: *God's Amazing Grace*, page 178.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Galatians 6:14.

LESSON AIM: To contemplate the love of God manifested at Calvary.

Introduction

'The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperilled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 196.

'The offence of the cross'

1. How did Paul describe the contrasting attitudes to the cross of Christ? 1 Corinthians 1:18.

NOTE: 'O, we would point men to the cross of Calvary. We would bid them look upon Him whom their sins have pierced. We would bid them to behold the Redeemer of the world suffering the penalty of their transgression of the law of God. The verdict is that "the soul that sinneth it shall die." But on the cross the sinner sees the only begotten of the Father dying in his stead, and giving the transgressor life. All the intelligences in earth and heaven are called upon to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Every sinner may look and live. Do not survey that scene of Calvary with careless, thoughtless mind. Can it be that angels shall look down upon us, the recipients of God's love, and see us cold, indifferent, unimpressible, when Heaven in amazement beholds the stupendous work of redemption to save a fallen world, and desires to look into the mystery of Calvary's love and woe? Angels in wonder and amazement look upon those for whom so great salvation has been provided, and marvel that the love of God does not awaken them, and lead them to pour forth melodious strains of gratitude and adoration. But the result which all Heaven looks to behold is not seen among those who profess to be followers of Christ. How readily do we speak in endearing words of our friends and relatives, and yet how slow we are to speak of Him whose love has no parallel, set forth in Christ crucified among you.' *Review & Herald*, December 15, 1891.

2. In what way did Paul explain the attitude of the unconverted Jews to the cross of Calvary? Galatians 5:11, last part. Consider Galatians 3:13.

NOTE: 'Paul well knew how his message would be regarded by both the Jews and the Greeks of Corinth. "We preach Christ crucified," he admitted, "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." 1 Corinthians 1:23. Among his Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind. But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. At that time there had been given him a revelation of the infinite love of God, as revealed in the death of Christ; and a marvellous transformation had been wrought in his life, bringing all his plans and purposes into harmony with heaven. From that hour he had been a new man in Christ. He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 245.

'That He might reconcile'

3. How did Paul explain the purpose of Christ's death on Calvary? Ephesians 2:16, Colossians 1:20.

NOTE: 'Christ's death proves God's great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved. Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 209-210

4. Why is this reconciliation necessary? Isaiah 59:2.

NOTE: 'The God of heaven is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," and cannot "look on iniquity." Habakkuk 1:13. It is not because He is unwilling to forgive that He turns from the transgressor; it is because the sinner refuses to make use of the abundant provisions of grace, that God is unable to deliver from sin. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." Isaiah 59:1, 2.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 323.

'Obedient unto death'

5. What wonderful example was revealed in Christ's willingness to die on Calvary? Philippians 2:8.

NOTE: 'Point after point Paul lingered over, in order that those who should read his epistle might fully comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in their behalf. Presenting Christ as He was when equal with God and with Him receiving the homage of the angels, the apostle traced His course until He had reached the lowest depths of humiliation. Paul was convinced that if they could be brought to comprehend the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, all selfishness would be banished from their lives. He showed how the Son of God had laid aside His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the conditions of human nature, and then had humbled Himself as a servant, becoming obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8), that He might lift fallen man from degradation to hope and joy and heaven.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 333.

6. What does a mind set on earthly and selfish things reveal? Philippians 3:18-19.

NOTE: 'A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world leads many to follow in the steps of learned men; and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible; and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the opposition of the clergy to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another. Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influence to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them by the silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whatever this attachment may be, parental, filial, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same; the opposers of truth exert their power to control the conscience, and the souls held under their sway have not sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions of duty.' *Great Controversy*, pages 596-597.

'The joy that was set before Him'

7. What sustained Christ through His sufferings on Calvary? Hebrews 12:2.

NOTE: 'Before Him, in vivid outline, lay the scenes whither His feet were tending. Even before He took humanity upon Him, He saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every

insult that was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:7, 8. Ever before Him He saw the result of His mission. His earthly life, so full of toil and self-sacrifice, was cheered by the prospect that He would not have all this travail for nought. By giving His life for the life of men, He would win back the world to its loyalty to God. Although the baptism of blood must first be received; although the sins of the world were to weigh upon His innocent soul; although the shadow of an unspeakable woe was upon Him; yet for the joy that was set before Him, He chose to endure the cross, and despised the shame.' *Desire of Ages*, page 410.

8. How are we shown that Christ's sufferings will be seen to be worthwhile? Isaiah 53:11. Consider Revelation 7:9-10.
NOTE: 'Christ saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He viewed the expanse of eternity and saw the happiness of those who through His humiliation should receive pardon and everlasting life. He was wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and with His stripes they were healed. He heard the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Although the baptism of blood must first be received, although the sins of the world were to weigh upon His innocent soul, although the shadow of an unspeakable woe was upon Him; yet for the joy that was set before Him He chose to endure the cross and despised the shame.' *Maranatha*, page 316.

'God hath highly exalted Him'

9. In contrast to His humiliation on Calvary, what position does Christ now hold? Philippians 2:9.
NOTE: 'The question of His divinity is forever settled. Where are those who held the Saviour bound at Pilate's bar, who smote Him in the face, who scourged Him, who drove the nails through His hands and feet? Those who mocked Him, saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." (Matthew 27:42)? Where is the puny arm that will be lifted against Him now? The scene is changed. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Christ, Lord of heaven and earth. The glory of Christ's humanity did not appear when He was upon the earth. He was regarded as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. We hid as it were our faces from Him. But He was pursuing the path the plan of God had devised. That same humanity now appears as He descends from heaven, robed in glory, triumphant, exalted.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 358.

10. What hymn of praise ascends to the throne? Revelation 5:11-13.
NOTE: 'The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore, humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart, and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous song: "Worthy, worthy, is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God, by His own most precious blood!"' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 98.

'What are these wounds in Thine hands?'

11. How are we shown that Christ retains the tokens of His suffering? John 20:27, Revelation 5:6. Consider Zechariah 13:6, Habakkuk 3:3-4.
NOTE: 'One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: "He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power." Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God, there is the Saviour's glory, there "the hiding of His power." "Mighty to save," through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God's mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honour; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.' *Great Controversy*, page 674.

12. What does Paul desire to see in every follower of Christ? Philippians 2:5.
NOTE: 'The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.' *Desire of Ages*, page 311.