

‘Questions and strifes of words’

General Introduction.

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God’s word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion.

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God’s people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what.

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance.

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine.

God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures, and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold.

God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God, so that when the testing time shall come, and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith, they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

Counsels to Writers & Editors, pages 38-40

Lesson 1: Creation: six days or millions of years?

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.’ Exodus 20:11.

STUDY HELP: *Education*, pages 128-134.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Can the Bible be reconciled with evolution and millions of years?

Introduction

‘The infidel supposition, that the events of the first week required seven vast, indefinite periods for their accomplishment, strikes directly at the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It makes indefinite and obscure that which God has made very plain. Infidel geologists claim that the world is very much older than the Bible record makes it. They reject the Bible record, because of those things which are to them evidences from the earth itself, that the world has existed tens of thousands of years. And many who profess to believe the Bible record are at a loss to account for wonderful things which are found in the earth, with the view that Creation week was only seven literal days, and the world is now only about 6000 years old.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 52.

‘Thus the heavens and the earth were finished’

1. What account does the Bible give of the duration of the work of Creation? Genesis 1:31-2:2. (Read Genesis 1.)

NOTE: ‘The weekly cycle of seven literal days, six for labour, and the seventh for rest, which has been preserved and brought down through Bible history, originated in the great facts of the first seven days. When God spake His law with an audible voice from Sinai, He introduced the Sabbath by saying, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” He then declares definitely what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh. He then, in giving the reason for thus observing the week, points them back to His example on the first seven days of time. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the record of Creation to mean literal days.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 52.

2. The Hebrew word for ‘day’ is ‘yom.’ Does it always mean a twenty-four hour day? Read Genesis 1.

NOTE: A typical concordance will illustrate that 'yom' can have a range of meanings, just as the word 'day' does in English: a period of light as contrasted with night, a 24-hour period, a period of time or era, a specific point in time, or a year. But whenever 'yom' is used **with a number** (410 times apart from Genesis 1), e.g. the first day, the second day, etc, it **always** means a literal 24-hour day. Whenever 'yom' is used **in connection with 'evening' and 'morning'** (23 times apart from Genesis 1) it **always** means a literal 24-hour day. Whenever 'yom' is used **with the word 'night'** (53 times apart from Genesis 1:5), it **always** means a literal 24-hour day. No one, starting from the Bible, could ever deduce that the six days of Creation were millions of years. This is simply an attempt to harmonise the Bible with the current ideas of fallible men.

'Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. Bones of men and animals, as well as instruments of warfare, petrified trees, etc., much larger than any that now exist, or that have existed for thousands of years, have been discovered, and from this it is inferred that the earth was populated long before the time brought to view in the record of creation, and by a race of beings vastly superior in size to any men now living. Such reasoning has led many professed Bible believers to adopt the position that the days of creation were vast, indefinite periods. But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing.' *Christian Education*, page 191.

'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth'

3. What is God's own statement regarding the duration of His work of creation? Exodus 20:11.

NOTE: 'The assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which He has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." [Psalm 33:6, 9.] The Bible recognises no long ages in which the earth was evolved from chaos. Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed. At the close of each day is given the result of the Creator's work. The statement is made at the close of the first week's record, "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created." [Genesis 2:4.] But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of His work.' *Christian Education*, pages 190-191.

4. How did God ordain that His people should remember His work of creation? Exodus 31:16-17.

NOTE: 'Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and He then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man. In the law given from Sinai, God recognised the week, and the facts upon which it is based. After giving the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and specifying what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh, He states the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing back to His own example: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." [Exodus 20:8-11.] This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the days of creation to be literal. The first six days of each week are given to man for labour, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. On the seventh day man is to refrain from labour, in commemoration of the Creator's rest.' *Christian Education*, page 190.

'Thou art the God, even Thou alone'

5. How is the true God identified? 1 Chronicles 16:26.

NOTE: 'God's claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is based upon the fact that He is the Creator, and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. Thus it is presented in the Bible. Says the prophet Jeremiah: "The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King. . . . The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.'" *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 336.

6. On what other occasions did God's people identify their God in this way? 2 Kings 19:15, Isaiah 40:28. Jeremiah 32:17, Revelation 4:11.

NOTE: 'Idolatry of nature is a farce; it is the invention of men who know not God, and who are trying to keep out of sight a knowledge of the true God. The words of Holy Writ say nothing of the independent laws of nature. They teach us that God is the Superintendent as well as the Creator of all things. The divine Being is engaged in upholding the things which He has created. God has laws which He has instituted; but they are only His servants, through which He effects results. It is God who calls everything into order, and keeps all things in motion. We may look up, through nature, to nature's God. The beautiful things of nature have been given us for our pleasure. Then let us not turn our blessings into a curse by being led away from God in the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Let nature's beautiful ministers of love answer the purpose of God, drawing our hearts to Him to adore His goodness, His compassion, His inexpressible love, and to be filled with the beauties of His character.' *Christian Educator*, April 1, 1899.

‘Lord, Thou art God’

7. What was a major element in the preaching of the early church? Acts 4:24, Acts 14:15, Acts 17:24-25.

NOTE: ‘The apostles endeavoured to impart to these idolaters a knowledge of God the Creator and of His Son, the Saviour of the human race. They first directed attention to the wonderful works of God, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the beautiful order of the recurring seasons, the mighty snow-capped mountains, the lofty trees, and other varied wonders of nature, which showed a skill beyond human comprehension. Through these works of the Almighty, the apostles led the minds of the heathen to a contemplation of the great Ruler of the universe.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 180.

8. Who is the Creator and how did John introduce Him in his gospel? John 1:1-3. Compare Colossians 1:16.

NOTE: ‘The Majesty of Heaven walked among the children of men with the dignity of a king; yet He preserved the simplicity of a little child. He was never known to boast of superiority, to exalt His own power, ability, or attainments. Christ was the Creator of the earth; He was the king of glory; yet His life of meekness and humility put to shame the proud boasting of men. He was the embodiment of wisdom, the fountain of knowledge. Let those who would pride themselves upon their superior abilities, learn of the great Teacher. Jesus invites all, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” He said to his disciples, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”’ *Signs of the Times*, June 30, 1881.

‘Death by sin’

9. What Bible teachings depend on a belief in the creation story? Romans 5:12, Mark 10:6-7, 2 Peter 3:5-7.

NOTE: Christ is described as ‘the last Adam’, putting right what was made wrong through the sin of the first Adam. This would be meaningless nonsense if the first Adam were a mythical figure and man were just a development from pre-human primates. The early chapters of Genesis provide the only satisfactory explanation of the origins of mankind, of sin and its remedy, of death, of marriage, of the seven-day week and the Sabbath, of the fossil record (Genesis 7:21-22), of the various languages spoken by mankind (Genesis 11:6-8), and many other important things. The Bible explains why, contrary to popular modern opinion, mankind consists of but a single race (Acts 17:26).

10. Did Christ believe in the early chapters of Genesis? Matthew 19:3-8, 23:35, 24:37-39.

NOTE: Christ frequently referred to the early chapters of Genesis as an authoritative historical account, as did all the New Testament writers. Rejection of the Bible’s first eleven chapters as mythical undermines all the major doctrines of the Bible. This is why, throughout the Bible, the creatorship of God is repeatedly stressed.

‘Worship Him that made heaven and earth’

11. What is declared to be an integral part of God’s final message to mankind? Revelation 14:6-7.

NOTE: ‘By the first angel, men are called upon to “fear God, and give glory to Him” and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9. The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. “All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.” Psalm 96:5. “To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.” “Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else.” Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things.” Revelation 4:11. In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:10, 11. Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is “a sign, . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.” Ezekiel 20:20. And the reason given is: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.” Exodus 31:17.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 436-437.

12. Why is it important to recognise the creative power of God? Psalm 51:10, Ephesians 2:10.

NOTE: ‘One of the most earnest prayers recorded in the Word of God is that of David when he pleaded, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Psalm 51:10. God’s response to such a prayer is, A new heart will I give you. This is a work that no finite man can do. Men and women are to begin at the beginning, seeking God most earnestly for a true Christian experience. They are to feel the creative power of the Holy Spirit. They are to receive the new heart, that is kept soft and tender by the grace of heaven. The selfish spirit is to be cleansed from the soul. They are to labour earnestly and with humility of heart, each one looking to

Jesus for guidance and encouragement. Then the building, fitly framed together, will grow into a holy temple in the Lord.' *Our High Calling*, page 159.

Lesson 2: Does the devil really exist?

MEMORY VERSE: 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' 2 Peter 5:8.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies Volume 1*, pages 290-302.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Is the devil a person or the evil in man?

Introduction

Satan 'fastens the delusion upon minds that there is no personal devil, and those who believe this make no effort to resist and war against that which does not exist, and poor blind mortals finally adopt the maxim, "Whatever is, is right." They acknowledge no rule to measure their course. Satan leads many to believe that prayer to God is useless, and but a form. He well knows how needful is meditation and prayer, to keep Christ's followers aroused to resist his cunning and deceptions. Satan's devices will divert the mind from these important exercises, that the soul may not lean for help upon the mighty One, and obtain strength from Him to resist his attacks.' *Messages to Young People*, page 59.

'Your adversary the devil'

1. By what names is the devil known in the Bible? Revelation 12:9.

NOTE: In this verse, the devil is identified as 'the great dragon' (see Revelation 12:3), 'that old serpent' (see Genesis 3:1), the Devil (a name used only in the New Testament) and Satan (used in both Old and New Testaments). Thus Genesis and Revelation are linked as we see the one who brought sin into the universe as the one who has constantly made war on Christ and His saints throughout human history.

2. What does the name 'Satan' mean?

NOTE: 'The word itself, the Hebrew שָׂטָן, is simply an "adversary," and is so used in 1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:22; 1 Kings 5:4; in 1 Kings 11:25; in Numbers 22:22, and Psalm 109:6; in 1 Kings 11:14, 23. This original sense is still found in our Lord's application of the name to St. Peter in Matthew 16:23. It is used as a proper name or title only four times in the O. T., namely, (with the article) in Job 1:6, 12, 2:1; Zechariah 3:1, and (without the article) in 1 Chronicles 21:1.' *Smith's Revised Bible Dictionary*, art. 'Satan'.

3. Is Satan alone in his work as man's enemy? Matthew 25:41. Compare Revelation 12:9.

NOTE: 'None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working. There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. The better to disguise his real character and purposes, he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite no stronger emotion than ridicule or contempt. He is well pleased to be painted as a ludicrous or loathsome object, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery by those who think themselves intelligent and well informed. It is because he has masked himself with consummate skill that the question is so widely asked: "Does such a being really exist?" It is an evidence of his success that theories giving the lie to the plainest testimony of the Scriptures are so generally received in the religious world. And it is because Satan can most readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence, that the word of God gives us so many examples of his malignant work, unveiling before us his secret forces, and thus placing us on our guard against his assaults.' *Great Controversy*, pages 516-517.

'Satan stood up against Israel'

4. What role did Satan play in the book of Job? Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6.

NOTE: It has been suggested in Christadelphian literature (Fred Pearce, *Do you believe in a devil?* pages 4-5) that it is an incorrect translation to suggest that Satan is a name in this passage, since Hebrew has no capital letters. As the previous note stated, Satan is used here as a proper name or title and this is indicated by the use of the article (i.e. the Satan). Their view is that these scenes in Job represent a group of human worshippers (the 'sons of God'), one of whom was a personal enemy of Job. The 'God' who spoke to 'Satan' was simply the priest, acting as God's spokesman. They fail to explain how this human enemy brought about the calamities that befell Job.

'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. God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy.' *Welfare Ministry*, page 21.

5. In what other scene is Satan described as opposing God's people? Zechariah 3:1-2.

NOTE: 'In the prophecy of Zechariah is brought to view Satan's accusing work, and the work of Christ in resisting the adversary of His people. The prophet says, "He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel." Zech. 3:1-3. The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God's people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 166.

'Get thee behind me, Satan'

6. Why did Jesus describe Peter as 'Satan'? Matthew 16:21-25.

NOTE: 'Satan is ever intruding himself between the soul of man and God. This lesson in regard to Peter needs to be studied carefully. Peter did not desire to see the cross in the work of Christ. The impression which his words would make was directly opposed to that which Christ desired to make on the minds of His followers, and the Saviour was moved to utter one of the sternest rebukes that ever fell from His lips. Satan was trying to discourage Jesus, and turn Him from His mission; and Peter, in his blind love, was giving voice to the temptation. The prince of evil was the author of the thought. His instigation was behind that impulsive appeal. He was seeking to fix Peter's gaze upon the earthly glory, that he might not behold the cross to which Jesus desired to turn his eyes. And through Peter, Satan was again pressing the temptation upon Jesus. But the Saviour heeded it not; His thought was for His disciple. Satan had interposed between Peter and his Master, that the heart of the disciple might not be touched at the vision of Christ's humiliation for him. The words of Christ were spoken, not to Peter, but to the one who was trying to separate him from his Redeemer. "Get thee behind Me, Satan." No longer interpose between Me and My erring servant. Let Me come face to face with Peter, that I may reveal to him the mystery of My love. It was to Peter a bitter lesson, and one which he learned but slowly, that the path of Christ on earth lay through agony and humiliation. The disciple shrank from fellowship with his Lord in suffering. But in the heat of the furnace fire he was to learn its blessing. Long afterward, when his active form was bowed with the burden of years and labours, he wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12, 13).' *Conflict & Courage*, page 312.

7. What New Testament title is applied to Satan? Matthew 4:1. (Read Revelation 20:2 to see that these two names are applied to the same being.)

NOTE: What does the word 'devil' mean? '(Διαβολος: *Diabolus*; properly "one who sets at variance," διαβαλλει; generally a "slanderer" or "false accuser"). The word is found in the plural number and adjective sense in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; and Titus 2:3. In all other cases it is used with the article as a descriptive name of Satan, excepting that in John 6:70 it is applied to Judas, and as "Satan" to St. Peter in Matthew 16:23, because they—the one permanently, and the other for the moment—were doing Satan's work.' Smith's *Revised Bible Dictionary*, art. 'Devil'.

Once again, in Christadelphian literature, an attempt is made to apply all references to the devil to various human slanderers.

'Tempted of the devil'

8. Who tempted Jesus in the wilderness? Matthew 4:1.

NOTE: It is taught, by those who deny the existence of a personal devil, that what Jesus suffered in the wilderness was 'the personification of that human urge to gratify his own desires; he utterly conquered it and remained sinless.' 'This, then, is the simple key which unlocks the problem passages about the devil and Satan: look for the source of it in the power of sin shown in the desires, the weaknesses and the actions of men; and the majority of passages will become plain.' Fred Pearce, *Do you believe in a Devil?* page 14.

'Why was it that at the beginning of His public ministry Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted? He went, not in His own behalf, but in our behalf; to overcome for us. He was to be tried and tested as a representative of the race. He was to meet the foe in personal encounter, to overthrow him who claimed to be the head of the kingdoms of the world. Satan met Him and tempted Him on the very points where man will be tempted. Our Substitute and Surety passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell. And the question was, Will He stumble and fall as Adam did over God's commandments? He met Satan's attacks again and again with "It is written," and Satan left the field of conflict a conquered foe. Christ has redeemed Adam's disgraceful fall, and has perfected a character of perfect obedience, and left an example for the human family. Had He failed on one point in reference to the law of God, He would not have been a perfect offering, for it was on one point only that Adam failed. Our Saviour withstood on every point the test of temptation, and in this way He has made it possible for man to

overcome. Now, there is enough in this idea, in this thought, to fill our hearts with gratitude every day of our lives. As Jesus was accepted as our substitute and surety, every one of us will be accepted if we stand the test and trial for ourselves. He took our nature that He might become acquainted with the trials wherewith man should be beset, and He is our mediator and intercessor before the Father.' *That I May Know Him*, page 32.

9. Was this the end of Christ's temptations? Luke 4:13.

NOTE: 'After Satan had ended his temptations he departed from Jesus for a season, and angels prepared Him food in the wilderness and strengthened Him, and the blessing of His Father rested upon Him. Satan had failed in his fiercest temptations; yet he looked forward to the period of Jesus' ministry, when he should at different times try his cunning against Him. He still hoped to prevail against Him by stirring up those who would not receive Jesus, to hate and seek to destroy Him. Satan held a special council with his angels. They were disappointed and enraged that they had prevailed nothing against the Son of God. They decided that they must be more cunning and use their power to the utmost to inspire unbelief in the minds of His own nation as to His being the Saviour of the world, and in this way discourage Jesus in His mission.' *The Story of Redemption*, page 202.

'How art thou fallen from heaven?'

10. What picture does the Bible give of Satan's initial rebellion? Isaiah 14:12-14. Compare Revelation 12:7-9.

NOTE: 'The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels. His spirit now reigns in the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God and promise men liberty through transgression of its precepts. Reproof of sin still arouses the spirit of hatred and resistance. When God's messages of warning are brought home to the conscience, Satan leads men to justify themselves and to seek the sympathy of others in their course of sin. Instead of correcting their errors, they excite indignation against the reprove, as if he were the sole cause of difficulty. From the days of righteous Abel to our own time such is the spirit which has been displayed toward those who dare to condemn sin.' *Great Controversy*, page 500.

11. How was Ezekiel shown the same events? Ezekiel 28:14-15.

NOTE: 'It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" (1 John 3:4) it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. Sin appeared in a perfect universe. The reason of its inception or development was never explained and never can be, even at the last great day when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened. At that day it will be evident to all that there is not, and never was, any cause for sin. At the final condemnation of Satan and his angels and of all men who have finally identified themselves with him as transgressors of God's law, every mouth will be stopped. When the hosts of rebellion, from the first great rebel to the last transgressor, are asked why they have broken the law of God, they will be speechless. There will be no answer to give.' *That I May Know Him*, page 15.

'That He might destroy him'

12. What was one of the purposes of Christ's death? Hebrews 2:14.

NOTE: Christadelphian literature proposes that 'Satan' is the weak human nature that all humanity since Adam's fall have shared. They teach that only through death can sin be put away in the life. They do this by proposing that Hebrews 2:14 and Hebrews 9:26 are identical in meaning, that just as 'through death' is the same as 'by the sacrifice of himself', so 'he might destroy the devil' must mean the same as 'put away sin'. The 'devil', they say, refers to that human rebellion against God that the Bible calls sin. But this view effectively says that sin is the same as weak human nature and implies that Christ, in sharing the common nature of humanity, was sinful, and needed to put away sin in Himself!

'The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, "It is finished," the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer's desire for self-exaltation had led him to say: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will be like the Most High." God declares: "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, . . . and never shalt thou be any more." Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28:18, 19. When "the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven;. . . all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1.' *Great Controversy*, page 503.

13. What pictures does the Bible gives of Satan's final destruction? Revelation 20:10. Compare Ezekiel 28:18-19.

NOTE: 'He [Satan] is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. After all have perished who fell by his deceptions, he is still to live and suffer on. In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch, Satan the root, his followers the branches. The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah. Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations.' *Great Controversy*, page 673.

Lesson 3: What happens when a person dies?

MEMORY VERSE: 'For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing,' Ecclesiastes 9:5.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 531-550.

LESSON AIM: Is death really death or another form of life?

Introduction

'If the dead are already enjoying the bliss of heaven or writhing in the flames of hell, what need of a future judgment? The teachings of God's word on these important points are neither obscure nor contradictory; they may be understood by common minds.' *Great Controversy*, page 549.

'Death by sin'

1. What warning did God give to Adam in connection with His command? Genesis 2:17. Compare Ezekiel 18:20, Romans 6:23, first part.

NOTE: 'God created Adam and Eve, and placed them in charge of the Garden of Eden, where everything was beautiful to look upon, and the fruit pleasant to the taste. He said to them, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They were forbidden to eat the fruit of this tree. This seems a small thing, but it was a test of their obedience and of their trust and confidence in God. God told them that if they disobeyed, death would be the result. Their happiness depended on obedience. By obedience Adam would have lost nothing which it was for his good to retain.' *Signs of the Times*, October 10, 1900.

2. How did the tempter first cast doubt on God's word and then deny it Genesis 3:1 & 4.

NOTE: 'The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. And the declaration of the serpent to Eve in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die", was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul. Yet this declaration, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by our first parents. The divine sentence, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally. We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God.' *Great Controversy*, page 533.

'The dead know not anything'

3. What is the Bible's testimony on the state of man in death? Psalm 146:4. Compare Ecclesiastes 9:5 & 10, Psalm 115:17, Psalm 6:5.

NOTE: In some modern versions, Psalm 146:4 is manipulated in order to remove its testimony concerning the state of man in death. The word 'thoughts' (Hebrew: 'eshtonah') is rendered plans, while the word 'perish' (Hebrew 'abad') is rendered come to nothing. If God's Word really stated that man's plans come to nothing on the day of his death, it would be sinful for a Christian to make a will!

'Man is only mortal, and while he feels himself too wise to accept Jesus, he will remain only mortal. Physical life is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. The Word of God nowhere teaches that the soul of man is immortal. Immortality is an attribute of God only [1 Timothy 6:16]. Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death, a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity. What say the Scriptures concerning these things? David declares that man is not conscious in death. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:4.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 174.

4. Where are the dead? Genesis 3:19. See Daniel 12:2 and compare John 11:41-44, Acts 2:29 & 34.

NOTE: 'Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that the patriarch David "is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." "For David is not ascended into the heavens." Acts 2:29, 34. The fact that David remains in the grave until the resurrection, proves that the righteous do not go to heaven at death. It is only through the resurrection, and by virtue of the fact that Christ has risen, that David can at last sit at the right hand of God.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 174.

‘If they will not hear Moses and the prophets’

5. What parable of Jesus is often used to ‘prove’ the immortality of the soul? Luke 16:19-31.

NOTE: Are all parables literal accounts of real events that actually happened? (Read Jotham’s parable? Judges 9:7-15 and Jehoshaphat’s parable. 2 Kings 14:9 before you answer.) Is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus a literal account of events that actually happened? Consider the following: Are all the righteous dead literally in Abraham’s bosom? (How big a bosom does Abraham have to carry all those people (see Revelation 7:9) in his arms? Are people in hell really going to be so close to heaven that they can see the righteous in heaven? Are heaven and hell so close that people can have conversations across the gap between them, as the rich man and Abraham had in this story? Is it likely that, suffering the torments of the flames of hell, the rich man could be significantly relieved by the wet tip of Lazarus’s finger? We all agree that **bodies** remain in the graves. If this parable is talking about **souls** going to heaven when people die, how can Abraham’s soul have a bosom, Lazarus’ soul a finger and the rich man’s soul a tongue? Surely their graves still contained Abraham’s bosom, all of Lazarus’ fingers and the rich man’s tongue, at least until they decomposed to dust.

6. Why did Jesus tell this parable? Luke 16:31. Compare John 11:47 & 53, 12:9-10.

NOTE: The purpose of this parable is to teach the lessons that people who reject the teachings of Moses and the prophets would not be convinced even if a person were raised from the dead. Notice that in this parable, Jesus gives the person who was proposed to come back from the dead a name. **Can you think of any other parable in which Jesus gave a character a name? Can you think why Jesus did it in this parable and why He chose that particular name, Lazarus?** Read John 11 and especially verses 43-53. Do these verses show the truth of the parable, that a man called Lazarus really did come back from the dead and the chief priests and Pharisees, who had rejected the testimony of Moses and the prophets concerning Christ, still refused to believe despite the evidence of one who had risen from the dead? (Of course, the Lazarus of the parable is not the same person as the real-life Lazarus, but the lesson the parable taught about the fictional Lazarus was proved true in the experience of the real-life Lazarus.) Christ told the disciples that he had not gone earlier to Lazarus ‘to the intent that ye may believe.’ John 10:15. By the time Christ arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead four days. There could be no doubt that he was dead. By that time his body would be decomposing. (John 11:39) And Christ called him back from the dead. In John 5:25-29, Christ had claimed that power over all the dead. And what was the reaction of the chief priests and the Pharisees? John 11:47-53. Exactly what Jesus had predicted in His parable would happen if Lazarus was raised from the dead. They had rejected the clear evidence of prophecies being fulfilled and not even the dead being raised to life would make them believe. (For information about the origin of the belief on which Christ based this parable, read Josephus: Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades, normally included in Whiston’s *The Works of Josephus*.)

‘Absent from the body, present with the Lord’

7. What words of Paul are often interpreted to mean that Paul believed that the dead go straight to heaven at death? 2 Corinthians 5:6 & 8.

NOTE: Paul wrote extensively on this subject. It would be honest, therefore, to read 1 Corinthians 15 since these words had already been written to the same people to whom Paul wrote about ‘absent from the body, present with the Lord.’ His readers already knew what Paul had written earlier on this subject. They would not expect him to contradict himself. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul explains how and when ‘we shall ever be with the Lord.’ The epistles to the Thessalonians were written before the epistles to the Corinthians so 1 Thessalonians 4 represents the basis for Paul’s later remarks on how we shall be ‘present with the Lord.’ In 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul uses figurative language. ‘Our earthly house of this tabernacle’ is the mortal body. ‘Tabernacle’ means tent, a temporary dwelling. If the mortal body is dissolved, we have ‘a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’. This house is not a tent, it is our eternal dwelling. Since the tent is our mortal body, the eternal house must be our immortal body. In verse 2 Paul expresses his earnest desire to have his immortal body. In verse 3 Paul does not want to be naked. Those who lose their mortal body at death but do not have an immortal body in the heavens will be naked. They will have no eternal, immortal body to clothe them. Paul does not want this to happen to him. Verse 4 While we are in our mortal body (our tent), we groan, **not because we want to be naked** but because we want our mortality to be swallowed up in [eternal] life. We want to exchange our mortal body for our eternal body. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54 explains what Paul taught about **when** this will happen.) Verse 5 It is God who made this possible for us and the guarantee [earnest] is that He has given us the Holy Spirit. Verse 6 So we have confidence even though we know that while we are living in the [mortal] body, we are absent from the presence of the Lord. Verse 7 (This confidence is based on our faith in His promise, not on anything that we can see.) Verse 8 So we have this confidence. Our will [our desire, our preference] would be to be away from this mortal body so that we can be present with the Lord. **Nowhere does Paul say that he wants to die.** Do you have to die to receive your immortal body? Is Paul saying, ‘I want to die’? **Or is he saying, ‘I want Jesus to return’?** Verse 3 is the key. Paul is **not** asking to be **naked**, which is what would happen if his soul went up to heaven. Paul wants his immortal **body**, his ‘building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ Paul has already explained to them **when** God’s people will receive immortal bodies. 1 Corinthians 15:42-53. ‘Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.’ Paul earnestly desires to be clothed with our ‘house which is from heaven’. That ‘house’ will be given to him when the Lord returns.

8. What other passage is interpreted to mean that you go to be with Christ as soon as you die? Philippians 1:23. Read verses 20-26.

NOTE: Paul is quite clear that he will not go to be with Christ when he dies, for he explained at length elsewhere that the dead in Christ meet the Lord 'when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.' **This does not happen at death.** Read Romans 8:23, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Corinthians 15:51-55, Colossians 3:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:1 and 2 Timothy 4:7-8 to confirm Paul's teaching about when God's people will be with Christ. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Philippians from imprisonment in Rome, an old and faithful missionary, knowing that he may be relieved of his task by death, but knowing that others may still be brought to Christ if he lives on. This verse shows Paul's willingness to accept either alternative.

'In Paradise'

9. What words of Christ are interpreted to mean that a person goes to heaven at death? Luke 23:43.

NOTE: Following the original word order in the Greek, this verse reads literally: 'And he said to him truly thee I tell today with me thou wilt be in the paradise.' 'Today' is an adverb of time and the grammatical rule requires it to modify the meaning of its **nearest** verb within the same sentence or clause. This verse contains three verbs, 'he said', 'I tell' and 'thou wilt be.' Luke clearly places 'today' immediately after the verb 'I tell' and separates it from the other two verbs. Thus a correct translation of this verse should read: 'And He said to him, "Truly I tell thee today, thou wilt be with Me in Paradise.' The reading found in most English versions is wrong, both grammatically and because it does not accord with the words of Christ in John 20: 17.

'I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. Christ did not promise that the thief should be with Him in Paradise that day. He Himself did not go that day to Paradise. He slept in the tomb, and on the morning of the resurrection He said, "I am not yet ascended to My Father." John 20:17. But on the day of the crucifixion, the day of apparent defeat and darkness, the promise was given. "Today" while dying upon the cross as a malefactor, Christ assures the poor sinner, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.' *Desire of Ages*, page 751.

10. Why was it important to give this assurance to the dying thief? Deuteronomy 21:22-23. See also Galatians 3:13.

NOTE: The clear teaching of Scripture is that God's curse rests on one who, having committed a crime worthy of death, is hanged on a tree. This curse must therefore rest on the dying thief. But he had acknowledged his sin (see Luke 23:40-41) and now he pleads with the Lord for mercy. And the Lord grants his prayer, on the very day when, according to the Word, God's curse should rest upon him! As Rotherham's *Emphasised New Testament* puts it: 'Verily I say unto thee this day: With Me shalt thou be in Paradise.' (As long ago as 1818, Cecil Hartley, in his *Principles of Punctuation*, pointed out the huge doctrinal differences that hang on the punctuation of this verse, punctuation which is supplied by the translator!)

'Together to meet the Lord'

11. Instead of the immortal soul, what hope is offered to the Christian? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

NOTE: It is important to note the word 'together' in verse 17. 'We which are alive' when the Lord returns will be 'caught up together with them', that is, the dead in Christ who have risen at the Lord's command. Paul is clear that all those in Christ, both resurrected and survivors, will meet the Lord together. One group will not meet the Lord before the other. (The word translated 'bring' in verse 14 [Greek: 'ago'] literally means 'to lead forth'. A related word is used in Hebrews 13:20 for the resurrection of Christ. What Paul is saying in verse 14 is what He said in 1 Corinthians 15:16-23: Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of the dead in Christ.)

12. What did Jesus say about the resurrection? John 5:28-29.

NOTE: 'The Life-giver is coming to break the fetters of the tomb. He is to bring forth the captives and proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life." Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection. In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken [Ecclesiastes 12:6], man's thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. . . . So when . . . this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15:52-54. As they are called forth from their deep slumber, they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death, the last thought that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:55. The pangs of death were the last things they felt. When they awake the pain is all gone.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 181.

Lesson 4: Predestination: what is it all about?

MEMORY VERSE: 'God so loved the world that He have His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3:16.

STUDY HELP: Ephesians 1:2-14.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Did God ordain which people would be saved and which lost before they were born?

Introduction

‘The predestination of which God speaks includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God’s commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God from among men. All who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world.’ *Manuscript Releases Volume 6*, page 388.

‘Not willing that any should perish’

1. What does the Bible say about predestination? Romans 8:28-30, Ephesians 1:5-11.

NOTE: These are the only two passages in the Bible where the words ‘predestinate’ and ‘predestinated’ are found. In both cases, these words are **only** applied to the redeemed and their predestination to conformity to Christ’s image. The Bible never speaks of the predestination of the wicked.

‘These promises are not made to a few, but to all who will come to the heavenly banquet that God has prepared by sending His Son to our world to die in our behalf, that through faith in Him, we should become one with God. The praise and glory of His grace, power, and wisdom is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people. Wonderful possibilities are provided for every one who has faith in Christ. No walls are built to keep any living soul from salvation.’ *Manuscript Releases Volume 6*, page 388.

2. Does the Bible teach that God has ordained that the majority of mankind should perish? 2 Peter 3:9.

NOTE: Since the time of Augustine, the one who invented the doctrine that God ordained the fate of every man before the world was made, it has been the teaching of what is today called Calvinism that God created the majority of mankind to suffer eternal torment and that nothing a man can do will alter this divine decree. Note the following: ‘The doctrine of absolute Predestination of course logically holds that some are foreordained to death as truly as some are foreordained to life.’ Lorraine Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, page 104. ‘The final torments of the wicked... are indescribably awful... In the next world the wicked, with all restraint removed, will go headlong into sin, blaspheming and cursing God, growing worse and worse as they sink deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit.’ op. cit, page 79.

‘Jesus is the only one who can give you peace. He loved you and gave Himself for you. His great heart of love is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities?” What sins are too great for Him to pardon? What soul too dark and sin-oppressed for Him to save? He is gracious, not looking for merit in us, but of His own boundless goodness healing our backslidings and loving us freely, while we are yet sinners. He is “slow to anger, and of great kindness;” “long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”’ *Testimonies Volume 5*, page 649.

‘God so loved the world’

3. What is the extent of God’s love? John 3:16.

NOTE: Calvinism teaches that Christ died only for the elect. The remainder of mankind are the subjects of God’s wrath, not for anything that they have chosen to do, but because He ordained them to eternal torment. Note the following: ‘It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and (then) condemn them for that evil; but the believing, spiritual man sees no absurdity at all in this.’ Martin Luther, quoted in Lorraine Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, page 106.

“‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John 3:16). This message is for the world, for “whosoever” means that any and all who comply with the condition may share the blessing. All who look unto Jesus, believing in Him as their personal Saviour, shall “not perish, but have everlasting life.” Every provision has been made that we may have the everlasting reward.’ *Faith & Works*, page 105.

4. How is the love of God shown even for those who reject Him? Matthew 23:37.

NOTE: Calvinism teaches that God’s will is irresistible and sovereign. They teach that if God were to will the salvation of all men, then all men would be saved, whether they wished it or no. The fact that some will be lost is for the Calvinist the proof that God ordained them to be lost.

‘Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God. The woes of a fallen race, pressing upon His soul, forced from His lips that exceeding bitter cry. He saw the record of sin traced in human misery, tears, and blood; His heart was moved with infinite pity for the afflicted and suffering ones of earth; He yearned to relieve them all. But even His hand might not turn back the tide of human woe; few would seek their only Source of help. He was willing to pour out His soul unto death, to bring salvation within their reach; but few would come to Him that they might have life. The Majesty of heaven in tears! The Son of the infinite God troubled in spirit, bowed down with anguish! The scene filled all heaven with wonder. That scene reveals to us the exceeding sinfulness of sin; it shows how hard a task it is, even for Infinite Power, to save the guilty from the consequences of transgressing the law of God.’ *Great Controversy*, page 22.

‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked’

5. How did God express His sorrow at the death of the wicked? Ezekiel 18:23, 32, Ezekiel 33:11.

NOTE: 'How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom. Said a learned doctor of divinity: "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. When they see others who are of the same nature and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, it will make them sensible of how happy they are." Another used these words: "While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, Amen, Alleluia! praise ye the Lord!" Where, in the pages of God's word, is such teaching to be found? Will the redeemed in heaven be lost to all emotions of pity and compassion, and even to feelings of common humanity? Are these to be exchanged for the indifference of the stoic or the cruelty of the savage? No, no; such is not the teaching of the Book of God. Those who present the views expressed in the quotations given above may be learned and even honest men, but they are deluded by the sophistry of Satan. He leads them to misconstrue strong expressions of Scripture, giving to the language the colouring of bitterness and malignity which pertains to himself, but not to our Creator. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11.' *Great Controversy*, page 535.

6. What must the wicked do to escape the penalty of his sin? Ezekiel 33:14-16.

NOTE: 'God does not desire the destruction of any. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 123.

'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father'

7. Why do men sin? James 1:13-15.

NOTE: Calvinism teaches that even our sinful actions are ordained by God and form part of His purpose. Consider the following: "When we get the larger view, we see that even the sinful acts of men have their place in the divine plan... All evil forces are under His absolute control... The murderer is kept in life and is indebted to God for the strength to kill his victim, and also for the opportunity." Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, page 239.

'Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy him. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God's goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil. He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than let any be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one.' *The Upward Look*, page 77.

8. Does God condemn men for Adam's sin? Ezekiel 18:19-20.

NOTE: One of the foundation principles of the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination is 'original sin', that is, that God holds each human being born into this world guilty of Adam's original sin. Thus, they teach, each man is born a sinner and thus born condemned to eternal torment because he is guilty of Adam's sin. Consider the following in the light of the verses in Ezekiel: 'Adam's sin is the cause and ground of the depravity, guilt and condemnation of all his posterity, simply because Adam and his posterity are one and, by virtue of their organic unity, the sin of Adam is the sin of the race.' Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology*, page 593.

'Our first parents by their disobedience opened the floodgates of woe to the race, and notwithstanding we have before us their sad experience in transgression, and the terrible result, we do not cease to sin; but while we deplore the sin of Adam, which was attended with such fearful consequences, we follow in the same course and realise the penalty of our own sins; for which suffering we alone are accountable. The providence of God is not responsible for the woes of man; his own course of action brings the sure result.' *Forest Park Reporter*, March 30, 1879.

'In sin did my mother conceive me'

9. Did David attribute his sin with Bathsheba to his parents? Psalm 51:5. Compare verses 1-3.

NOTE: This verse, above all others, is used to teach the principle of original sin. Augustine used this verse to 'prove' that the act of conceiving a child is, in itself, sinful. (But see Hebrews 13:4.) If Psalm 51:5 is held to teach that man is conceived as a sinner, this interpretation surely contradicts Psalm 71:5-6. The essence of the teaching of original sin is that it removes from the sinner any responsibility for his sin.

'There are many who in their hearts murmur against God. They say, "We inherit the fallen nature of Adam, and are not responsible for our natural imperfections." They find fault with God's requirements, and complain that he demands what they have no power to give. Satan made the same complaint in heaven, but such thoughts dishonour God' *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1892.

10. Did Paul teach that Adam's sin made every man a sinner? Romans 5:12. Compare Ezekiel 18:4, last part.

NOTE: The final phrase of the verse explains that all die because all have sinned. Compare Romans 3:23. We stand guilty before God because each one of us has sinned, not because God has judged us guilty of Adam's sin.

'Let us note the message to us describing our condition and the causes that have brought it. Isaiah 58:1-6. "Cry aloud and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." My people, even the faithful ones in the church are guilty, for all have sinned. The real trouble is between their way and God's way. The difference in the two ways is of such a nature that they cannot be united. Isaiah 58: 8-9. Our only hope is to give up our way and accept God's way. Isaiah 65:57.' *Loma Linda Messages*, page 473.

'Whom He did foreknow'

11. Upon what is God's predestination of the elect based? Romans 8:29, first part.

NOTE: Bible prophecy reveals the accuracy of God's foreknowledge. But does God's foreknowledge mean that He ordained what is to happen and man has no choice in these things?

'No one is to understand from this scripture [Acts 28:25-28] that God arbitrarily blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of the Jews. It was Christ's work to soften hard hearts. But if men resisted the work of Christ, the sure result would be that their hearts would become hardened. Christ quoted a prophecy which more than a thousand years before had predicted what God's foreknowledge had seen would be. The prophecies do not shape the characters of the men who fulfil them. Men act out their own free will, either in accordance with a character placed under the moulding of God or a character placed under the harsh rule of Satan.' *Review & Herald*, November 13, 1900.

12. Why is it that some will be saved and others lost? 2 Thessalonians 2:11-13.

NOTE: Calvinism teaches that salvation has nothing to do with anything that man may do; it is entirely an arbitrary decision of God's sovereign will. See the following: 'Eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal death for others.' Calvin, quoted in Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, page 15. 'It may be asked, Why does God save some and not others? But that belongs to His secret counsels... His reasons for saving particular ones while passing by others have not been revealed to us... Let it be remembered that we are under no obligation to explain all the mysteries connected with these doctrines.' Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, pages 96, 97, 124.

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." In this text the two agencies in the salvation of man are revealed, the divine influence, [and] the strong, living faith of those who follow Christ. It is through the sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the truth, that we become labourers together with God. God waits for the co-operation of his church. He does not design to add a new element of efficiency to His word; He has done His great work in giving His inspiration to the world. The blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the divine word, are ours. The object of all this provision of heaven is before us, the souls for whom Christ died, and it depends upon us to lay hold of the promises God has given, and become labourers together with Him; for divine and human agencies must co-operate in this work.' *Christian Education*, page 86.

(The compiler of these lessons is indebted to Dr Ralph Larson for many of the insights he has shared in this lesson.)

Lesson 5: 'Thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.' 1 Peter 2:9.

STUDY HELP: Romans 11:1-26.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Are the Jews still God's chosen people?

Introduction

'Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven's purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God. But the branches that had been separated from the parent stock God was able to reunite with the true stock of Israel, the remnant who had remained true to the God of their fathers.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 377.

'The LORD loved you'

1. Why did God choose Israel to be His people? Deuteronomy 7:6-8.

NOTE: 'God chose Israel to be His own people, that, by adhering closely to His commandments, they might be to the world an illustration of the beauty of character, the moral power, and the virtue that might be attained through fearing and honouring Him. He desired also to reveal through them the advantages that would come to those who, as His true sons and daughters, would walk in harmony with the principles of His law. In His dealing with men, God has often demonstrated that through the virtue obtained by obedience to the laws of heaven, human beings may gain a beauty of character that will fit them to be labourers together with Him.' *Review & Herald*, August 31, 1905.

'The Lord chose Israel as His peculiar people, and designed that they should be the depositaries of His law. They were to be a distinct and holy nation, separate from the heathen nations around them. They were to preserve the knowledge of the true God, and through them, light from Heaven was to shed its healing beams to all the world. They were to be a living illustration of the

superiority of that religion which acknowledges God as the supreme ruler of the universe.' *Signs of the Times*, December 18, 1884.

2. How did the Lord express His purpose for Israel? Isaiah 62:1-3. Compare 1 Peter 2:9.

NOTE: 'God intended that His people Israel should be light bearers to all the inhabitants of the earth. In maintaining His public worship they were bearing a testimony to the existence and sovereignty of the living God. And this worship it was their privilege to sustain, as an expression of their loyalty and their love to Him. The Lord has ordained that the diffusion of light and truth in the earth shall be dependent upon the efforts and offerings of those who are partakers of the heavenly gift. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth; He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai, with His own voice; but in His infinite love and wisdom He called men to become co-labourers with Himself, by choosing them to do this work.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 528.

'If thou shalt hearken'

3. What promises did God make to His chosen people? Deuteronomy 28:13. Read verses 1-13.

NOTE: 'God surrounded Israel with every facility, gave them every privilege, that would make them an honour to His name and a blessing to surrounding nations. If they would walk in the ways of obedience, He promised to make them "high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour." "All people of the earth," He said, "shall hear that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee." The nations which shall hear all these statutes shall say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Deuteronomy 26:19; 28:10; 4:6.' *Education*, page 40.

4. What conditions did God place upon Israel as His chosen people? Deuteronomy 28:15. Read verses 16-68. Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

NOTE: 'God's promises are conditional. In order to make it possible for Him to bless us, we must do our part. We cannot expect that all His blessings will come to us naturally, if we fold our hands in inactivity. We are to be labourers together with God. It is our privilege and duty to labour for souls ready to perish.' *Sermons & Talks Volume 2*, page 195.

'The Lord shall scatter thee'

5. What fate was promised to Israel if she failed to fulfil God's purpose? Deuteronomy 28:63-65.

NOTE: 'Moses traced the evils that would result from a departure from the statutes of Jehovah. Calling heaven and earth to witness, he declared that if, after having dwelt long in the Land of Promise, the people should introduce corrupt forms of worship and bow down to graven images and should refuse to return to the worship of the true God, the anger of the Lord would be aroused, and they would be carried away captive and scattered among the heathen. "Ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it," he warned them; "ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.'" *Prophets & Kings*, page 295.

6. How was this sad prophecy fulfilled? 2 Chronicles 36:19-21.

NOTE: 'Jeremiah predicted the captivity of many of the Jews, as their punishment for not heeding the word of the Lord. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise His disobedient people. Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence and to the warnings they had despised. "This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment," the prophet declared; "and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.'" *Review & Herald*, March 14, 1907.

'To finish the transgression'

7. After the Lord had, in mercy, brought a remnant back from captivity, what period of probation did He grant the Jewish nation? Daniel 9:24.

NOTE: 'The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period, the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles.' *Maranatha*, page 247. As Daniel 9:25 shows, this period of seventy prophetic weeks, or 490 years, would begin at 'the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem'. This commandment was completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus in BC 457 (see Ezra 7:12-26) which supplemented the earlier decrees of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2-4) and Darius (Ezra 6:8-12) Ezra 6:14 shows that these three decrees form a single commandment. The seventy weeks, the period of probation granted to the Jewish nation, reached to the consecration of Jesus as Messiah in AD 27 (Daniel 9:25), to His crucifixion in AD 31 and the end of the sacrificial system (Daniel 9:27) and three and a half years further to the official and final rejection of Christ by the Sanhedrin, the rulers of the Jews, in AD 34 (Acts 7:57).

8. How did Jesus pronounce God's rejection of the Jewish nation? Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: 'For more than a thousand years the Jewish nation had abused God's mercy and invited His judgments. They had rejected His warnings and slain His prophets. For these sins the people of Christ's day made themselves responsible by following the same course. In the rejection of their present mercies and warnings lay the guilt of that generation. The fetters which the nation had for centuries been forging, the people of Christ's day were fastening upon themselves. In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her

last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease. That day had come to Jerusalem. Jesus wept in anguish over the doomed city, but He could not deliver her. He had exhausted every resource. In rejecting the warnings of God's Spirit, Israel had rejected the only means of help. There was no other power by which they could be delivered. The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God's Holy Spirit may read their own condemnation.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 586-587.

'There is a remnant'

9. While the Jewish nation was rejected by God, were all Jews rejected? Romans 11:5, Romans 9:27. (See Acts 2:41, Acts 4:4, Acts 6:7.

NOTE: 'Notwithstanding Israel's failure as a nation, there remained among them a goodly remnant of such as should be saved. At the time of the Saviour's advent there were faithful men and women who had received with gladness the message of John the Baptist, and had thus been led to study anew the prophecies concerning the Messiah. When the early Christian church was founded, it was composed of these faithful Jews who recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the one for whose advent they had been longing.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 376.

10. What is the present qualification for membership of the true Israel of God (Galatians 6:16)? Galatians 3:28-29.

NOTE: 'The Lord had made the Jews the depositaries of sacred truth. He had appointed them stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and temporal advantage, and He called upon them to impart these blessings. Special instruction had been given them in regard to their treatment of their brethren who had fallen into decay, of the stranger within their gates, and of the poor among them. They were not to seek to gain everything for their own advantage, but were to remember those in need and share with them. And God promised to bless them in accordance with their deeds of love and mercy. But... they put forth no helping hand to relieve the temporal or spiritual necessities of suffering humanity. Filled with pride, they regarded themselves as the chosen and favoured people of God; yet they did not serve or worship God. They put their dependence in the fact that they were children of Abraham. "We be Abraham's seed," they said proudly. (John 8:33.) When the crisis came, it was revealed that they had divorced themselves from God, and had placed their trust in Abraham, as if he were God. Christ longed to let light shine into the darkened minds of the Jewish people. He said to them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham." John 8:39, 40. Christ recognised no virtue in lineage. He taught that spiritual connection supersedes all natural connection. The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham; but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not his true children. Only those who prove themselves to be spiritually in harmony with Abraham by obeying the voice of God, are reckoned as of true descent.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 267-268.

'Take heed'

11. What lessons can be learned from the experience of the Jewish nation? Romans 11:17-21. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:11-12.

NOTE: 'When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step. When afterward evidence accumulated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were too proud to acknowledge that they had erred. So with the people of our day who reject the truth. They do not take time to investigate candidly, with earnest prayer, the evidences of the truth, and they oppose that which they do not understand. Just like the Jews, they take it for granted they have all the truth, and feel a sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose they had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. All the evidence produced they decide shall not weigh a straw with them, and they tell others that the doctrine is not true, and afterward, when they see, as light, evidence they were so forward to condemn, they have too much pride to say, "I was wrong"; they still cherish doubt and unbelief, and are too proud to acknowledge their convictions. Because of this, they take steps that lead to results of which they have never dreamed.' *1888 Materials*, page 169.

12. Does God give membership of Israel on the basis of one's physical ancestors? Romans 9:6-8.

NOTE: 'As a nation the Jews refused to receive Christ. He had led them in their travels, as their invisible, infinite Leader. He had communicated His will to them, but in the test they rejected Him, their only hope, their only salvation, and God rejected them. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). To all who receive and obey the conditions, God's gifts flow steadily, without repentance, without recall. God has imparted His gifts to man to be used, not according to hereditary or fanciful ideas, not according to natural impulses or inclination, but according to His will.' *This Day With God*, page 31.

Lesson 6: Jesus: Son of God

MEMORY VERSE: 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' 1 Timothy 3:16.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages Book 1*, pages 246-249.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Does the Bible teach that Jesus is truly God?

Introduction

'The world was made by Him, "and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.' *Selected Messages Book 1*, page 247.

'The Word was God'

1. How does John describe Jesus? John 1:1-3, 14.

NOTE: 'Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father, one in nature, in character, in purpose, the only Being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6). His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).' *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 34.

2. How did Isaiah describe Christ in prophecy? Isaiah 9:6.

NOTE: 'Isaiah tells us who and what our Redeemer is: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Christ had two natures, the nature of a man and the nature of God. In Him divinity and humanity were combined. Upon His mediatorial work hangs the hope of the perishing world. No one but Christ has ever succeeded in living a perfect life, in living a pure, spotless character. He exhibited a perfect humanity, combined with deity; and by preserving each nature distinct, He has given to the world a representation of the character of God and the character of a perfect man. He shows us what God is, and what man may become, godlike in character.' *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, October 1, 1899.

'In the beginning was the Word.'

3. How does the Bible teach the pre-existence of Christ? Colossians 1:17.

NOTE: Some groups, like the Christadelphians, claim that Christ's existence did not begin until His birth in Bethlehem. Thus they state: 'There is no hint in the Old Testament that the Son of God was already existent or in any way active at that time.' Tennant, *The Christadelphians*, page 85.

'The Pharisees... retorted with a sneer, as if they would prove Jesus to be a madman, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" With solemn dignity Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin.' *Desire of Ages*, page 469. 'Here Christ shows them that, although they might reckon His life to be less than 50 years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.' *Lift Him Up*, page 17.

4. How does Jesus Himself assert this truth? John 17:24. (Compare John 8:58.)

NOTE: 'Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 46.

'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God'

5. What principle did Christ state when tempted by the devil? Matthew 4:10.

NOTE: 'All false worship is spiritual adultery. The second precept, which forbids false worship, is also a command to worship God, and Him only serve. The Lord is a jealous God. He will not be trifled with. He has spoken concerning the manner in which He should be worshiped. He has a hatred of idolatry; for its influence is corrupting. It debases the mind, and leads to sensuality and all kinds of sin.' *SDA Bible Commentary Volume 1*, page 1106.

6. On what occasions did Christ accept worship? Matthew 2:11, Matthew 8:2, Matthew 9:18, Matthew 14:33, Matthew 15:25, Matthew 20:20, Matthew 28:9, Matthew 28:17.

NOTE: These instances of Christ accepting worship are taken from Matthew's gospel alone. See also Hebrews 1:6. Note especially John 20:28. Christ's acceptance of worship stands in contrast to the response of both apostles and angels to attempts to worship them. And it was Christ Himself who emphasised the principle that worship is due to God alone. In accepting worship, Christ was showing that He is God.

'It is not men whom we are to exalt and worship; it is God, the only true and living God, to whom our worship and reverence are due.' *Evangelism*, page 133.

7. How did Peter respond when Cornelius attempted to worship him? Acts 10:25-26. Compare Acts 14:11-16. See also Revelation 19:10 & Revelation 22:8-9.

NOTE: 'As Peter entered the house of the Gentile, Cornelius did not salute him as an ordinary visitor, but as one honoured of Heaven and sent to him by God. It is an Eastern custom to bow before a prince or other high dignitary and for children to bow before their parents; but Cornelius, overwhelmed with reverence for the one sent by God to teach him, fell at the apostle's feet and worshiped him. Peter was horror-stricken, and he lifted the centurion up, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, page 137.

'Worship Him that made heaven and earth'

8. Who does the Bible identify as the Creator? John 1:3. Compare Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2.

NOTE: 'What opposites meet and are revealed in the person of Christ! The mighty God, yet a helpless child! The Creator of all the world, yet, in a world of His creating, often hungry and weary, and without a place to lay His head! The Son of man, yet infinitely higher than the angels! Equal with the Father, yet His divinity clothed with humanity, standing at the head of the fallen race, that human beings might be placed on vantage-ground! Possessing eternal riches, yet living the life of a poor man! One with the Father in dignity and power, yet in His humanity tempted in all points like as we are tempted! In the very moment of His dying agony on the cross, a Conqueror, answering the request of the repentant sinner to be remembered by Him when He came into His kingdom.' *The Signs of the Times*, April 26, 1905.

9. Who are we called upon to worship? Revelation 14:7.

NOTE: 'The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens." Psalm 96:5. "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else." Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things." Revelation 4:11.' *Great Controversy*, page 436.

'I AM'

10. What further evidences of His deity did Christ reveal? Matthew 9:2-6, John 10:30-33.

NOTE: For a mere man to claim the right to forgive sins is certainly blasphemous. In this, the Pharisees were certainly correct. Their error was in failing to recognise that the One who spoke these words was truly God, even though His action in discerning their unspoken thoughts should have provided them with evidence.

'The Pharisees standing by were filled with greater bitterness by the Saviour's words, and said within themselves, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus then gave them most striking evidence of His divine character by showing that He read the thoughts of their hearts as an open book. "Wherefore," said He, "think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The sufferer arose and departed to his house. "But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.'" *Review & Herald*, October 16, 1883.

'The incarnate I AM is our abiding Sacrifice. The I AM is our Redeemer, our Substitute, our Surety. He is the Daysman [see Job 9:33] between God and the human soul, our Advocate in the courts of heaven, our unwearying Intercessor, pleading in our behalf His merits and His atoning sacrifice. The I AM is our Saviour. In Him our hopes of eternal life are centred. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble. In Him is the assurance of every promise. We must acknowledge and receive this almighty Saviour; we must behold Him, that we may be like Him in character. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.'" *Signs of the Times*, May 3, 1899.

11. On what other occasion did Christ take the Divine name upon His lips? Mark 14:61-62.

NOTE: 'I AM means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike with God. He sees the most remote events of past history and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things which are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM. Our Saviour says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Fifteen hundred years before Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and left His position of honour in the heavenly courts, assumed humanity, and walked a man among the children of men, Abraham saw His day, and was glad. "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (verses 57, 58). Christ was using the great name of God that was given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence (See Exodus 3:14.) Isaiah also saw Christ, and his prophetic words are full of significance. He says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Speaking through him, the Lord says, “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Fear not: for I am with thee. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King” (Isaiah 43:3-15). When Jesus came to our world, He proclaimed Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).’ *That I May Know Him*, page 12.

‘They wrest the scriptures to their own destruction’

12. What verse asserting the deity of Christ has been attacked in recent years? 1 Timothy 3:16.

NOTE: Most modern versions of the Bible translate this verse in such a way that the word ‘God’ is removed and replaced by ‘he’. Thus the NIV renders the verse as follows: ‘Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body.’ Of course, there is nothing miraculous about a person appearing in a body. The birth of Christ only becomes mysterious when we appreciate that this was God manifest in the flesh. But it has been noted that practically every Bible verse that teaches the deity of Christ is altered or questioned in modern English versions. All English Bibles translated from the original Greek until 1862 placed the word ‘God’ in this verse. (English versions based on the Latin Vulgate did not.) The overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts contain the word ‘God’ in this verse. Though the ancient Codex Alexandrinus is now worn and indistinct in this passage, the earliest scholars who studied this verse are unanimous that it has the word ‘God’ in this verse. The Codex Vaticanus, however, omits the word ‘God’ and it is on the authority of this one manuscript that modern versions change the reading of this verse.

‘Christ was God manifest in the flesh, the mystery hidden for ages, and in our acceptance or rejection of the Saviour of the world are involved eternal interests.’ *Christian Education*, page 76.

13. What other verse has been challenged? John 1:1.

NOTE: The Jehovah’s Witnesses claim that this verse should read: ‘the Word was a god.’ No other Bible version, apart from the (Jehovah’s Witness) New World version translates this verse in this way.

It should be noted that many of the modern versions alter ‘all things were made **by** Him’ (John 1:3) to ‘all things were made **through** Him’, reducing Christ to a mere agent of God in the work of creation. Similar alterations are found in Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2 in a number of versions. It is not hard to see why the teachings that Christ is God and that He is the Creator should be under attack today.

Lesson 7: Jesus: Son of man

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.’ Hebrews 2:17.

STUDY HELP: *Selected Messages Book 1*, pages 246-256.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Did the Son of God truly become a man?

Introduction

‘In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matt. 8:17). He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. And yet He knew no sin.’ *Selected Messages Book 1*, page 256.

‘Great is the mystery of godliness’

1. What great mystery did Paul write of? 1 Timothy 3:16.

NOTE: ‘The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last; and looking to heaven with its unnumbered years he will exclaim, “Great is the mystery of godliness.”’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 133.

‘The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries. Christ was one with the Father, yet He was willing to step down from the exaltation of One who was equal with God. That He might accomplish His purpose of love for the fallen race, He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 48.

2. How did John express this great truth? John 1:14.

NOTE: ‘The Son of God stooped to uplift the fallen. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” Isaiah 53:5. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He knew what it meant to be hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He was a stranger and a sojourner on the earth--in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women of today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 472.

‘Took part of the same’

3. How did Paul describe the incarnation of Christ? Hebrews 2:14.

NOTE: It has been suggested that when Jesus was born, God provided Him with a nature like that of Adam before his fall. But Paul shows that Jesus partook of the flesh, not of Adam, but of the children. Adam, of course, was never a child.

‘Christ did not make believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2: 14). He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent. He is declared to be a man, even the Man Christ Jesus.’ *Selected Messages Book 1*, page 247.

4. To what depths did Jesus stoop in order to accomplish man’s redemption? Philippians 2:6-8.

NOTE: ‘Christ suffered, being tempted; therefore He always sympathizes with the tempted ones, whom Satan is seeking to destroy. That He might be a merciful and faithful high priest, He was in all things made like those he came to help. He has compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way; for when He was on this earth He was compassed with infirmities. He is able to help us in our perplexities. As He works for us, let us work for one another, striving to promote unity and harmony. Let us reveal Christ-like love for our fellow workers, acting in such a way that they will have full confidence in us. Think of the rich encouragement the Saviour has given us, which we in turn are to give to others.’ *Southern Watchman*, March 13, 1902

‘In all things like unto His brethren’

5. How complete was the incarnation of Christ? Hebrews 2:17.

NOTE: ‘He came as a helpless babe, bearing the humanity we bear. “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” He could not come in the form of an angel; for unless He met man as man, and testified by His connection with God that divine power was not given to Him in a different way to what it will be given to us, He could not be a perfect example for us. He came in humility, in order that the humblest being upon the face of the earth could have no excuse because of his poverty, or ignorance, and say, Because of these things, I cannot obey the law of Jehovah. Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity; that He might live with humanity and bear all the trials and afflictions of man. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In His humanity He understood all the temptations that will come to man.’ *SDA Bible Commentary Volume 7*, page 925

6. Who are the ones whom Christ calls brethren? Hebrews 2:11.

NOTE: ‘Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, submitted to humiliation that we might have hope. For our sake He became poor, that through His merits we might be entitled to imperishable riches. Shall not the story of Christ’s self-denial and self-sacrifice for our sakes, lead us to pour contempt on all our pride and selfishness? The Son of God could make nothing of the human family, save as He submitted to humiliation, and through suffering came in contact with suffering humanity. It was through unutterable woe that Jesus came to reach lost man where he is plunged in sin and degradation. Let us contemplate the life, nature, and purpose of the King of glory. Let us look upon the Majesty of heaven as He shrouded his glory in the form of a child, and was cradled in a manger. But though He was so lowly born, so humbly circumstanced, angels bowed in adoration before the Babe of Bethlehem, without forfeiting their place in the courts of God or marring their allegiance to the Deity.’ *Bible Echo*, December 15, 1892.

‘Yet without sin’

7. Though Jesus took upon Himself the nature of those He came to save, did He ever yield to temptation? Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:21-22, 1 John 3:5.

NOTE: ‘We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. And yet He “knew no sin.” He was the lamb “without blemish and without spot.” Could Satan in the least particular have tempted Christ to sin, he would have bruised the Saviour’s head. As it was, he could only touch His heel. Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it came upon Adam. Christ and the church would have been without hope.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 49.

8. How did Jesus Himself express His sinlessness? John 14:30.

NOTE: ‘Not even by a thought could Christ be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Christ declared of Himself, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Jesus did not allow the enemy to pull Him into the mire of unbelief, or crowd Him into the mire of despondency and despair. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity, and in this strength He would bear all the temptations that Satan could bring against Him, and yet keep His soul untainted by sin. And this power to overcome He would give to every son and daughter of Adam who would accept by faith the righteous attributes of His character.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 49.

‘It behoved Him’

9. Did it matter whether Jesus was made like His brethren in every respect? Hebrews 2:17.

NOTE: The word ‘behooved’ means that it had to be thus; there was no other alternative. It was essential that He be made like His brethren in every respect.

‘In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him.’ *Confrontation*, page 32.

10. How is Christ’s struggle with temptation described? Hebrews 5:7-8.

NOTE: ‘It was not only on the cross that Christ gave Himself for humanity, not only in the wilderness of temptation and in Gethsemane that He overcame in our behalf. Every day’s experience was an outpouring of His life; every day He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And because the life of Jesus was a life of perfect trust His service for heaven and earth was without failure or faltering. He met and resisted all the temptations that man must meet because in his humanity he relied upon divine power.’ *Columbia Union Visitor*, October 2, 1912.

‘Leaving us an example’

11. What lessons may we learn from Christ’s victory over temptation? 1 Peter 2:21-22.

NOTE: ‘As the sacrifice in our behalf was complete, so our restoration from the defilement of sin is to be complete. No act of wickedness will the law of God excuse; no unrighteousness can escape its condemnation. The ethics of the gospel acknowledge no standard but the perfection of the divine character. The life of Christ was a perfect fulfilment of every precept of the law. He said, “I have kept my Father’s commandments.” John 15:10. His life is our example of obedience and service. God alone can renew the heart. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” But we are bidden, “Work out your own salvation.” Phil. 2:13, 12.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 89.

12. What promise do we have that victory over our sins is possible? Romans 6:13-14.

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

‘Christ lived a human life that He might be man’s example in all things. He endured temptation even as every human being must endure. He believed God as we must believe. He learned obedience even as we are required to learn obedience. And He overcame as we must overcome. His path lay through manifold temptations; therefore He knows how to succour those who are tempted.’ *Bible Echo*, September 3, 1900.

Lesson 8: What does it mean to be saved?

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.’ Romans 5:10.

STUDY HELP: *Our High Calling*, pages 141-142.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Is the act of coming to Jesus sufficient to save a person?

Introduction

‘When souls are converted their salvation is not yet accomplished. They then have the race to run; the arduous struggle is before them to do, what? “To fight the good fight of faith,” to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus.’ *My Life Today*, page 313.

‘He shall save His people from their sins’

1. Why was Jesus given this name? Matthew 1:21.

NOTE: ‘Jesus came to this world to save His people from their sins. He will not save us in our sins, for He is not the minister of sin. We must respond to the divine drawing of Christ, and repent of our sins, and unite ourselves to Christ as the branch is united to the vine.’ *Bible Echo*, February 1, 1892.

2. How did John express this truth? 1 John 3:5.

NOTE: While we are to be in harmony with God’s law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments

of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will He save us in disobedience to law.' *Faith & Works*, page 95.

'Reconciled to God'

3. What did the death of Christ accomplish for sinful mankind? Romans 5:10, first part, Colossians 1:21-22.

NOTE: 'Well would it be for us if we could always remember Calvary, where Jesus bore the terrible burden of the sins of the world. In His expiring agony hear Him exclaim, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" [Matthew 27:46.] and remember that He endured the hiding of His Father's face, that it might not be forever hidden from fallen man. He endured shame, cruel scourging, insult, and mockery, that we might be reconciled to God and rescued from endless death. If our minds dwell upon these themes, our conversation will be in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, and even vain thoughts will seem out of place.' *Gospel Workers*, (1892 ed.) page 92.

4. What has separated us from God? Why do we need to be reconciled to Him? Isaiah 59:2.

NOTE: 'Through Christ was man's only hope of restoration to the favour of God. Man had separated himself at such distance from God by transgression of His law that he could not humiliate himself before God in any degree proportionate to the magnitude of his sin. The Son of God could fully understand the aggravating sins of the transgressor, and in His sinless character He alone could make an acceptable atonement for man in suffering the agonising sense of His Father's displeasure. The sorrow and anguish of the Son of God for the sins of the world were proportionate to His divine excellence and purity, as well as to the magnitude of the offence.' *Confrontation*, page 50.

'Saved by His life'

5. If we have been reconciled to God by Christ's death, what is it that Christ lives to accomplish for us? Romans 5:10, last part, Hebrews 7:25.

NOTE: 'Everyone who will break from the slavery and service of Satan, and will stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel will be kept by Christ's intercessions. Christ, as our Mediator, at the right hand of the Father, ever keeps us in view, for it is as necessary that He should keep us by His intercessions as that He should redeem us with His blood. If He lets go His hold of us for one moment, Satan stands ready to destroy.' *Our High Calling*, page 50.

6. What prayer for salvation should be ours? Jude verses 24-25. Compare Hebrews 2:18.

NOTE: 'While we trust in Christ's saving power, all the arts and wiles of the fallen host can do nothing to harm us. Heavenly angels are constantly with us, guiding and protecting. God has ordained that we shall have His saving power with us, to enable us to do all His will.' *Review & Herald*, January 7, 1909.

'The soul who loves Jesus, who appreciates the saving power of His grace, will feel such a drawing near to Christ that he will desire to work in His lines. He cannot, dare not, let Satan control his spirit and a poisonous miasma surround his soul. Everything will be placed aside that will corrupt his influence, because it opposes the will of God. . . Wherever God has, in providence, placed us, He will keep us; as our day our strength shall be.' *Christian Education*, page 149.

'The power of God unto salvation'

7. What good news did Christ bring? Romans 1:16.

NOTE: 'You will never be good enough of yourselves to merit the favour and help of God. You must come just as you are. Christ meets you as you draw nigh to Him. Place your hand in the hand of Jesus, and He will direct you. Believe that He keeps you, and then it will be found that in the trial of your faith you will come off more than conqueror through Him that loved you. We gain the victory through faith in Christ's power to save us. Then the trial of our faith will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Christ. You will praise God that you have found in Christ a present help in every time of need.' *Review & Herald*, March 8, 1892.

'Many believe that they are on the right foundation, that they have the truth. . . Such reckon themselves among the chosen, peculiar people of God, yet they experience not His presence and power to save them from yielding to temptation and folly. These profess to know God, yet in works deny Him. How great is their darkness! The love of the world with many, the deceitfulness of riches with others, have choked the word, and they have become unfruitful.' *Testimonies Volume 2*, page 125.

8. What must we do to receive the gospel power? John 1:12.

NOTE: "'Ask, and ye shall receive.'" Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them. Now in the first place you have the promise that if you ask you shall receive. Then think what you most need to overcome. Acquaint yourselves with your failings, and then as you feel you cannot overcome in your own strength, ask God to help you. By doing this you acknowledge your own weakness, and throw yourselves upon God's arm. He will sustain you in your efforts to do right. But be careful and do not rely too much on your own strength and efforts. Ever realise that Satan is continually trying to lead your. . . minds to do wrong. In order to resist his temptations, you must rely upon a power stronger than your own. "Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them." Do not merely come to God and ask; but believe that He will do just as He has said He would. As you ask, believe He answers, and believe you do receive strength from Him.' *Appeal to the Youth*, page 54.

'He is able to save to the uttermost'

9. Can we do anything on our own to change our hearts? Jeremiah 13:23.

NOTE: 'If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.' *Steps to Christ*, page 31.

10. Do we therefore sit back and expect Christ to save us? Philippians 2:12-13.

NOTE: 'The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 482.

'We shall be like Him'

11. What is Christ's purpose in saving us from our sins? Ephesians 4:13-15.

NOTE: 'The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God would have His servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character and may rejoice in the assurance of His great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until all who will accept salvation are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters.' *Ministry of Healing*, page 99.

12. What assurance do we have that the work of salvation will be successfully concluded? 1 John 3:2-5.

NOTE: 'The Bible contains instruction regarding the character God's children must possess. "Blessed are the pure in heart," it declares, "for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I John 3:2, 3.' *Counsels to Teachers, Parents & Students*, page 429.

'Then, in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. In that great multitude which no man could number, presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24), He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us, "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53:11.' *Education*, page 309.

Lesson 9: Which is God's holy day?

MEMORY VERSE: 'Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.' Leviticus 23:3.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 434-438, 52-54.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Is the seventh day still the Sabbath of the Lord our God?

Introduction

'In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods. It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest day for man. It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship.' *Great Controversy*, pages 53-54.

'God blessed the seventh day'

1. On what day did God originally set His blessing? Genesis 2:3.

NOTE: 'God has declared that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. When "the heavens and the earth were finished," He exalted this day as a memorial of His creative work. Resting on the seventh day "from all his work which he had made, . . . God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:1-3).' *Prophets and Kings*, pages 178-180.

2. How did God confirm this action more than 2500 years later? Exodus 20:8-11.

NOTE: 'Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and He then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man. In the law given from Sinai, God recognised the week, and the facts upon which it is based. After giving the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and specifying what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh, He states the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing back to His own example: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." [Exodus 20:8-11.] This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the days of creation to be literal. The first six days of each week are given to man for labour,

because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. On the seventh day man is to refrain from labour, in commemoration of the Creator's rest.' *Christian Education*, page 190.

'Call the Sabbath a delight'

3. How did the Lord confirm the Sabbath blessing in the time of Isaiah? Isaiah 58:13-14.

NOTE: 'God created the world in six days and rested upon the seventh. He sanctified and blessed the seventh day and made it His sacred memorial. "Wherefore," He declares, "the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." Exodus 31:16. Those who do this, keeping all of God's commandments, may claim the promises contained in Isaiah 58:11-14. The instruction given in this chapter is full and decided. Those who refrain from labour on the Sabbath may claim divine comfort and consolation. Shall we not believe God? Shall we not call holy the day which He calls holy? Man should not be ashamed to acknowledge as sacred that which God calls sacred. He should not be ashamed to do that which God has commanded. Obedience will bring him a knowledge of what constitutes true sanctification.' *Medical Ministry*, page 215.

4. How was Isaiah shown that the Sabbath was not for the Jews alone? Isaiah 56:6-7.

NOTE: 'The work of Sabbath reform to be accomplished in the last days is foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." "The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, everyone that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer." Isaiah 56:1, 2, 6, 7. These words apply in the Christian age, as shown by the context: "The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, beside those that are gathered unto Him." Verse 8. Here is foreshadowed the gathering in of the Gentiles by the gospel. And upon those who then honour the Sabbath, a blessing is pronounced. Thus the obligation of the fourth commandment extends past the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, to the time when His servants should preach to all nations the message of glad tidings.' *Great Controversy*, page 451.

'The Lord of the Sabbath'

5. How did Jesus remind His disciples that the Sabbath remains His holy day? Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5.

NOTE: 'Many endeavour to evade the claims of the fourth commandment by urging that the law of God was given to the Jews exclusively; that the seventh day of the week is the Jewish, while the first day is the Christian Sabbath. This distinction is not recognised in the Scriptures. There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. It was by Christ that the worlds were made. By Christ the law was proclaimed from Sinai. Hence, Christ is, in the fullest sense, as He declares himself to be, "Lord of the Sabbath." He made the day sacred to Himself, on which to receive the worship of angels and of men.' *Signs of the Times*, September 14, 1882.

6. On what day did the apostles customarily meet for prayer, worship and preaching? Acts 13:14, 42-44, Acts 16:13, Acts 17:2, Acts 18:4.

NOTE: It is interesting to note that while the word 'Sabbath' is mentioned nine times in the Book of Acts, referring to perhaps eighty Sabbaths, the first day of the week is mentioned only once in this book. Indeed, apart from references to the actual day of Christ's resurrection, the first day of the week is mentioned only twice in the entire New Testament.

'Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honour was given to the day by Christ or His apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that "mystery of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:7, R.V.) which, even in Paul's day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction?' *Great Controversy*, page 54.

'The breaking of bread'

7. Does Acts 20:7 prove that Sunday had replaced the Sabbath as the weekly day of worship?

NOTE: It is interesting to notice how the *New English Bible* translates this verse: 'On the Saturday night, in our assembly for the breaking of bread, Paul who was to leave next day, addressed them, and went on speaking until midnight.' The *Revised English Bible* reads essentially the same: 'On the Saturday night, when we gathered for the breaking of bread, Paul, who was to leave next day, addressed the congregation and went on speaking until midnight.' In the Bible, days are reckoned from sunset to sunset; thus the first day of the week, began at sunset on Saturday evening after the Sabbath had closed. This is the **only** meeting of the early Christian church which is stated to have taken place on the first day of the week.

'Sailing from Philippi, Paul and Luke reached their companions at Troas five days later, and remained for seven days with the believers in that place. Upon the last evening of his stay the brethren "came together to break bread." The fact that their beloved teacher was about to depart had called together a larger company than usual. They assembled in an "upper chamber"

on the third storey. There, in the fervency of his love and solicitude for them, the apostle preached until midnight.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 391.

8. Does the fact that they met on this day to break bread prove that this was the weekly day of worship? Acts 2:46.

NOTE: The following note comes from a series of articles published in an official Roman Catholic periodical. The intention of these articles was to show that there is no Biblical authority for the observance of Sunday and therefore churches claiming to take the Bible as their authority should not keep Sunday.

'Once more, the Biblical apologists for the change of day call our attention to the Acts, chapter 20, verses 6 and 7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread," etc. To all appearances, the above text should furnish some consolation to our disgruntled Biblical friends, but being a Marplot, we cannot allow them even this crumb of comfort. We reply by the axiom: "*Quod probat nimis, probat nihil*" - "What proves too much, proves nothing." Let us call attention to the same, Acts 2:46: "And they, continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house," etc. Who does not see at a glance that the text produced to prove the exclusive prerogative of Sunday, vanishes into thin air - *an ignis fatuus* - when placed in juxtaposition with the 46th verse of the [second] chapter? What the Biblical Christian claims for Sunday alone, the same authority, St Luke, informs us was *common to every day of the week*: "And they, continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house." *The Catholic Mirror*, September 16, 1893. (Emphasis in original.)

'The first day of the week'

9. Does 1 Corinthians 16:2 prove that Sunday was the appointed day for worship in the early church?

NOTE: In this verse, Corinthian Christians are exhorted to allot some time on the first day of the week for reckoning up how much God had prospered them financially during the previous week and then set aside in store a sum of money for the relief of famine-stricken Christians in Judaea, so that, when Paul arrived in Corinth, there need be no last-minute fund-raising.

'There is no evidence here that this putting-aside had anything to do with a worship service on Sunday. It sounds more like a practical means of making sure that some kind of contribution would be there when Paul arrived.' John Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth*, page 181 (Pelican New Testament Commentaries series).

10. Does Revelation 1:10 prove that Sunday had become the sacred day for Christians?

NOTE: Once again, the note is taken from *The Catholic Mirror*.

'The ninth text wherein we meet the expression "the Lord's day," is the last to be found in the apostolic writings. The Apocalypse, or Revelation, chapter 1: 10, furnishes it in the following words of St. John: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" but it will afford no more comfort to our Biblical friends than its predecessors of the same series. Has St John used the expression previously in his Gospel or Epistles? - Emphatically, *No*. Has he had occasion to refer to Sunday hitherto? - Yes, twice. How did he designate Sunday on these occasions? Easter Sunday was called by him (John 20:1) "*the first day of the week*." Again, chapter twenty, nineteenth verse: "Now when it was late that same day, *being the first day of the week*." Evidently, although inspired, both in his Gospel and Epistles, he called Sunday "the first day of the week." On what grounds, then, can it be assumed that he dropped that designation? Was he *more inspired* when he wrote the Apocalypse, or did he adopt a new title for Sunday, because it was now in vogue?" *The Catholic Mirror*, September 23, 1893. (Emphasis in original.)

The verses mentioned in Question 5 should show clearly which day the Lord Himself claimed as 'the Lord's day.'

'Rightly dividing the word of truth'

11. Consider the following arguments in favour of Sunday as the appropriate day for Christian worship:

- **Christ customarily met with His disciples after His resurrection on the first day of the week**

NOTE: In fact the gospel writers **only** mention 'the first day of the week' in connection with the actual day of the resurrection. It may be inferred that the meeting mentioned in John 20:26 also took place on the first day of the week, but John did not regard this as a fact sufficiently important to mention. Christ met with His disciples on a number of occasions after His resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:4-8, as well as Matthew 28:16, John 21:1 and Acts 1:3) and, apart from the Resurrection day itself, none of these meetings is recorded as having taken place on the first day of the week.

- **The Holy Spirit was poured out on the early church on the first day of the week, thus making Sunday the church's birthday.**

NOTE: Scholars have calculated that the Day of Pentecost fell on a Sunday in the year of Christ's crucifixion. In Luke's account in Acts 2, the apostle does not regard this as a fact important enough to mention.

- **Colossians 2:16 and Romans 14:5-6 prove that the Sabbath commandment has been abolished.**

NOTE: These passages (and the parallel passages in Galatians) should be read in the context of the dispute which gave rise to them. This dispute is documented in Acts 15:1-5. It is important to notice that neither in Acts 15, Romans 14, nor Galatians is the Sabbath mentioned as forming any part of this dispute. The question was: whether observance of the law of Moses was essential to salvation. The Sabbath formed part of the law of God and nowhere in this dispute is any part of the law of God questioned. In Colossians 2:16, 'sabbath days' are mentioned. But sabbath days formed a part of the law of Moses, since several of the annual feasts included sabbath days, including the Passover, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. These annual sabbaths fell on stated dates and could thus fall on any day of the week. Each of them was 'a shadow of things to come', as Paul describes them in Colossians 2:16-17, symbolic of particular aspects of Christ's saving work for man. The weekly Sabbath was a memorial of creation, rather than 'a shadow of things to come.' In the early church, a dispute arose as to whether these sabbaths should continue to be observed along with the rest of the law of Moses.

Paul in Romans 14 and Colossians 2 states that this should be left to personal conviction and should not be a cause of dispute. Since Paul groups such sabbaths with meat and drink [offerings], holy days and new moons, none of which form a part of the Ten Commandments, describing them as 'the handwriting of ordinances' which was nailed to the cross, and since the law of Moses, containing **all** these things, was indeed handwritten by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24-26), it should be clear that Paul was talking about the annual sabbaths and not the weekly Sabbath of the 4th Commandment.

Lesson 10: Is the Holy Spirit simply a force or influence?

MEMORY VERSE: 'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.' John 14:6.

STUDY HELP: *Evangelism* pages 616-617.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Is the Holy Spirit a force or influence proceeding from God, or the Third Person of the Trinity?

Introduction

'It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself." John 15:26; 16:13. The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 51- 52.

'The Spirit of God moved'

1. Where do we first meet the Holy Spirit in the Bible? Genesis 1:2.

NOTE: 'Eighty-eight times and in twenty-two of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, the Spirit is mentioned. The footprints of the third person of the Godhead may be traced through the centuries from the beginning of the world.' Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, page 27.

'When "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."' *Prophets & Kings*, page 717.

2. How was the Spirit involved in the work of man's salvation in Old Testament times? Genesis 6:3.

NOTE: 'In the days of Noah, the wickedness of the world became so great that God could no longer bear with it. But He pitied the race, and in His love provided a refuge for all who would accept it. He gave the message to Noah to be given to the people: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Spirit of God continued to strive with rebellious man until the time specified had nearly expired, when Noah and his family entered the ark, and the hand of God closed its door. Mercy had stepped from the golden throne, no longer to intercede for the guilty sinner.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 321.

'He came upon individuals, working through or clothing them with mighty power for special deeds. He strove with men (Genesis 6:3); He gave Bezaleel skill (Exodus 31:3-5); He gave Samson strength (Judges 14:6). Thus did the Holy Spirit make men His instruments, doing a work or delivering messages through them, as with Joshua (Numbers 27:18), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Saul (1 Samuel 10:10), and David (1 Samuel 16:13).' Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, page 28.

'The Spirit of the Lord'

3. What are some of the names by which the Holy Spirit is known? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 3:3, Ephesians 1:13, Hebrews 10:29, 1 Peter 4:14.

NOTE: 'A number of appropriate names are applied to the Holy Spirit. These include some of His attributes as God and reveal something of His relation to the Father and the Son. He is called 'the Spirit of the Lord God' (Isaiah 61:1), 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17), the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2), and the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9).' Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, page 91.

4. When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples, by what name did He introduce the Holy Spirit? John 14:6.

NOTE: The Greek word 'Parakletos' translated 'Comforter' literally means 'one called to the side of'. Its Biblical use reflects the meaning of its accompanying verb 'parakaleo' which means to exhort or comfort. The same word is translated 'Advocate' in 1 John 2:1, taking its legal sense of one who speaks on your behalf. Since Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as '**another** Comforter', we may see that Jesus Himself was their Comforter, the One who stood beside them to encourage, comfort and speak on their behalf. The Holy Spirit was to fill Christ's place after He returned to heaven.

'The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realisation of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 51.

‘Ye know Him’

5. How are we shown that the Holy Spirit has the essential qualities of a person? For each of these verses, write in a word or two:

e.g. Isaiah 63:10	He can be vexed
Matthew 12:31-32	He can be.....
Acts 5:3	He can be.....
Acts 5:9	He can be.....
Acts 7:51	He can be.....
Romans 8:27	He has a.....

NOTE: ‘The Holy Spirit is a person; for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. What strong evidence of the power of truth we can give to believers and unbelievers when we can voice the words of John, “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. “For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man, which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” *Manuscript Releases Volume 20*, page 68.

6. What do the following verses tell us about the way the Holy Spirit acts? For each of them write in a word or two:

e.g. John 14:26	He teaches
John 15:26	He.....
John 16:8-11	He.....
John 16:13	He.....
Acts 13:2	He.....
Acts 16:6-7	He.....

NOTE: ‘The essentials of personality are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the many Bible texts that speak of Him. He possesses intellect (1 Corinthians 2:11), feelings (Ephesians 4:30), and will (1 Corinthians 12:11). He can be treated as a personality.’ Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, page 93.

‘Whither shall I flee?’

7. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit from the following verses? For each text, write in a word or two

e.g. Psalm 139:7-10	He is everywhere
1 Corinthians 2:10-11	He
Romans 8:11	He
Luke 2:26	He

NOTE: ‘The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 669.

8. How may the Holy Spirit be involved in our prayers? Romans 8:26.

NOTE: ‘Pray often to your heavenly Father. The oftener you engage in prayer, the closer your soul will be drawn into a sacred nearness to God. The Holy Spirit will make intercession for the sincere petitioner with groanings which cannot be uttered, and the heart will be softened and subdued by the love of God. The clouds and shadows which Satan casts about the soul will be dispelled by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the chambers of mind and heart will be illuminated by the light of Heaven.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 89.

Notice how in our prayer life, we may experience the reality of the Trinity. Jesus tells us that the One to whom we should address our prayers is our heavenly Father. But we come to the Father only through the merits of Jesus and thus our prayers are offered in the name of Jesus. And because we do not really know our needs, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, as we pray, expressing the deepest needs of our lives. Thus we pray to God the Father; we pray through God the Son, and our prayers are made meaningful through the intercession of God the Holy Spirit. Thus God may be in every aspect of our prayer life.

‘Moved by the Holy Ghost’

9. Who was the One who inspired the Bible writers? 2 Peter 1:21.

NOTE: God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.’ *Great Controversy*, page vi.

10. Who is the One who helps us to understand the Bible? John 16:13, John 14:26.

NOTE: 'When those who have received the false interpretation of the word search the Scriptures with determined effort to know what is truth, the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of their understanding, and the word is to them a new revelation. Their hearts are quickened with a new and living faith, and they behold wondrous things out of His law. The teachings of Christ have a breadth and meaning to them that they have never before understood.' *Counsels to Teachers, Parents & Students*, page 430.

'The Lord our God is One Lord'

11. Compare the following pairs of verses to see how the Holy Spirit relates to the Father and the Son:

2 Samuel 23:2 & 2 Samuel 23:3. Isaiah 63:10-14 & Numbers 14:11. Matthew 1:20 & Luke 1:35. Acts 5:3 & Acts 5:4. Acts 28:25 & Luke 1:68-70. Romans 15:19 & Psalm 136:3-4.

NOTE: 'The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father. The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptised, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.' *Special Testimonies Series B*, pages 62-63.

Lesson 11: 'We have a great high priest'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Hebrews 4:15.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 479-491.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: What is Jesus doing now?

Introduction

'The intercession of Christ on man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption.' *Great Controversy*, page 489.

'Consider the High Priest'

1. How does Paul describe the present work of Christ? Hebrews 3:1.

NOTE: 'Jesus is our Advocate, our High Priest, our Intercessor. Our position is like that of the Israelites on the Day of Atonement. When the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, representing the place where our High Priest is now pleading, and sprinkled the atoning blood upon the mercy seat, no propitiatory sacrifices were offered without. While the priest was interceding with God, every heart was to be bowed in contrition, pleading for the pardon of transgression. Type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. Our great High Priest has made the only sacrifice that is of any value in our salvation. When He offered Himself on the cross, a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people. We are now standing in the outer court, waiting and looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. No sacrifices are to be offered without, for the great High Priest is performing His work in the Most Holy Place. In His intercession as our advocate, Christ needs no man's virtue, no man's intercession. He is the only sin-bearer, the only sin-offering. Prayer and confession are to be offered only to Him who has entered once for all into the Most Holy Place. He will save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' *Lift Him Up*, page 319.

2. What is the heart of the High Priest's work? Hebrews 7:24-25.

NOTE: 'Jesus is our great High Priest in heaven. And what is He doing? He is making intercession and atonement for his people who believe in Him. Through His imputed righteousness, they are accepted of God as those who are manifesting to the world that they acknowledge allegiance to God, keeping all His commandments.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 37.

3. How do we know that there is a sanctuary in heaven? Hebrews 8:1-2. Compare Revelation 7:15, Revelation 11:19.

NOTE: 'The question, What is the sanctuary? is clearly answered in the Scriptures. The term "sanctuary," as used in the Bible, refers, first, to the tabernacle built by Moses, as a pattern of heavenly things; and, secondly, to the "true tabernacle" in heaven, to which the earthly sanctuary pointed. At the death of Christ the typical service ended. The "true tabernacle" in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant. The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." Revelation 4:5. He saw an angel "having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Revelation 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the

“seven lamps of fire” and the “golden altar,” represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, “the temple of God was opened” (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld “the ark of His testament,” represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God. Moses made the earthly sanctuary after a pattern which was shown him. Paul teaches that that pattern was the true sanctuary which is in heaven. And John testifies that he saw it in heaven. The sanctuary in heaven is the very centre of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 202.

‘Every high priest taken from among men’

4. What qualification did Jesus need to possess in order to be our great High Priest? Hebrews 2:17-18.

NOTE: ‘In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”’ *Confrontation*, page 33.

5. What privilege does Christ’s humanity give to those who place their faith in our great High Priest? Hebrews 4:15-16.

NOTE: ‘Sin-burdened, struggling souls, Jesus in His glorified humanity has ascended into the heavens to make intercession for us. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” We should be continually looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; for by beholding Him we shall be changed into His image, our character will be made like His. We should rejoice that all judgment is given to the Son, because in His humanity He has become acquainted with all the difficulties that beset humanity.’ *Reflecting Christ*, page 20.

‘A Day of Atonement’

6. What special work was entrusted to the High Priest? Leviticus 23:27, Leviticus 16:30.

NOTE: The word ‘atonement’ was specially created to describe the work of restoring man to union with God. Atonement is making man once more **at one** with God. As Isaiah 59:2 reveals, when we sin, we separate ourselves from God. The work of Christ, our great High Priest, is to reconcile us to God. It is important to note that some, refusing to accept the only Biblical definition of sin, that it is the transgression of God’s law (see 1 John 3:4), have declared that sin should be defined as separation from God. Isaiah 59:2 shows the falsity of this view. Our sins are the **cause** of our separation from God, not the separation itself.

‘Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people.’ *Great Controversy*, page 420.

7. How is this work described? Leviticus 16:16. Compare Daniel 8:14.

NOTE: ‘The most important part of the daily ministrations was the service performed in behalf of individuals. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and placing his hand upon the victim’s head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest. Both ceremonies alike symbolised the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary. Such was the work that went on day by day throughout the year. The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, the holy places were defiled, and a special work became necessary for the removal of the sins. God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments, as for the altar, to “cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.” Leviticus 16:19. Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the Most Holy Place for the cleansing of the sanctuary.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 198.

‘Ye shall afflict your souls’

8. While the High Priest was making atonement, what crucial work were the people of God to perform? Leviticus 16:29, 31, Leviticus 22:27, 32.

NOTE: 'We are now living in the great day of atonement. All who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 69.

9. How did the Lord describe the true work of afflicting one's soul? Isaiah 58. Read the whole chapter.

NOTE: In this chapter, the significance of the Day of Atonement for the individual believer is explained. In verse 1, we are reminded of the significance of the Feast of Trumpets, which came just ten days before the Day of Atonement. In verses 2-5, the Lord rejects merely nominal and formal professions of religion, afflicting the body, rather than the soul, for outward show. In verses 6-7, the Lord shows the practical outcome of genuine afflicting of the soul, manifested in works of love for the needy ones around us. In verses 8-11, the Lord reveals the blessings that will result from this genuine work of repentance. Finally in verses 12-14, the Lord describes the reformation that results from genuine repentance and revival of spiritual life. Such people will begin a work of restoring those aspects of God's truth that have been neglected. The Lord speaks of one particular aspect of His law that has been forgotten and neglected, namely the true spiritual observance of the Sabbath, and He describes the blessing that He will bestow on those who 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

'Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed'

10. When did Jesus begin this work of cleansing the sanctuary on the antitypical Day of Atonement? Daniel 8:14.

NOTE: 'The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord's soon coming. By the lips of thousands was this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith. All felt that upon the events therein foretold depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes. These prophetic days had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844.' *Great Controversy*, page 409.

11. What event was prophesied to mark the beginning of the 2300 prophetic days? Daniel 9:25, first part.

NOTE: 'The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time, "unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." After bidding Daniel "understand the matter, and consider the vision," the very first words of the angel are: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City." The word here translated "determined" literally signifies "cut off." Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained. In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. Verses 12-26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built "according to the commandment ["decree," margin] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. Taking 457 B.C., the time when the decree was completed, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled... The beginning of the seventy weeks is fixed beyond question at 457 B.C., and their expiration in A.D. 34. From this data there is no difficulty in finding the termination of the 2300 days. The seventy weeks, 490 days, having been cut off from the 2300, there were 1810 days remaining. After the end of 490 days, the 1810 days were still to be fulfilled. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844. At the expiration of this great prophetic period, upon the testimony of the angel of God, "the sanctuary shall be cleansed." *Great Controversy*, pages 326 & 328.

'Blotted out'

12. What two outcomes are placed before God's people when the sanctuary is cleansed? Leviticus 16:30, Leviticus 23:29.

NOTE: 'As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 212.

13. What confidence may we have if we have truly afflicted our souls before the Lord? Hebrews 10:19, 1 John 4:17.

NOTE: 'The love of the world separates from God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is impossible for any to discern the truth while the world has their affections. The world comes between them and God,

beclouding the vision and benumbing the sensibilities to such a degree that it is impossible for them to discern sacred things. God calls upon such: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." Those who have stained their hands with the pollution of the world are required to cleanse themselves from its stains. Those who think they can serve the world and yet love God are double-minded. But they cannot serve God and mammon. They are men of two minds, loving the world and losing all sense of their obligation to God, and yet professing to be Christ's followers. They are neither the one thing nor the other. They will lose both worlds unless they cleanse their hands and purify their hearts through obedience to the pure principles of truth. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." *Testimonies Volume 1*, page 530.

Lesson 12: Who is the Antichrist?

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

STUDY HELP: *Last Day Events*, pages 155-171.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Who is the Antichrist?

Introduction

'The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvellous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.' *Great Controversy*, page 593.

'Ye have heard that antichrist shall come'

1. Which Bible writer uses the term 'antichrist'? 1 John 2:18, 22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 1:7.

NOTE: The word 'antichrist' is used in the Bible, only by the apostle John, and in just three passages. 'Christ' is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word 'Messiah,' the anointed one. 'Anti-' is a Greek prefix, meaning 'in place of'. An antichrist is one who claims to take Christ's place. Thus when Pope Leo XIII in one of his encyclical letters wrote: 'We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty,' he was claiming to be Antichrist.

2. Does the Bible teach that the antichrist is to be a single person, or can there be more than one antichrist? 1 John 2:18.

NOTE: Thanks to the teachings of John Nelson Darby, founder of the Exclusive Brethren, and the popularity of the 'Left Behind' series of novels, many Christians have been led to believe that the Antichrist will be a single individual, who will appear after the Secret Rapture, and will eventually become the great persecutor of the post-Rapture believers, imposing the Mark of the Beast. It is clear from John's writings that he did not see the word 'antichrist' as applying to just one person at the end of time.

'The Man of Sin'

3. How does Paul identify the antichrist? 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

NOTE: 'The Scriptures foretell a great apostasy, which even in the days of the apostles had begun to manifest itself among certain false brethren in the church, and which finally was to develop into a "falling away," and the revelation of "that Man of Sin,... the Son of Perdition," of whom Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7. In fulfilment of these predictions, it is a matter of historical record that following the death of the last of the apostles of Jesus, some members of the Christian Church began to depart from the simplicity of the truth as taught by Christ; and gradually these church members were led to unite with the world in heathen practices. As the years passed by, and the Church increased in numbers and in popularity, there were many who became less and still less strict in their obedience to Bible teaching, until finally, in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ, the greater number of those who claimed to be Christians were in reality not living in harmony with the teachings of Christ. For many centuries thereafter an apostate form of Christianity held sway. The truth was suppressed and lost sight of, and ignorance prevailed. These centuries of apostasy are correctly designated in history the "Dark Ages." During this time attempts were made to alter or to set aside many of the fundamental teachings of the Bible.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, pages 241-242.

4. What did Paul reveal about the career of the Antichrist? 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Compare Daniel 7:25 & Revelation 13:6.

NOTE: 'The man of sin was to arise, and do his work of exaltation and blasphemy, before the brethren could look for the coming of Christ. That great event was to be preceded by a falling away. There would be revealed a form of Antichrist, and the leaven of apostasy was to work with increasing power to the end of time.' *Review & Herald*, July 31, 1888.

5. What two definitions of blasphemy are given in the Bible? Matthew 9:2-3, John 10:33.

NOTE: The Jews were quite correct in supposing that for a mere man to claim to forgive sins is blasphemous. It is likewise blasphemous for a mere man to claim to be God. But Christ was no mere man, but, as the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 reveals, 'the mighty God.' It has, however, been a feature of the Roman Catholic religion that its priests have the right to forgive men's sins. It is also the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that the pope is God, as the following quotations reveal: The Catholic Encyclopaedia Volume 6 page 48 describes the pope as: '**not a mere man, but as it were God and the vicar of God.**' Pope Leo XIII in one of his encyclical letters wrote: '**We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.**' Pope Innocent III wrote: '**The pope is not simply a man but rather God on earth.**' He also wrote: 'The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ **but he is Jesus Christ Himself hidden under the veil of flesh.**'

'To make war with the saints'

6. When did Paul prophesy that the Man of Sin would be revealed? 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8. Compare Daniel 7:7-8, 23-24.

NOTE: Paul speaks of a power restraining the Man of Sin from manifesting himself in his true colours. So long as the Roman emperors held sway, the papacy was unable to assume supreme power. Though the seeds of the great apostasy were already beginning to grow, even in Paul's day, the persecutions by the Roman emperors tended to inhibit the tendency of some Christian churches to conform to worldly and pagan customs, practices and beliefs. But once the last Roman emperor had abdicated and three powers hostile to the papacy (see Daniel 7:8 & 24) had been defeated, the popes were able to assume supreme power.

'Previous to the rise of the papacy, all opposition to the law of God had been in the form of paganism, God had been openly defied; but from that time the opposition was carried on under the guise of professed allegiance to Him. The papacy, however, was no less the instrument of Satan than was pagan Rome; for all the power, the seat, and the great authority of the papacy, were given it by the dragon [Revelation 13:2]. And so, although the pope professed to be the vicegerent of Christ, he is, in reality, the vicegerent of Satan, he is antichrist.' *Great Controversy, 1888 edition, page 680.*

7. What would be the effect on the Church of the revelation of the Man of Sin? Revelation 13:7. Compare Daniel 7:21.

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

'His deadly wound'

8. How long was the Antichrist to oppress the people of God? Daniel 7:25. Compare Revelation 12:6, 13-14, Revelation 13:5-7.

NOTE: 'The forty and two months are the same as the "time and times and the dividing of time," three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7, the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798.' *Great Controversy, page 439.*

9. What happened to bring this period of supremacy to an end? Revelation 13:3, first part. Revelation 13:10.

NOTE: 'The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed. The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the "great tribulation" to befall the church, the Saviour said: "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22. Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.' *Great Controversy, page 266.*

'His deadly wound was healed'

10. How did John prophesy the revival of papal power and influence? Revelation 13:3, last part.

NOTE: 'The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power. "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Verse 3. The infliction of the deadly wound points to the downfall of the papacy in 1798. After this, says the prophet, "his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Paul states plainly that the "man of sin" will continue until the Second Advent. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. To the very close of time he will carry forward the work of deception. And the Revelator declares, also referring to the papacy: "All that dwell upon the

earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.” Revelation 13:8. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honour paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.’ *Great Controversy*, page 578.

11. How does John picture the final downfall of the papacy? Revelation 17:16-18, Revelation 18:21.

NOTE: ‘Church members who have seen the light and been convicted, but who have trusted the salvation of their souls to the minister, will learn in the day of God that no other soul can pay the ransom for their transgression. A terrible cry will be raised, “I am lost, eternally lost.” Men will feel as though they could rend in pieces the ministers who have preached falsehoods and condemned the truth. All unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. “We are lost!” they cry, “and you are the cause of our ruin”; and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God’s people are now employed to destroy their enemies.’ *Last Day Events*, page 247.

Seven distinguishing marks

12. What seven distinguishing marks does Daniel reveal about the antichrist? Daniel 7:24-25

NOTE: In Daniel 7, the career of the antichrist is explained in detail. The empire of Rome is divided into ten kingdoms which arise out of it. Then after this division takes place, another power emerges, at first much smaller and weaker than the ten kingdoms. In order for this power to arise, three of the ten kingdoms have to be uprooted. This power was to be a totally different kind of power from the ten kingdoms. It would blaspheme against God. It would take the lead in persecuting Christians. It would claim the power to change God’s sacred times and laws. And Christians would be persecuted by this power for a period of ‘a time, times and the dividing of time. Here we have seven identifying features:

- It would rise after the Roman Empire had split up into ten smaller kingdoms.
- Three of these kingdoms would be overthrown in its rise to power.
- It would be a different kind of power (diverse) from the others that came before it.
- It would blaspheme against God.
- It would persecute God’s people.
- It would claim the right to change God’s law and times.
- Its period of power would be ‘a time, times, and the dividing of time.’

13. Which is the only power that has fulfilled all of these identifying features?

NOTE:

- The pope assumed the title of the Caesars, Pontifex Maximus (Supreme Pontiff) in 538, nearly sixty years after the last Roman emperor abdicated and his empire was divided.
- In these sixty years, three kingdoms, the Heruli, the Ostrogoths and the Vandals, all of which opposed the papacy, were overthrown and disappeared from history.
- The papacy, as a total union of church and state, and claiming authority over all earthly kings, exercises a different kind of power from those kingdoms that preceded it.
- The Bible defines blasphemy in two ways, claiming to be God and claiming the right to forgive sins. The popes has made both those claims.
- History reveals the papacy as the greatest persecutor of Christians, both in terms of time and numbers. A comparison of the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20 and in standard Roman Catholic catechisms will show that one commandment has been omitted and five others have been heavily edited.
- The period of time that the papacy would flourish was ‘a time, times, and the dividing of time.’ Elsewhere this period is referred to as 1260 days and 42 months. The principle of prophetic interpretation that a prophetic day is equivalent to a literal year makes this period 1260 years. The papacy assumed the role of the Caesars in 538. 1260 years later in 1798, Napoleon sent General Berthier to Rome to arrest the pope, thus planning to bring an end to the papacy.

Lesson 13: Will Jesus return secretly?

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ Matthew 24:30-31.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 290-302.

LESSON AIM: To answer the question: Will the Lord return secretly to catch His church away from the earth?

Introduction

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matt. 24:24-27. This coming, there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known, witnessed by the whole world.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 346.

‘Believe it not’

1. What warnings did Christ give regarding His Second Coming? Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-26.

NOTE: ‘Christ said, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Many false messiahs will appear, claiming to work miracles, and declaring that the time of the deliverance of the Jewish nation has come. These will mislead many. Christ’s words were fulfilled. Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem many false messiahs appeared. But this warning was given also to those who live in this age of the world. The same deceptions practised prior to the destruction of Jerusalem have been practised through the ages, and will be practised again.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 628.

2. How did Jesus describe His Second Coming? Matthew 24:30-31.

NOTE: There have been several attempts to make people believe that the Second Coming of Christ is secret. For many years, it was taught that the Second Coming takes place to each individual at death. The commonest view today, first taught by Chilean Jesuit, Manuel de Lacunza, and popularised by John Nelson Darby, founder of the Exclusive Brethren, and Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, writer of the Scofield bible notes, is the Rapture, once known as ‘the Secret Rapture’. In this view, Christ returns secretly and snatches away the entire Christian Church, leaving the world in turmoil as planes, trains and cars crash, because of the absence of their ‘raptured’ pilots and drivers. These views have been publicised in the last decade by the best-selling ‘Left Behind’ series of novels.

‘Christ is coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory... It is called the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. His coming surpasses in glory all that the eye has ever seen. Far exceeding anything the imagination has conceived will be His personal revelation in the clouds of heaven. Then there will be a perfect contrast to the humility which attended His first advent. Then He came as the Son of the infinite God, but His glory was concealed by the garb of humanity. Then He came without any worldly distinction of royalty, without any visible manifestation of glory; but at His second appearing He comes with His own glory and the glory of the Father and attended by the angelic host of heaven. In the place of that crown of thorns which marred His brow, He wears a crown within a crown. No longer is He clad with the garments of humility, with the old kingly robe placed upon Him by His mockers. No: He comes clad in a robe whiter than the whitest white. Upon His vesture and thigh a name is inscribed, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 357.

‘Caught up’

3. Do the words ‘caught up’ in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 prove that Christ’s coming will be secret? 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

NOTE: Those who teach the Rapture teach that Christ will return twice. The first coming will be secret and to catch away the church. The second, after a seven-year ‘tribulation’, will be ‘the glorious appearing.’ The words ‘caught up’ are the significant words. A comparison with verse 15 shows that this catching up takes place at the coming of the Lord. So far most Christians are in agreement. The question is: which coming of the Lord? Is this a silent and invisible coming of the Lord before the seven-year Tribulation or the highly visible and audible glorious appearing at the end of the world? What does Paul say in verse 16? He describes this coming as accompanied by ‘a shout,’ ‘the voice of the Archangel’ and ‘the trumpet of God.’ The ‘Left Behind’ books describe this event as a silent and secret event. But Paul describes an event that is anything but silent. Can you have a secret shout, a silent trumpet call?

4. Does Paul’s reference to ‘a thief in the night’ mean that Christ’s coming will be secret? 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Read verses 3-4 and compare 2 Peter 3:10.

NOTE: It is clear from a comparison of these two passages that the phrase ‘thief in the night’ is intended to convey the idea of unexpectedness, rather than secrecy. Paul states that those who are unprepared will be overtaken with ‘sudden destruction’ which will overwhelm them all. Peter, using terms reminiscent of a thermo-nuclear catastrophe, writes of this destruction overwhelming the entire world.

‘Paul speaks of a class to whom the Lord’s appearing will come unawares. “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape.” But he adds, to those who have given heed to the Saviour’s warning: “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5.’ *Great Controversy*, page 371.

‘The one shall be taken’

5. Do Christ’s words in Matthew 24:40-41 describe a secret rapture? Matthew 24:37-41. Compare Matthew 24:39 with Luke 17:27.

NOTE: In Matthew 24:40-41 is found the origin of the phrase 'left behind.' In these verses, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Son of man (verse 39). Then He says: 'Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.' On these two verses, the imaginative picture of the Rapture is based: two men in the field, suddenly one is taken up and the other is left behind. Two women working side by side when suddenly one disappears because she has been taken up; the other is left behind. Is this what Jesus actually said? Yes, He does contrast the fate of the two. One is taken and the other left. But go back to verse 37 to see what Jesus is actually saying. Which were the ones that were **taken** in the time of Noah's Flood? 'They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and **took** them all away.' Those who were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage were the ones that were taken. What took them? 'The flood came and **took** them all away.' So when these people were taken, who were the ones who were left? Faithful Noah and his family who were safe in the ark. Jesus was certainly talking about being taken and being left. Those who were taken were destroyed by God's judgements in the Flood. Those who were left were **left alive** because they had faithfully responded to the message of God.

- 6. It is claimed that the Greek word 'parousia' refers to the Rapture and that other words are used for the 'glorious appearing'. Read the following verses which all contain the word 'parousia': Matthew 24:27, Matthew 24:37, Matthew 24:39.**

NOTE: The word 'parousia' is often translated as coming (21 times). Matthew 24:27, which contains this word, clearly shows that 'parousia' refers to the visible and glorious return of the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 16:17, Paul uses the word 'parousia' for the arrival of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, surely not a secret rapture! See also 2 Corinthians 7:6.

'And destroyed them all'

- 7. Those who teach 'the Rapture' believe that those who are not 'raptured' will have a second chance of salvation in the seven years that lie between 'the Rapture' and 'the Glorious Appearing'. Does the Bible support this view? 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, Luke 17:26-30.**

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

- 8. How does Paul describe the fate of those who are unready for the coming of Christ? 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8.**

NOTE: 'Christ has declared that He will come the second time to gather His faithful ones to Himself: "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew 24:30, 31. Then shall they that obey not the gospel be consumed with the spirit of His mouth and be destroyed with the brightness of His coming. 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Like Israel of old the wicked destroy themselves; they fall by their iniquity. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, their natures have become so debased with evil, that the manifestation of His glory is to them a consuming fire.' *Great Controversy*, page 37.

'The Lord delivereth'

- 9. A central feature of the 'Rapture' teaching is that God loves His church too much to permit it to go through the Tribulation. Does the Bible teach this? John 16:33, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:35-37, Revelation 7:14. Compare Luke 21:12, 16-17.**

NOTE: The word 'tribulation' is used twenty-two times in the Bible. In nearly every case, it refers to the tribulation of God's people.

'He warns His followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake." "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death." John 16:33; Luke 21:12, 16. This prophecy has been fulfilled in a marked manner. Every indignity, reproach, and cruelty that Satan could instigate human hearts to devise, has been visited upon the followers of Jesus. And it will be again fulfilled in a marked manner; for the carnal heart is still at enmity with the law of God, and will not be subject to its commands. The world is no

more in harmony with the principles of Christ today than it was in the days of the apostles. The same hatred that prompted the cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" the same hatred that led to the persecution of the disciples, still works in the children of disobedience. The same spirit which in the Dark Ages consigned men and women to prison, to exile, and to death, which conceived the exquisite torture of the Inquisition, which planned and executed the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and which kindled the fires of Smithfield, is still at work with malignant energy in unregenerate hearts. The history of truth has ever been the record of a struggle between right and wrong. The proclamation of the gospel has ever been carried forward in this world in the face of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 84.

10. What precious promises are for those who endure tribulation? Psalm 34:19, Mark 13:12-13, James 5:10-11, Revelation 2:10.

NOTE: 'In all ages the Saviour's chosen have been educated and disciplined in the school of trial. They walked in narrow paths on earth; they were purified in the furnace of affliction. For Jesus' sake they endured opposition, hatred, calumny. They followed Him through conflicts sore; they endured self-denial and experienced bitter disappointments. By their own painful experience they learned the evil of sin, its power, its guilt, its woe; and they look upon it with abhorrence. A sense of the infinite sacrifice made for its cure humbles them in their own sight and fills their hearts with gratitude and praise which those who have never fallen cannot appreciate. They love much because they have been forgiven much. Having been partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are fitted to be partakers with Him of His glory.' *Great Controversy*, page 649.

'Who shall be able to stand?'

11. How will those unprepared for His coming respond when they see Him? Revelation 6:15-16.

NOTE: 'What a day that will be, when those who rejected Christ will look upon Him whom their sins have pierced. At His second coming, conviction will be brought to every heart. Those who have turned from Him to the trivial things of this earth, seeking selfish interests and worldly honor, will in the day of His coming acknowledge their mistake. These are the ones spoken of by the Revelator as "all kindreds of the earth," who "shall wail because of Him." "And they also which pierced Him." These words apply not only to the men who pierced Christ when He hung on the cross of Calvary, but to those who by evil-speaking and wrong-doing are piercing Him today.' *Maranatha*, page 292.

12. In contrast what will be the words of those who are ready for His coming? Isaiah 25:8-9.

NOTE: 'Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. He is coming with all the holy angels with Him. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendour, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice. The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ's second advent, said, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger." Job 19:27, margin. To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts. With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." Isaiah 25:9.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 420- 421.