

‘I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people’

General Introduction.

The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armour, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.

Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. Not one cloud has fallen upon it that He has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork His work, that He has not foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted. He has not left His church forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and that which His Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell has been brought about. All His purposes will be fulfilled. His law is linked with His throne, and no power of evil can destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition.

During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theatre of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.

“Whereunto,” asked Christ, “shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?” Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ’s kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished. This kingdom is to uplift and ennoble humanity. God’s church is the court of Holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit. The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless.

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

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

Acts of the Apostles, pages 11-15.

Lesson 1: ‘Thy name shall be Israel’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.’ Genesis 32:28.

STUDY HELP: *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 195-198.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Hosea 10:1-4, 11:1-8, 12:2-6.

LESSON AIM: To study the significance of Israel in the Bible.

Compiler’s note: I am indebted to Steve Wohlberg for many of the concepts behind this lesson.

Introduction

‘Throughout his ministry Isaiah bore a plain testimony concerning God’s purpose for the heathen. Other prophets had made mention of the divine plan, but their language was not always understood. To Isaiah it was given to make very plain to Judah the truth that among the Israel of God were to be numbered many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh. This teaching was not in harmony with the theology of his age, yet he fearlessly proclaimed the messages given him of God and brought hope to many a longing heart reaching out after the spiritual blessings promised to the seed of Abraham.’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 236.

‘He had power over the Angel and prevailed’

1. To whom was the name ‘Israel’ first given and why? Genesis 32:28. Compare Hosea 12:4.

NOTE: ‘The error that had led to Jacob’s sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud was now clearly set before him. He had not trusted God’s promises, but had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God would have accomplished in His own time and way. As an evidence that he had been forgiven, his name was changed from one that was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory. “Thy name,” said the Angel, “shall be called no more Jacob [the supplanter], but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 197.

2. With whom had Jacob been wrestling? Genesis 32:29-30.

NOTE: ‘It was Christ, “the Angel of the covenant,” who had revealed Himself to Jacob. The patriarch was now disabled and suffering the keenest pain, but he would not loosen his hold. All penitent and broken, he clung to the Angel; “he wept, and made supplication” (Hosea 12:4), pleading for a blessing. He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned. Physical pain was not sufficient to divert his mind from this object. His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release Himself; He urged, “Let Me go, for the day breaketh;” but Jacob answered, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 196.

‘Israel is My son’

3. How did God next apply the name ‘Israel’? Exodus 4:22-23.

NOTE: ‘When the Hebrew people were suffering cruel oppression under the hand of their taskmasters, the Lord looked upon them, and He called Israel His son. He bade Moses go to Pharaoh with the message, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn. And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” The Lord did not wait until His people went forth and stood in triumph on the shores of the Red Sea before He called Israel His son, but while they were under oppression, degraded, downtrodden, suffering all that the power and the invention of the Egyptians could impose to make their lives bitter and to destroy them, then God undertakes their cause and declares to Pharaoh, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.”’ *The Southern Work*, page 14. ‘The Lord called Israel His first-born because He had singled them out from all the people to be the depositaries of His law, the obedience of which would preserve them pure amidst idolatrous nations. He conferred upon them special privileges, such as were generally conferred upon the first-born son.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1*, page 175.

4. How did God speak of the nation He called ‘Israel’? Isaiah 41:8, Isaiah 45:4. See also Isaiah 49:3.

NOTE: ‘It was God’s design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming. At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: “I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.” And of His people He said, “Behold, . . . I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.” Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8. These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterised the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated.’ *Prophets & Kings*, pages 703-704. ‘The terms “My servant,” “Israel,” “the Lord’s servant,” mean anyone that the Lord may select and appoint to do a certain work. He makes them ministers of His will, though some who are selected may be as ignorant of His will as was Nebuchadnezzar. God will work for those of His people who will submit themselves to the working of the Holy Spirit. He pledges His glory for the success of the Messiah and His kingdom.’ *Testimonies, volume 9*, page 138.

‘Out of Egypt have I called My Son’

5. How did Hosea write of these things? Hosea 11:1.

NOTE: ‘Sinful and rebellious though the children of Israel had been, the Lord had ever regarded them with compassion, and by every possible means had tried to win them back to himself. “When Israel was a child,” the Lord declared, “then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.” Hosea 11:1. He had led His chosen ones into the Promised Land, and established them there that they might be a blessing to the whole earth. “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms,” He declared, “but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.” Verses 1-3. “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?”’ *Review & Herald*, January 29, 1914.

6. What application did Matthew, under inspiration, make of Hosea’s words? Matthew 2:15.

NOTE: ‘Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1, which, in its historical context, referred to the nation of Israel being called out of Egypt in the time of Moses. Yet here the Gospel writer picks up this text and then declares it “fulfilled” in Jesus Christ! Here Matthew is beginning to reveal a principle that he develops throughout his book... Remember, the first time the name “Israel” is used in the Bible, it is a spiritual name given to one man, whose name was Jacob (Genesis 32:28). That name had to do with Jacob’s spiritual victory. It means “prince of God”. Even so, in the beginning of the New Testament that same name is beginning to be applied to one Man, to the Victorious One, to Jesus Christ, *the Prince of God*.’ Wohlberg: *Exploding the Israel Deception*, page 20. [Emphasis in original.]

‘My Servant’

7. What parallels show that the Old Testament prophecies about Israel are fulfilled in Christ? Compare Isaiah 41:8 with Galatians 3:16. Compare Psalm 80:8 with John 15:1. Compare Exodus 4:22 with Romans 8:29.

NOTE: 'There are amazing parallels between the history of Israel and the history of Jesus Christ. In Hebrew history, a young man named Joseph, who had dreams, went to Egypt. In the New Testament we find another man named Joseph who had dreams and then went to Egypt. When God called Israel out of Egypt, He called that nation "my son". Exodus 4:22. When Jesus came out of Egypt, God said, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." When the nation of Israel left Egypt, the people went through the Red Sea. They were "baptised...in the sea." 1 Corinthians 10:2. In the third chapter of Matthew, we read that Jesus was baptised in the Jordan river "to fulfil all righteousness." Verse 15. Then God called Jesus "My beloved Son." Verse 17. After the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, they spent 40 years in the wilderness. Immediately, after Jesus was baptised in the Jordan river, He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness" for 40 days (Matthew 4:1-2). At the end of the 40 days, Jesus resisted the devil's temptations by quoting three Scriptures. All were taken from Deuteronomy, the very book that God gave to Israel at the end of their 40 years in the wilderness! What does it mean? It means that in Matthew's book, Jesus is repeating the history of Israel, point by point, and is overcoming where they failed. He is becoming the new Israel, the Prince of God, the one victorious Man who overcomes all sin.' Wohlberg: *Exploding the Israel Deception*, pages 20-21.

8. How did Christ take the role that the nation of Israel failed to take? Compare Isaiah 41:8 & Isaiah 42:1-3 with Matthew 12:16-20.

NOTE: 'Here Matthew is doing the same thing he did with Hosea 11:1. He is quoting Isaiah 42:1-3, which, in its original context, referred to God's "servant", which was "Israel...My servant." Isaiah 41:8. Once again, under inspiration from the Holy Spirit, the writer of the first New Testament book declared that Isaiah 42:1-3 had been "fulfilled" by God's "servant", Jesus Christ.' Wohlberg: *Exploding the Israel Deception*, page 22.

'A light to the Gentiles'

9. How was Christ to fulfil the purpose that Israel failed to perform? Compare Isaiah 60:1-3 with Luke 2:27-32 and Acts 26:23.

NOTE: 'The aged Simeon, in the temple where Christ was now teaching, had spoken of Him as "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." Luke 2:32. In these words he was applying to Him a prophecy familiar to all Israel. By the prophet Isaiah, the Holy Spirit had declared, "It is too light a thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:6, R.V.' *Desire of Ages*, page 465.

10. How did Christ enter into covenant relationship with His chosen people? Matthew 26:28. Compare Exodus 24:8.

NOTE: 'In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ. And the administration of the Sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity.' *Desire of Ages*, page 656.

'If ye will obey My voice indeed'

11. Upon what condition did the descendants of Jacob become the Israel of God? Exodus 19:3-6. Note Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: Note the important word 'if'.

'God gave them [Israel] His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realise the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7. They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favour of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant, and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 78.

12. Upon what condition may people today become part of the Israel of God? Galatians 3:29.

NOTE: Note the important word 'if'.

'The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 131.

Lesson 2: 'The everlasting covenant'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.' Hebrews 8:10.

STUDY HELP: *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 363-373.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Exodus 19:3-8, Hebrews 8:6-9.

LESSON AIM: To study the basis for God's covenant with His people.

The Hebrew word 'bereeth' means a treaty or alliance or agreement between two parties. For theological reasons, some theologians try to imply that the covenant between God and His people is entirely one-sided, but a close examination of the Bible evidence shows that this is not so. In fact, a covenant involves **both** parties undertaking to perform certain obligations and the covenant is broken if **either** party fails to live up to the obligations of the covenant. While we may be certain that God would never break His covenant, the Bible shows that the covenant between God and His people may indeed be broken by His people's unfaithfulness to their obligations under the terms of the covenant.

Introduction

'As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants. The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when, after the fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation... Another compact, called in Scripture the "old" covenant, was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new" covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed **after** the blood of the first covenant. That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham, is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God, the "two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie." Hebrews 6:18.' *Review & Herald*, October 17, 1907.

'With thee will I establish My covenant'

1. To whom did God first speak of entering into covenant? Genesis 6:18.

NOTE: 'God calls upon us to receive and impart the love which passeth knowledge. He is looking upon His prostrate law, upon His Sabbath trampled under foot by a race of rebellious subjects. He could have come forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity. He could have swept them away by a flood, as He did in Noah's day. But He did not.' *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, October 1, 1899.

2. What was there about Noah that made it possible for God to enter into covenant with him? Genesis 6:8. Compare verse 22.

NOTE: 'God in His providence set forth Noah as a representative of what true faith would do. The Lord designed that Noah in his life and character should present before the antediluvian world a marked example of the results of believing the word of God. He did not walk in sparks of his own kindling. He obtained all his discernment, all his power, all his strength, from the source of all light; for he held communion with God. It was because he had faith in God, because he was a man of prayer, that he was a man of power. He kindled his taper at the divine altar, that he might be a light to the world. He had a message entrusted to him from God. In his day there was so fearful a departure from God and His ways that hatred of God's law, contempt of truth and righteousness, was well nigh world-wide. The wickedness of men was very great, yet there was hope for them if they would turn from their wickedness, and the Lord made Noah His messenger to proclaim to the inhabitants of the Old World their sins, and to set before them wherein they had provoked the wrath of God. He told them what God proposed to do in the world. He declared to them the word of God. "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man; for that he also is flesh. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. . . . And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. . . . But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.'" *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895.

'I will remember My covenant'

3. How did the covenant between God and Noah affect succeeding generations? Genesis 9:9-11, Isaiah 54:9-10.

NOTE: 'With the assurance given to Noah concerning the flood, God Himself has linked one of the most precious promises of His grace; "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee" (Isaiah 54:9, 10).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 132.

4. What enduring token did God give of the covenant between Him and Noah? Genesis 9:12-17.

NOTE: 'How great the condescension of God and His compassion for His erring creatures in thus placing the beautiful rainbow in the clouds as a token of His covenant with men! The Lord declares that when He looks upon the bow, He will remember His covenant. This does not imply that He would ever forget; but He speaks to us in our own language, that we may better understand Him. It was God's purpose that as the children of after generations should ask the meaning of the glorious arch which spans the heavens, their parents should repeat the story of the Flood, and tell them that the Most High had bent the bow and placed it in the clouds as an assurance that the waters should never again overflow the earth. Thus from generation to generation it would testify of divine love to man and would strengthen his confidence in God.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 106.

'I will establish my covenant between Me and thee'

5. Who was the next man who is recorded as having entered into covenant with God? Genesis 15:18.

NOTE: 'The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ... The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second," or "new," covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today. . . . Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the author and the finisher of our faith.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 77.

6. What was there about Abraham that made it possible for God to enter into covenant with him? Genesis 15:6.

NOTE: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God's law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 17:1; 26:5.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 77.

7. What was to be the token of the covenant between God and Abraham, and Abraham's descendants? Genesis 17:9-11.

NOTE: 'If the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 364.

'They hearkened not'

8. How did God seek to remind Israel of the covenant He had made with Abraham? Exodus 6:4-8.

NOTE: 'In bitterness of soul [Moses] went before God, with the cry, "Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all." The answer was, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land." Again he was pointed back to the covenant which God had made with the fathers, and was assured that it would be fulfilled.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 259.

9. What was the response of the people of Israel to God's reminder of His covenant with them? Exodus 6:9.

NOTE: 'The Hebrews had expected to obtain their freedom without any special trial of their faith or any real suffering or hardship. But they were not yet prepared for deliverance. They had little faith in God, and were unwilling patiently to endure their afflictions until He should see fit to work for them. Many were content to remain in bondage rather than meet the difficulties attending removal to a strange land; and the habits of some had become so much like those of the Egyptians that they preferred to dwell in Egypt. Therefore the Lord did not deliver them by the first manifestation of His power before Pharaoh. He overruled events more fully to develop the tyrannical spirit of the Egyptian king and also to reveal Himself to His people. Beholding His justice, His power, and His love, they would choose to leave Egypt and give themselves to His service. The task of Moses would have been much less difficult had not many of the Israelites become so corrupted that they were unwilling to leave Egypt. The Lord directed Moses to go again to the people and repeat the promise of deliverance, with a fresh assurance of divine favour. He went as he was commanded; but they would not listen. Says the Scripture, "They hearkened not . . . for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.'" *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 260.

'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do'

10. How did God renew His offer of a covenant with Israel? Exodus 19:3-6.

NOTE: 'Another compact [other than the Abrahamic covenant], called in Scripture the "old" covenant, was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the "second", or "new" covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. Soon after the encampment at Sinai, Moses was called up into the mountain to meet with God... Israel was now to be taken into a close and peculiar relation to the Most High, to be incorporated as a church and a nation under the government of God. The message to Moses for the people was: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:4-6).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 135.

11. What was the people's response to God's offer? Exodus 19:8. Compare Exodus 24:3, Exodus 24:7.

NOTE: 'Moses returned to the camp, and having summoned the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the divine message. Their answer was, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Thus they entered into a solemn covenant with God, pledging themselves to accept Him as their Ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of His authority.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 135.

'A better covenant... better promises'

12. What was the problem with this covenant? Joshua 24:19.

NOTE: 'In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. God brought them to Sinai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience. The people did not realise that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exodus 24:7).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 135.

13. How did Paul explain the drawback with this covenant and why a new covenant was needed? Hebrews 8:6-7.

NOTE: 'The "new covenant" was established upon "better promises", the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:33, 34. The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit." Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. Through the prophet He declared of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 372.

Lesson 3: 'They shall be My people, and I will be their God'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart.' Jeremiah 24:7.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 381-382.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Revelation 21:1-8.

LESSON AIM: To study the terms of God's covenant with His people.

Introduction

'God desired to make of His people Israel a praise and a glory. Every spiritual advantage was given them. God withheld from them nothing favourable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself. Their obedience to the law of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their Teacher, and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations, and would be blessed with vigour of intellect. The glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 288.

'They shall be My people'

1. What is the purpose of God entering into covenant? Consider the following Scriptures: Jeremiah 24:7, Jeremiah 31:33, Jeremiah 32:38, Ezekiel 37:26-27, Zechariah 8:8, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Revelation 21:3.

NOTE: 'We are to grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, and we are thus growing up a precious temple unto the Lord. He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16). What we want is the Spirit of God in our souls. We want our faces set constantly heavenward. And when we see that sin in us is striving for the mastery, then we must strive. The pitying Saviour stands right by your side to help you. He would send every angel out of glory while you are struggling to overcome sin, so that Satan cannot have the victory over you. Christ took man's human nature upon Him that He might come right down to man in the temptation wherewith man is beset. The pitiful Redeemer knows just how to help us in every one of our strivings.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 263.

2. What does God require of those who are to be His people? 2 Corinthians 6:17-18. Compare Ezekiel 11:19-20, Ezekiel 14:11, Ezekiel 37:23.

NOTE: 'In the most definite manner Christ through Moses had set before them God's purpose, and had made plain the terms of their prosperity. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God," He said; "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. . . . Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. . . . Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto thy fathers; and He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people. . . . And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee." Deuteronomy 7:6, 9, 11-15. If they would keep His commandments, God promised to give them the finest of the wheat, and bring them honey out of the rock. With long life would He satisfy them, and show them His salvation.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 288- 289.

'Thy Maker is thine Husband'

3. What symbol does God use to describe this covenant relationship? Isaiah 54:5-8. Compare Jeremiah 31:31-32.

NOTE: 'In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. "Fear not," He says; "thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14. In the "Song of Songs" we hear the bride's voice saying, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." And He who is to her "the chiefest among ten thousand," speaks to His chosen one, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." Song of Solomon 2:16; 5:10; 4:7.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 64.

4. How is the same imagery used in the New Testament? 2 Corinthians 11:2. Compare Ephesians 5:25, Revelation 19:7.

NOTE: 'The close relation of the church to Christ is represented under the figure of marriage. The Lord had joined His people to Himself by a solemn covenant, He promising to be their God, and they pledging themselves to be His, and His alone. Said Paul, addressing the church, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." [2 Corinthians 11:2.] But when her confidence and affection were turned away from Him, and she sought after vanity, and allowed the love of worldly things to separate her from God, she forfeited the privileges included in this peculiar and sacred relation. By the apostle James those who assimilate to the world are addressed as "adulterers and adulteresses." [James 4:4.]' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 4*, page 233.

'Thou hast played the harlot'

5. How does God symbolise the breaking of the covenant relationship? Jeremiah 3:20. Read verses 1-11.

NOTE: 'The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow. The sin of Israel in departing from the Lord is presented under this figure; and the wonderful love of God which they thus despised is touchingly portrayed: "I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine." "And thou wast exceeding beautiful and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee. . . . But thou didst trust in thine own beauty and playedst the harlot because of thy renown." "As a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord;" "as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!" Ezekiel 16:8, 13-15, 32; Jeremiah 3:20.' *Great Controversy*, page 381.

6. How does James use the same imagery to describe those unfaithful to God? James 4:4.

NOTE: 'In the New Testament, language very similar is addressed to professed Christians who seek the friendship of the world above the favour of God. Says the apostle James: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'" *Great Controversy*, page 382.

'A better country'

7. What is promised to those who remain in covenant with God? James 2:5.

NOTE: 'What more could the Lord do for us than He has done? He has promised us power and strength here, and for the overcomer He has promised an eternal life in the kingdom of glory. He will help you in all your struggles with sin. You can take your trials to him. Who will now accept of Christ, and give himself to Him as he has never done before? Who will seek for the comfort and encouragement that Christ has given? Who will search the Scriptures to learn what is truth?' *Review & Herald*, December 16, 1909.

8. Is the promised kingdom earthly or heavenly? Hebrews 11:16.

NOTE: 'What [Jesus] said was contrary to the expectation of the Jewish nation. They had been instructed that Christ was to reign as a temporal prince on David's throne, and break from off them the Roman yoke which brought them into subjection as a people to a nation which they despised. Although Christ from time to time had striven to impress their minds with the idea that His kingdom was not a temporal, earthly kingdom, but a spiritual, heavenly kingdom, they could not comprehend His teachings, and really believe His words. The priests and the scribes had often declared that Christ was to come in glory. The description that applied to His second coming, they applied to His first advent, and therefore their statements were false. They gave utterance to the very suggestions of Satan.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 7*, page 200.

'Those who secure for their children worldly wealth and honour at the expense of their eternal interests, will find in the end that these advantages are a terrible loss. Like Lot, many see their children ruined, and barely save their own souls. Their lifework is lost; their life is a sad failure. Had they exercised true wisdom, their children might have had less of worldly prosperity, but they would have made sure of a title to the immortal inheritance. The heritage that God has promised to His people is not in this world. We must dwell as pilgrims and strangers here if we would gain "a better country, that is, an heavenly.'" *Conflict & Courage*, page 55.

'If ye will obey My voice indeed'

9. Upon what condition is the kingdom promised? Exodus 19:5-6.

NOTE: 'What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care, and He has built a hedge, the Ten Commandments, about His subjects to preserve them from the results of transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. He teaches them that the perfection of character He requires can be attained only by becoming familiar with His word.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, page 454.

10. What may cause the covenant to be broken? Isaiah 24:5, Jeremiah 11:10, Ezekiel 44:6-8. See Exodus 32:19.

NOTE: 'As they drew near the encampment, they beheld the people shouting and dancing around their idol. It was a scene of heathen riot, an imitation of the idolatrous feasts of Egypt; but how unlike the solemn and reverent worship of God! Moses was overwhelmed. He had just come from the presence of God's glory, and though he had been warned of what was taking place, he was unprepared for that dreadful exhibition of the degradation of Israel. His anger was hot. To show his abhorrence of their crime, he threw down the tables of stone, and they were broken in the sight of all the people, thus signifying that as they had broken their covenant with God, so God had broken His covenant with them.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 320.

'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you'

11. What second chance did God given the Jewish nation to renew their covenant with Him? Daniel 9:24.

NOTE: 'God declared that even if His people should fail of fulfilling His purpose, He would not forsake them utterly. "If they shall confess their iniquity," He said, "and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. . . . When they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them; to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.'" *Youth's Instructor*, April 23, 1903.

12. How did Jesus announce the Jewish nation's final breach of their covenant with God? Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: 'Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him. But envy and jealousy made them implacable. They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and thenceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce passions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site ploughed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold, to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 295-296.

Lesson 4: 'Having therefore these promises'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' 2 Corinthians 7:1.

STUDY HELP: *This Day With God*, page 31.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 7:21-27.

LESSON AIM: To study the qualifications for those who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Introduction

'Christ's Sermon on the Mount declares who are the truly blessed: "Blessed are the poor in spirit [those who are not self-exalted, but candid, and of a humble disposition, not too proud to be taught, not vain and ambitious for the honours of the world]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn [those who are penitential, submissive, and who grieve over their failures and errors because the Spirit of God is grieved]: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek [those who are gentle and forgiving, who, when reviled, will not revile again, but who manifest a teachable spirit, and do not hold themselves in high esteem]: for they shall inherit the earth." Those who possess the qualifications here enumerated will not only be blessed of God here in this life, but will be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality in His kingdom.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 631.

'Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord'

1. How did Jesus show that a mere profession of Christianity is insufficient for entry into the kingdom of God? Matthew 7:21.

NOTE: 'A mere profession of godliness is worthless. It is he that abideth in Christ that is a Christian. Unless the mind of God becomes the mind of men, every effort to purify himself will be useless; for it is impossible to elevate man except through a knowledge of God. The question you need to put to yourselves is, "Am I a Christian?" To be a Christian is to be far more than many understand. It means more than simply having your name upon the church records. It means to be joined to Christ. It means to have simple faith, unwavering reliance upon God. It means to have childlike confidence in your heavenly Father through the name and merit of His dear Son. Do you love to keep the commandments of God, because the commandments of God are God's precepts, the transcript of His character, and can no more be altered than can the character of God? Do you respect and love the law of Jehovah? As sons and daughters of God, Christians should strive to reach the high ideal set before them in the gospel. They should be content with nothing less than perfection. To those who receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If during this life they are loyal to God, they will at last "see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4. And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God and know Him as Father?' *The Faith I Live By*, page 130.

2. How did the apostles teach the same truth? Romans 2:13, James 1:22.

NOTE: 'Genuine faith will show definite results in the character, and will exert a controlling influence over the thoughts of the heart, and the affairs of the life. It will lead its possessor to practice the principles of his belief. Says Jesus, "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." Says the apostle, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." It is the doing of the words and works of Christ that testifies to the saving qualities of your faith.' *Signs of the Times*, March 30, 1888.

'For theirs is the kingdom of heaven'

3. What foundational quality is essential for those who will be citizens of the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 5:3.

NOTE: 'Of the poor in spirit Jesus says, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."... All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus. He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden." Matthew 11:28. He bids you exchange your poverty for the riches of His grace. We are not worthy of God's love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness. He presents us to the Father clothed in the white raiment of His own character. He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner's place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me. Does Satan plead loudly against our souls, accusing of sin, and claiming us as his prey, the blood of Christ pleads with greater power.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 8.

4. What additional quality will be possessed by those who inherit the earth? Matthew 5:5. Compare Matthew 18:1-4, Matthew 19:14.

NOTE: 'It is the love of self that destroys our peace. While self is all alive, we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult; but when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult...Far better would it be for us to suffer under false accusation than to inflict upon ourselves the torture of retaliation upon our enemies. The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and can bring only evil to him who cherishes it. Lowliness of heart, that meekness which is the fruit of abiding in Christ, is the true secret of blessing. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." Psalm 149:4. The meek "shall inherit the earth."' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 16-17.

'They shall see God'

5. What is essential in those who will see God? Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: 'Jesus... points out the need of purity of heart. The wisdom that is from above "is first pure." James 3:17. Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner. But the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart," have a deeper meaning, not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike. Only like can appreciate like. Unless you accept in your own life the principle of self-sacrificing love, which is the principle of His character, you cannot know God.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 24-25.

6. What may be the experience of those who enter the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 5:10-12.

NOTE: 'Through trials and persecution, the glory, character, of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 31.

'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'

7. What personal preparation of heart is necessary for those who look for the kingdom of God? Matthew 3:2, Matthew 4:17.

NOTE: 'Repentance is associated with faith and is urged in the gospel as essential to salvation. Paul preached repentance. He said, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20, 21). There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness, Repentance is described by Paul as a godly sorrow for sin that "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Corinthians 7:10). This repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner. As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, "Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish." His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.' *Faith & Works*, page 99.

8. What warning did Jesus give concerning righteousness of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 5:20. Read verse 21-48 to understand Christ's words.

NOTE: 'The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the oracles of God; yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 108.

'How hard is it for them that trust in riches'

9. Who especially did Jesus say would find it hard to enter the kingdom of heaven? Matthew 19:23-24, Mark 10:23-25.

NOTE: 'The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. They say, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." Deuteronomy 8:17. Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self. They lose the sense of their dependence upon God and their obligation to their fellow men. Instead of regarding wealth as a talent to be employed for

the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of serving themselves. Instead of developing in man the attributes of God, riches thus used are developing in him the attributes of Satan.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 52.

10. What group especially did Jesus say would be of little account when the kingdom is made up? Matthew 5:19.

NOTE: 'Least in the kingdom of heaven.' 'That is, he shall have no place therein. For he who wilfully breaks one commandment, does not, in spirit and truth, keep any of them. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. It is not the greatness of the act of disobedience that constitutes sin, but the fact of variance from God's expressed will in the least particular; for this shows that there is yet communion between the soul and sin. The heart is divided in its service. There is a virtual denial of God, a rebellion against the laws of His government.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 51.

'Ye have done it unto Me'

11. Which ones did Jesus single out for special mention when making up His kingdom? Matthew 25:34-40.

NOTE: 'In that day Christ does not present before men the great work He has done for them in giving His life for their redemption. He presents the faithful work they have done for Him... Those whom Christ commends know not that they have been ministering unto Him. To their perplexed inquiries He answers, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 637.

'At the day of judgment, those who have been faithful in their everyday life, who have been quick to see their work and do it, not thinking of praise or profit, will hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Christ does not commend them for the eloquent orations they have made, the intellectual power they have displayed, or the liberal donations they have given. It is for doing little things which are generally overlooked that they are rewarded.' *Lift Him Up*, page 346.

12. What counsel did Paul give to those who know the promises of God? 2 Corinthians 7:1.

NOTE: 'Ample provision has been made for all who sincerely, earnestly, and thoughtfully set about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation. None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength and purity and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, turn from their course of iniquity, and with full purpose of heart seek the living God. He is waiting to take away their stained garments, polluted by sin, and to put upon them the pure robe of His righteousness, to bid them live and not die. In Him, as branches of the Living Vine, they may flourish. Their boughs will not wither nor be fruitless. If they abide in Him, they can draw nourishment from Him, be imbued with His spirit, walk as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand.' *Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene*, page 140.

Lesson 5: 'He that overcometh'

MEMORY VERSE: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.' Revelation 21:7.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, page 324.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: 1 John 5:1-5.

LESSON AIM: To study the relationship between overcoming and entering the kingdom.

Introduction

'When man was lost, the Son of God said, I will redeem him, I will become his surety and substitute. He laid aside His royal robes, clothed His divinity with humanity, stepped down from the royal throne, that He might reach the very depth of human woe and temptation, lift up our fallen natures, and make it possible for us to be overcomers, the sons of God, the heirs of the eternal kingdom.' *Christian Education*, page 119.

'To eat of the tree of life'

1. What precious promise does Christ make to those who overcome in the battle with temptation and sin? Revelation 2:7.

NOTE: 'We are seeking for the life that measures with the life of God; therefore our natures must be brought into conformity with the will of God. We must so conduct our life work that we can go to God in confidence and open our hearts before Him, telling Him our necessities and believing that He hears and will give us grace and strength to carry out the principles of the Word of God. What we want is heaven, the victor's crown, an entrance through the gates to the city of God, the right to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. We want to see the King in His beauty. Then daily let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, the perfection of human character, and laying hold of His divinity we shall have the strength of divinity to aid us in overcoming every evil tendency and desire.' *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 365.

2. What was it that caused God to withdraw access to the tree of life from mankind? Genesis 3:22-24.

NOTE: 'God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance. Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness. On this condition he was to have access to the tree of life.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 13.

'Shall not be hurt of the second death'

3. What further promise is made to those who overcome? Revelation 2:11.

NOTE: 'Your eternal happiness will be determined by the course you now pursue. Can you reject the invitations of mercy now offered? Can you choose your own way? Will you cherish pride and vanity, and lose your soul at last? The word of God plainly tells us that few will be saved, and that the greater number of those, even, who are called will prove themselves unworthy of everlasting life. They will have no part in heaven, but will have their portion with Satan, and experience the second death. Men and women may escape this doom if they will. It is true that Satan is the great originator of sin; yet this does not excuse any man for sinning; for he cannot force men to do evil. He tempts them to it, and makes sin look enticing and pleasant; but he has to leave it to their own wills whether they will do it or not. He does not force men to become intoxicated, neither does he force them to remain away from religious meetings; but he presents temptations in a manner to allure to evil, and man is a free moral agent to accept or refuse. Conversion is a work that most do not appreciate. It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind and bring it to understand the unspeakable love of Christ, the charms of His grace, and the excellency of God, so that the soul shall be imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. When he understands these things, his former life appears disgusting and hateful. He hates sin, and, breaking his heart before God, he embraces Christ as the life and joy of the soul. He renounces his former pleasures. He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will; his sorrows, and desires, and love are all new. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which have heretofore been preferred before Christ, are now turned from, and Christ is the charm of his life, the crown of his rejoicing. Heaven, which once possessed no charms, is now viewed in its riches and glory; and he contemplates it as his future home, where he shall see, love, and praise the One who hath redeemed him by His precious blood.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, pages 293-294.

4. How is the contrast drawn between those who suffer the second death and those who do not? Revelation 21:7-8.

NOTE: "'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Romans 6:23. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." Deuteronomy 30:15. The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is "the second death" that is placed in contrast with everlasting life. In consequence of Adam's sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;" "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22. But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. They who have been "accounted worthy" of the resurrection of life are "blessed and holy." "On such the second death hath no power." Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression, "the wages of sin." They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, "according to their works," but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." And another declares: "They shall be as though they had not been." Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.' *Great Controversy*, page 544.

'A new name written'

5. What further wonderful promises are given to the overcomer? Revelation 2:17. Compare Revelation 3:12.

NOTE: 'Before entering the City of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up in the form of a hollow square about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love. Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own "new name" (Revelation 2:17), and the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." In every hand are placed the victor's palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skilful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Revelation 1:5, 6.' *Great Controversy*, page 645.

6. How did Jesus explain the spiritual significance of the manna? John 6:51-58.

NOTE: 'You have a right to appropriate the promises which you present to God in the name of Jesus, for the Father has committed to His Son the bounties of His grace to be dispensed to those who come unto Him asking in faith. The Lord Jesus is the One who gives to him that overcometh to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. He who took humanity upon Himself knows just how to sympathise with the sufferings of humanity. He had the same nature as the sinner although He knew no sin, in order that He might be able to condemn sin in the flesh and might be able to sympathise with those who were in the difficulties, dangers, and temptations that beset His own path while He walked with men. They are to obtain help as He Himself obtained it, through a vital connection with God. Look to Jesus, your substitute and surety and righteousness. He became sin for us who knew no sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. He gives the crown of life to those who are faithful unto death. He it is who gives to eat of the hidden manna.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 10*, page 176.

'Shall be clothed in white raiment'

7. What additional precious promise is made to the overcomer? Revelation 3:5, first part.

NOTE: 'If we would be overcomers, we must search our hearts to be sure that we are not cherishing anything that is offensive to God. If we are, we cannot wear the white raiment that is here promised. If we would stand before God in the white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, we must now do the work of overcoming.' *Lift Him Up*, page 326.

8. What is the white raiment with which God's people are to be clothed? Revelation 19:8. Compare Revelation 3:18.

NOTE: 'Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18. This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 311.

'I will not blot out His name'

9. What is promised to the overcomer in the time of judgement? Revelation 3:5, last part.

NOTE: 'Christ says of the overcomer, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." The names of all those who have once given themselves to God are written in the book of life, and their characters are now passing in review before Him. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. They are watching the development of character in those now living, to see if their names can be retained in the book of life. A probation is granted us in which to wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Who is doing this work? Who is separating from himself sin and selfishness? "Ye are dead," says the apostle Paul of the true followers of Christ, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." When we are alive to God, we are dead to self. May God help us to die to self. Whose names will not be blotted out of the book of life? Only the names of those who have loved God with all the powers of their being, and their neighbours as themselves.' *Historical Sketches*, page 138.

10. What principle is followed by the Lord in blotting a name out of His book? Exodus 32:33.

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.

11. What is necessary to prevent our names being blotted out of God's book? Acts 3:19. Compare Isaiah 44:22, Isaiah 43:25.

NOTE: 'Repentance includes sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 127.

‘To sit with Me in My throne’

12. What supreme promise is given to those who overcome? Revelation 3:21.

NOTE: ‘In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favouritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained, tokens of self-conquest through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who has drunk most deeply of His spirit of self-sacrificing love, love that “vaunteth not itself, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,” love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labour and sacrifice even unto death, for the saving of humanity.’ *Conflict & Courage*, page 314.

13. How are we shown that overcoming in the battle with temptation and sin is essential for those who enter into covenant with God? Revelation 21:7. Compare Hebrews 8:10.

NOTE: The Bible expresses the terms of the covenant in this simple way on many occasions: ‘I will be their God and they shall be My people.’

‘We are His children, and He deals with us as such. When we draw near to Him, and renew our covenant with Him, He mercifully preserves us from the assaults of the enemy. Never will He betray one who trusts in Him as a child trusts in its parents. He sees the humble, trusting souls drawing near to Him, and in pity and love He draws near to them, and lifts up for them a standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. He teaches them to exercise unquestioning faith in His power to work on their behalf. With assurance they say, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”’ *Review & Herald*, April 25, 1907.

Lesson 6: ‘Through Christ which strengtheneth me’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.’ John 15:5.

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 80.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:1-5.

LESSON AIM: To study the provision God has made for His people to be overcomers.

Introduction

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired. We suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and our ignorance of how to exercise faith. We must break through the clouds of unbelief. We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation, until the science of faith is better understood, and until more faith is exercised. There can be no perfection of Christian character without that faith that works by love, and purifies the soul.’ *Review & Herald*, October 18, 1898.

‘Perfect in Christ’

1. How does Christ describe those who are to inherit the kingdom? Matthew 5:48.

NOTE: ‘The word “therefore” implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus has been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father “is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels. The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden, perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 76.

2. How did the apostles express their understanding of this truth? Colossians 1:28, James 1:4, 1 Peter 1:15.

NOTE: ‘Paul endeavoured to show them Christ’s power to keep them from evil. He knew that if they would comply with the conditions laid down, they would be strong in the strength of the Mighty One. As a means of helping them to break away from the thralldom of sin and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, Paul urged upon them the claims of Him to whom they had dedicated their lives at the time of their conversion. “Ye are Christ’s,” he declared. “Ye are not your own. . . . Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” The apostle plainly outlined the result of turning from a life of purity and holiness to the corrupt practices of heathenism. “Be not deceived,” he wrote; “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, . . . nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 306.

‘He bringeth forth fruit unto himself’

3. What does the Bible say of those who strive to appear holy? Hosea 10:1.

NOTE: ‘The prophet Hosea had pointed out what constitutes the very essence of Pharisaism, in the words, “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.” Hosea 10:1. In their professed service to God, the Jews were really working for self. Their righteousness was the fruit of their own efforts to keep the law according to their own ideas and for their own selfish benefit. Hence it could be no better than they were. In their endeavour to make themselves holy, they were trying to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The law of God is as holy as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect. It presents to men the righteousness of God. It is impossible for man, of himself, to keep this law; for the nature of man is depraved, deformed, and wholly unlike the character of God. The works of the selfish heart are “as an unclean thing;” and “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 54.

4. What story did Jesus tell to illustrate the folly of those who seek to be righteous for their own selfish benefit? Luke 18:9-14.

NOTE: ‘The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners. They were like the salt that had lost its savour; for their influence had no power to preserve the world from corruption. The only true faith is that which “worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6) to purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character. All this the Jews should have learned from the teachings of the prophets. Centuries before, the cry of the soul for justification with God had found voice and answer in the words of the prophet Micah: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:6-8.’ *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 53.

5. What vital counsel did Jesus give? John 15:5.

NOTE: ‘Many say, “How can I help sinning? I have tried to overcome, but I do not make advancement.” In your own strength you will fail, but help has been laid upon One who is mighty. In His strength you may be more than conqueror. Say, “Through the grace of God I will be an overcomer.” Put your will on the side of God’s will, and with your eye fixed upon Him who is the author and finisher of your faith, you may make straight paths for your feet. When you are tempted, say, “Jesus is my Saviour, I love Him because He first loved me.” Show that you trust Him. As you walk the streets, as you work about your house, you can communicate with your Lord; lay hold upon Him by living faith, and believe His Word to the letter.’ *Bible Echo*, July 15, 1892.

‘Through Christ’

6. What is the source of the Christian’s strength to overcome? Philippians 4:13.

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

7. How may we lay hold on His strength? 1 Corinthians 2:5, 1 Peter 1:5. Compare Isaiah 27:5.

NOTE: ‘Are you taking God at His word, planting your feet on the eternal Rock that cannot be moved? You should daily be making advancement in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. If you have been labouring in your own strength, make a covenant with God that from this time forth you will rely upon Him who is mighty to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him... When you are imbued with the Spirit of God, self will no longer be cherished. What has been the trouble with your experiences in the past? Why have you not made a success of the Christian life? It has been because of vain conceit, self-esteem, self-righteousness, and unbelief. May God help us that self may die here. May He help us to humble our souls by repentance and confession until we can come before Him clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Say before Heaven, “I have nothing of my own to bring; I want that righteousness that comes through the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour. How thankful we should be that we have a whole Saviour, that in Him is our complete righteousness and salvation!’ *Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1889.

‘By these ye might be partakers of the divine nature’

8. What means has God chosen to enable us to become like Him? 2 Peter 1:3-4.

NOTE: ‘We have the promise that if we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. Is it indeed possible that Christ may abide in us, and we in Him? Christ says, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Would He tempt us and deceive us? No, indeed. There is everything to encourage any soul who by faith claims the promises that God has given us, for through His grace we may be overcomers.’ *Review & Herald*, July 29, 1890.

9. What effect will His promises have on our characters? 2 Corinthians 7:1.

NOTE: 'Most professed Christians have no sense of the spiritual strength they might obtain, were they as ambitious, zealous, and persevering to gain a knowledge of divine things as they are to obtain the paltry, perishable things of this life. The masses professing to be Christians have been satisfied to be spiritual dwarfs. They have no disposition to make it their object to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; hence godliness is a hidden mystery to them, they cannot understand it. They know not Christ by experimental knowledge. Ample provisions have been made for all who sincerely, earnestly, and thoughtfully set about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Strength, grace, and glory have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation. None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength, purity, and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, cease their course of iniquity, and turn with full purpose of heart to the living God. He is waiting to strip them of their garments, stained and polluted by sin, and to put upon them the white, bright robes of righteousness; and He bids them live and not die. In Him they may flourish. Their branches will not wither nor be fruitless. If they abide in Him, they can draw sap and nourishment from Him, be imbued with His Spirit, walk even as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand.' *Maranatha*, page 53.

'Believe that ye receive them'

10. What does it mean to have faith? John 15:7, 1 John 3:22. Compare Romans 4:21.

NOTE: 'We must trust less in human beings for spiritual help and more, far more, in approaching Jesus Christ as our Redeemer.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 82.

'Feeling is not faith; the two are distinct. Faith is ours to exercise, but joyful feeling and the blessing are God's to give. The grace of God comes to the soul through the channel of living faith, and that faith it is in our power to exercise. True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realised and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second veil, and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing, and claim it as ours. We are then to believe that we receive the blessing, because our faith has hold of it, and according to the word it is ours. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. Here is faith, naked faith, to believe that we receive the blessing, even before we realise it. When the promised blessing is realised and enjoyed, faith is swallowed up. But many suppose they have much faith when sharing largely of the Holy Spirit, and that they cannot have faith unless they feel the power of the Spirit. Such confound faith with the blessing that comes through faith. The very time to exercise faith is when we feel destitute of the Spirit. When thick clouds of darkness seem to hover over the mind, then is the time to let living faith pierce the darkness and scatter the clouds. True faith rests on the promises contained in the word of God, and those only who obey that word can claim its glorious promises. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22.' *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 126.

11. What are the identifying features of the true saints of God? Revelation 14:12.

NOTE: 'Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 172.

'An acceptance of the truth of heavenly origin brings the mind into subjection to Christ. Then the health of soul which comes from receiving and following pure principles is revealed in words and works of righteousness. The faith which leads to this is not the faith which believes in mind controlling mind till one person acts out the will of another. Church members having confidence in this science may be called sound in the faith, but it is not the faith of Jesus Christ. Theirs is a faith in the work which Satan is doing. He presents gigantic errors, and by the miracles which he works he deceives many. This work he will do more and more. A healthy church is composed of healthy members, of men and women who have a personal experience in true godliness.' *Mind Character & Personality, volume 2*, page 710.

12. How did Jesus demonstrate His faith? John 11:39-44.

NOTE: 'In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God's will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received. We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realised when we need it most.' *Education*, pages 257-258.

'We shall be like Him'

13. What will be the character of those who exercise faith in Jesus? 1 John 3:1-3, 1 John 4:7-11.

NOTE: 'Those who have faith in the Son of God make manifest what is the character of His mission, by lives of devotion, integrity, and self-sacrifice, and prove to the world that He came, not to save men in their sins, but from their sins. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."' *Signs of the Times*, March 30, 1888.

14. How does James describe those who are heirs of the kingdom? James 2:5.

NOTE: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19. How can we harmonise our dwarfed spiritual condition with the presentation of our text that describes the fullness of knowledge it is our privilege to possess? How can Heaven look upon us, who have had every spiritual and temporal advantage that we might grow in grace, when we have not improved our opportunities? The apostle did not write these words to tantalise us, to deceive us, or to raise our expectations, only to have them disappointed in our experience. He wrote these words to show us what we may and must be, if we would be heirs of the kingdom of God. How can we be labourers together with God, if we have a dwarfed experience? We have a knowledge of the Christian’s privilege, and should seek for that deep, spiritual understanding in the things of God that the Lord has desired us to have. Do we really believe the Bible? Do we really believe that we may attain to the knowledge of God that is presented before us in this text? Do we believe every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God? Do we believe the words that have been spoken by prophets and apostles, by Jesus Christ, who is the author of all light and blessing, and in whom dwelleth all richness and fullness? Do we really believe in God, and in His Son?’ *Review & Herald*, October 1, 1889.

Lesson 7: ‘Everlasting life’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.’ 1 John 5:20.

STUDY HELP: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 390-393.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:10-15.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible tells us about eternal life.

Introduction

‘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.

‘Life and good, and death and evil’

1. How did Jesus contrast the fates of those who believe in Him and those who do not? John 3:15-16.

NOTE: “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: “I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” Deuteronomy 30:15. The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is “the second death” that is placed in contrast with everlasting life.’ *Great Controversy*, page 544.

2. How did God explain the consequences of man’s acts of sin? Genesis 2:17. Compare Romans 6:23, first part, Romans 5:12.

NOTE: ‘In consequence of Adam’s sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;” “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:22.’ *Great Controversy*, page 544.

‘The sleep of death’

3. In what way does the Bible describe the first death that all mankind suffer? Deuteronomy 31:16, Daniel 12:2, Job 14:12, Psalm 13:3.

NOTE: ‘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, 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.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 181.

4. How did Jesus use the same way of describing death? John 11:11-14.

NOTE: 'Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.' *Desire of Ages*, page 527.

5. How did Paul employ the same language when talking about death? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

NOTE: 'The theory of the immortality of the soul was one of those false doctrines that Rome, borrowing from paganism, incorporated into the religion of Christendom. Martin Luther classed it with the "monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals." Commenting on the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes, that the dead know not anything, the Reformer says: "Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awakened, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute." The martyr Tyndale, referring to the state of the dead, declared: "I confess openly, that I am not persuaded that they be already in the full glory that Christ is in, or the elect angels of God are in. Neither is it any article of my faith; for if it were so, I see not but then the preaching of the resurrection of the flesh were a thing in vain.'" *The Faith I Live By*, page 175.

'The second death'

6. Why is it appropriate to describe the first death as a sleep? Acts 24:15. Compare John 5:28-29.

NOTE: 'To the believer, Christ is the resurrection and the life. In our Saviour the life that was lost through sin is restored; for He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will. He is invested with the right to give immortality. The life that He laid down in humanity, He takes up again, and gives to humanity. When Christ comes to gather to Himself those who have been faithful, the last trump will sound, and the whole earth, from the summits of the loftiest mountains to the lowest recesses of the deepest mines, will hear. The righteous dead will hear the sound of the last trump, and will come forth from their graves.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 183.

'At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead, and appear before God. Thus the Revelator, after describing the resurrection of the righteous, says, "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 184.

7. Will all who are resurrected live for ever? Daniel 12:2. Compare John 5:28-29.

NOTE: Notice in both passages that only one class is promised life. In contrast to everlasting life is condemnation, everlasting contempt, not an everlasting life of torment.

'A distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. They who have been "accounted worthy" of the resurrection of life are "blessed and holy." "On such the second death hath no power." Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression, "the wages of sin." *Great Controversy*, page 544.

8. What term does the Bible use for the fate of the resurrected wicked? Revelation 20:13-15. Compare Revelation 21:8. See also Revelation 20:6, Revelation 2:11.

NOTE: 'They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, "according to their works," but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." And another declares: "They shall be as though they had not been." Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.' *Great Controversy*, page 544.

'He that believeth'

9. Are there conditions to receiving everlasting life? John 3:16, John 3:36, John 6:47.

NOTE: 'Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life." In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life. "He that believeth in Me," said Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.' *Desire of Ages*, page 530.

'You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood.' *Review & Herald*, July 24, 1888.

10. What condition did Jesus explain is required for eternal life? Matthew 19:16-17, Romans 6:22. Compare Mark 10:17-18, Luke 10:25-28.

NOTE: The words spoken by the lawyer in Luke 10:27 are quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18. These two commandments were well known to the Jews of Christ's day; they were not, as some today claim, two new commandments invented by Christ to replace the Ten Commandments.

‘Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life, the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden, harmony with God’s law, which is holy, just, and good.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 391.

‘At the last trumpet’

11. When will the righteous experience the promised immortality? 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. Compare Romans 2:7, John 6:40.

NOTE: There is a view common among Evangelicals that the moment a person accepts Christ, he becomes immortal. (Curiously, these same people also believe that the human soul is inherently immortal, in other words, that whether a person is wicked or not, he is already immortal.)

‘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. 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Job 14:10-12. 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. Job 14:21. 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 corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and 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?” Verse 55.’ *Great Controversy*, page 549.

12. How does Paul describe the time when all the righteous, both living and resurrected, will be reunited and meet their Lord? 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

NOTE: ‘To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death,” “he shall never taste of death.” To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” John 8:51, 52; Colossians 3:4. The voice that cried from the cross, “It is finished,” was heard among the dead. It pierced the walls of sepulchres, and summoned the sleepers to arise. Thus will it be when the voice of Christ shall be heard from heaven. That voice will penetrate the graves and unbar the tombs, and the dead in Christ shall arise. At the Saviour’s resurrection a few graves were opened, but at His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 787.

‘The former things are passed away’

13. How is everlasting life described? Revelation 21:4.

NOTE: ‘In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of Paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 362.

14. How did Isaiah describe everlasting life? Isaiah 65:17-18. (Notice the marginal reading for the last part of verse 17.)

NOTE: ‘Fellow pilgrim, we are still amid the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities; but soon our Saviour is to appear to bring deliverance and rest. Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things “shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 372.

Lesson 8: 'My reward is with Me'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.' Matthew 16:27.

STUDY HELP: *This Day With God*, page 220.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:22-39.

LESSON AIM: To study how everyone will be rewarded and on what basis.

Introduction

'No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do is the result of what we are. To a great degree the experiences of life are the fruition of our own thoughts and deeds. "The curse causeless shall not come." Proverbs 26:2. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him. . . . Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isaiah 3:10, 11. "Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts." Jeremiah 6:19. Terrible is this truth, and deeply should it be impressed. Every deed reacts upon the doer. Never a human being but may recognise, in the evils that curse his life, fruitage of his own sowing.' *Education*, page 146.

'Thy exceeding great reward'

1. To whom did God reveal that He will reward mankind? Genesis 15:1.

NOTE: 'Those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings, how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction! They will realise the promise: "Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." "Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:14. "Fear not: . . . I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Genesis 15:1. "I am thy part and thine inheritance." Numbers 18:20. "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." John 12:26.' *Testimonies, volume 6*, page 312.

2. What kind of reward did Abraham look forward to? Hebrews 11:9-10. Compare Hebrews 11:13-16.

NOTE: 'The Lord has precious promises in this life for those who keep His law. He says, "My son, forget not My law; but let thine heart keep My commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Proverbs 3:1-4. But a better than earthly reward awaits those who, basing their work on the solid Rock, build up symmetrical characters, in accordance with the living word. For them is prepared "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:10. Its streets are paved with gold. In it is the Paradise of God, watered by the river of life, which proceeds from the throne. In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river, is the tree of life, which yields its fruit every month; "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.'" *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, page 63.

'Verily there is a reward for the righteous'

3. Who are the ones who will be rewarded? Psalm 58:11.

NOTE: 'A fear of making the future inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualise away the very truths which lead us to look upon it as our home. Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.' *The Adventist Home*, page 541.

4. How are we shown that the wicked will also be rewarded? Psalm 91:8. See Proverbs 26:10, Isaiah 3:11.

NOTE: 'The Lord declares by the prophet Isaiah: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him." "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isaiah 3:10, 11. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times," says the wise man, "and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked." Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13. And Paul testifies that the sinner is treasuring up unto himself "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds;" "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Romans 2:5, 6.' *Great Controversy*, page 540.

'My reward is with Me'

5. When will the righteous be rewarded? Isaiah 40:10. Compare Revelation 22:12.

NOTE: 'In the fifty-eighth [chapter] of Isaiah there is light for those who rejoice in the hope of the soon-coming morning. The Lord desires to send us the reviving, healing beams of His sunshine. "The fashion of this world passeth away," but the fashion of the world to come will endure forever. With that infinite bliss will the righteous be rewarded! What boundless joy will be theirs!' *Manuscript Releases, volume 16*, page 344.

6. When will the wicked be rewarded? Revelation 18:4-8. See also Revelation 20:15.

NOTE: 'God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. "The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act." Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy. When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out.' *Great Controversy*, page 627.

7. What are some of the rewards for the wicked? Read Revelation 16. Compare Psalm 91:5-8, Revelation 14:9-12.

NOTE: 'These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy.' *Great Controversy*, page 628.

'According as his work shall be'

8. Why will God reward every man? Galatians 6:7-8. Compare Proverbs 13:13.

NOTE: 'It takes more than a name to make a Christian. It is to be Christ-like. We are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Reader, what kind of an account will be opened of your case? If you have cared only for yourself, God notices it if others pass it by. That which you sow, you will also reap. Embrace every opportunity that presents itself for doing good. Have your life dotted all through with bright spots where self has been denied, and others benefited. Let your experience be interwoven with acts of benevolence, and you cannot fail to be happy while you are making others happy; and you will finally receive the reward to be given to those who have "well done."' *Good Samaritan*, February 1, 1860.

9. On what basis will the righteous be rewarded? Colossians 3:23-24. Compare Luke 6:35, Matthew 10:41-42, Mathew 5:11-12.

NOTE: 'The righteous are represented as wondering what they have done for which they are to be so liberally rewarded. They had had the abiding presence of Christ in their hearts; they had been imbued with His Spirit, and without conscious effort on their part; they had been serving Christ in the person of His saints, and had thereby gained the sure reward. But they had not had in view the reward they were to receive, and the expectation of it had been no part of the motive that had actuated their service. What they did was done from love to Christ and to their fellow-men, and Christ identifies Himself with suffering humanity, and accounts that all deeds done in sympathy and compassion and love to men, are done to Him. In a subordinate sense we should all have respect unto the recompense of the reward. But while we appreciate the promise of blessing, we should have perfect confidence in Jesus Christ, believing that He will do right, and give us reward according as our works have been. The gift of God is eternal life, but Jesus would have us not so anxious concerning rewards, as that we may do the will of God because it is right to do it, irrespective of all gain.' *Maranatha*, page 342.

10. On what basis will the wicked be rewarded? Proverbs 11:18-19.

NOTE: 'The wicked receive their recompense in the earth. They "shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts." Some are destroyed as in a moment, while others suffer many days. All are punished according to their deeds. The sins of the righteous have been transferred to Satan, the originator of evil, who must bear their penalty. Thus he 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 justice of God is satisfied, and the saints and all the angelic host say with a loud voice, Amen.' *Spirit of Prophecy. volume 4*, page 488.

'He is a God that judgeth in the earth'

11. How does the Bible link the concepts of judgement and reward? Psalm 58:11.

NOTE: 'God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world. He who came from the heavenly courts to save man from eternal death; He who submitted to be arraigned before an earthly tribunal, and who suffered the ignominious death of the cross, He alone is to pronounce the sentence of reward or of punishment. He who submitted to the suffering and humiliation of the cross here, in the counsel of God is to have the fullest compensation, and ascend the throne acknowledged by all the heavenly universe as the King of saints. He has undertaken the work of salvation, and shown before unfallen worlds and the heavenly family that the work He has begun He is able to complete. In that day of final punishment and reward both saints and sinners will recognise in Him who was crucified the Judge of all living.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 359.

12. How quickly after judgement will God reward mankind? Revelation 22:11-12.

NOTE: 'When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12. The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state, men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Saviour, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.' *Great Controversy*, pages 490-491.

'Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities'

13. What comfort are we given that sinners need not be rewarded for their sins? Psalm 103:10-14.

NOTE: 'Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner. As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 82.

14. What assurance do we have that God will reward the righteous? Hebrews 11:6. Compare Hebrews 10:35.

NOTE: 'Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach. While the people are looking for earthly good, Jesus points them to a heavenly reward. But He does not place it all in the future life; it begins here. The Lord appeared of old time to Abraham and said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Genesis 15:1. This is the reward of all who follow Christ. Jehovah Immanuel, He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:3, 9), to be brought into sympathy with Him, to know Him, to possess Him, as the heart opens more and more to receive His attributes; to know His love and power, to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, to comprehend more and more "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18, 19), "this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:17.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 34.

Lesson 9: 'The things that God hath prepared'

MEMORY VERSE: 'But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' 1 Corinthians 2:9.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 675-678.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 22:1-6.

LESSON AIM: To consider what God has prepared for those who love Him.

Introduction

'All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20) will be forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 360.

'I will come again'

1. What precious promise is the hope of God's people? John 14:3.

NOTE: 'Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet, the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended. He will come "with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise." "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory."

Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 25:31. Thus will be fulfilled the Lord's own promise to His disciples: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. Well might the disciples rejoice in the hope of their Lord's return.' *Desire of Ages*, page 832.

2. How does Paul describe the fulfilment of this promise? Titus 2:13.

NOTE: 'We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world.' *Evangelism*, page 220.

'Many mansions'

3. What has Jesus been preparing for His people since He went away? John 14:2. Compare Hebrews 11:16.

NOTE: 'The consolation of these words has come down to our times to comfort the hearts of believers on Jesus in this our day. Our whole being should be thrilled with fervent gratitude that we have such a hope set before us. If we are co-workers with Christ, denying self, we may have connection with God, and obtain grace to help in every time of need, so that we shall not be found wanting when the Saviour comes to redeem His people. We may be found ready to be translated at the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour. I cannot make preparation for you. I cannot repent for you. This is work between God and your soul. If you are defiled in heart, you must go to Him who can cleanse you from all unrighteousness. You must seek God. You must have the soul temple purified, if you would have the blessing of the Father rest upon you.' *Signs of the Times*, June 10, 1889.

4. For whom is that city prepared? Hebrews 11:13.

NOTE: "'God is not ashamed to be called their God.'" What evidence does He present to verify this assurance? The answer is, "He hath prepared for them a city." But those who are thus honoured are doers of the word of God. They love God with all the heart, and their neighbours as themselves, and are living epistles, known and read of all men. By their character they say to the world that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. "For they that say such things declare plainly [to the world] that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city.'" *The Medical Missionary*, November 1, 1894. (Parenthesis in original.)

'To him that is athirst'

5. What precious promise is given to those who thirst? Revelation 21:6. Compare Revelation 22:17

NOTE: 'Christ presents to us who are athirst the water of life, that we may drink freely; when we do this we have Christ within us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Then our words are full of moisture. We are prepared to water others. No sooner does one come to Christ, than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell. And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. If you will go to work as Christ designs that His disciples shall, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need of a deeper experience and a greater knowledge in divine things, and will hunger and thirst after righteousness. You will plead with God, and your faith will be strengthened, and your soul will drink deeper drafts at the well of salvation. Encountering opposition and trials will drive you to the Bible and prayer. You will grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and will develop a rich experience.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 305.

6. How did John describe the water of life? Revelation 22:1. Compare Ezekiel 47:1-5.

NOTE: 'The streets of the City are of pure gold. In this city is the throne of God, and a pure, beautiful river proceeding out of it, as clear as crystal. Its sparkling purity and beauty makes glad the City of God. The saints will drink freely of the healing waters of the river of life.' *Youth's Instructor*, October 1, 1852.

'For the healing of the nations'

7. What was John shown beside the river of life? Revelation 22:2.

NOTE: 'On either side of this beautiful river is the tree of life. And the redeemed saints, who have loved God and kept His commandments here, will enter in through the gates of the City, and have right to the tree of life. They will eat freely of it, as our first parents did before their fall. The leaves of that immortal wide-spread tree will be for the healing of the nations. All their woes will then be gone. Sickness, sorrow and death they will never again feel, for the leaves of the tree of life have healed them. Jesus will then see of the travail of his soul [Isaiah 53:11] and be satisfied, when the redeemed, who have been subject to sorrow, toil and afflictions, who have groaned beneath the curse, are gathered up around that tree of life to eat of its immortal fruit, that our first parents forfeited all right to, by breaking God's commands. There will be no danger of their ever losing right to the tree of life again, for he that tempted our first parents to sin, will be destroyed by the second death.' *Youth's Instructor*, October 1, 1852.

8. How did Ezekiel picture this same scene? Ezekiel 47:12.

NOTE: 'Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will "grow up" to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ's faithful ones will appear in "the beauty of the Lord our God," in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord. Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.' *Maranatha*, page 325.

9. Why was the tree of life withheld from mankind? Genesis 3:22-24.

NOTE: 'The dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation; their happy estate could be retained only on condition of fidelity to the Creator's law. They could obey and live, or disobey and perish. God had made them the recipients of rich blessings; but should they disregard His will, He who spared not the angels that sinned could not spare them; transgression would forfeit His gifts, and bring upon them misery and ruin. Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God. This made it necessary for them to be driven from Eden and be separated from the tree of life, to eat of which after their transgression would perpetuate sin.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 179.

10. To whom will be granted to eat once more of the tree of life? Revelation 2:7.

NOTE: 'Obedience to all the commandments of God was the condition of eating of the tree of life. Adam fell by disobedience. Obedience through Jesus Christ gives to man perfection of character and a right to that tree of life. The conditions of again partaking of the fruit of the tree are plainly stated in the testimony of Jesus Christ to John: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'" *Maranatha*, page 325.

'Faithful and true'

11. How may we be sure that these things are certain to be enjoyed by God's people? Revelation 22:6. Compare Revelation 21:5, 2 Peter 3:13, 9.

NOTE: 'Our part is to rest on the Word with unwavering faith, believing that God will do according to His promise. Let faith cut its way through the shadow of the enemy. When a questioning doubt arises, go to Christ and let the soul be encouraged by communion with Him. The redemption He has purchased for us is complete.' *Our High Calling*, page 117.

12. How may we be sure that God's word is reliable? Hebrews 10:23. See also 1 John 1:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

NOTE: Notice in all these verses the assurance that God 'is faithful.'

'The words and promises of God are the only foundation of our faith. Take the word of God as truth, as a living, speaking voice to you, and obey faithfully every requirement. God is faithful, who hath promised...Our blessings are limited by the weakness of our faith. God is not unwilling to bestow; He is a reservoir of power. We must cherish meekness and holiness of heart. We may have rich evidences of His love and mercy daily in our self-denying efforts to do others good.' *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, page 72.

'For them that love Him'

13. For whom are these things prepared? 1 Corinthians 2:9.

NOTE: 'Long have we waited for our Saviour's return. But none the less sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne. Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home, that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'" *The Adventist Home*, page 545.

14. What should be our response to God's promise of these wonderful things He has prepared? 2 Peter 3:14.

NOTE: 'A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. Then by innumerable voices will be sung the song, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 358.

Lesson 10: Twelve twelves

MEMORY VERSE: 'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.' Revelation 14:4, last part-5.

STUDY HELP: *Early Writings*, pages 13-20.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:1-22:5.

LESSON AIM: To study the twelves in the New Jerusalem.

Compiler's note: It has been noted that the New Jerusalem is "a city of twelves" or even "a city of twelve twelves": 12 gates, 12 pearls, 12 angels, 12 tribes, 12 foundations, 12 names, 12 apostles, 12 jewels, 12 kinds of fruit, 12,000 furlongs and 144 (12x12) cubits for the height of the wall.

Introduction

'Heaven is perfectly organised. There is no confusion. With the millions of spiritual Israelites who will belong to the city, there will need to be order and organisation, but never will it impinge on the perfect freedom of any individual... Altogether there are twelve twelves in this portrayal. Twelve denotes divine organisation. There is perfect order in God's kingdom.' Austin Cooke, *New Heaven! New Earth!* page 20.

'The twelve tribes of Israel'

1. How was the original Israel made up? Exodus 24:4-7.

NOTE: 'Upon descending from the mountain, Moses "came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Thus by a most solemn service the children of Israel were once more set apart as a peculiar people. The sprinkling of the blood represented the shedding of the blood of Jesus, by which human beings are cleansed from sin.' *Review & Herald*, August 16, 1906.

2. When the tribe of Levi was set aside for the work of the sanctuary, how was the number twelve maintained? Joshua 14:4. Compare Ezekiel 47:13.

NOTE: 'Said Jacob, "Thy two sons, Ephraim, and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." They were to be adopted as his own, and to become the heads of separate tribes. Thus one of the birthright privileges, which Reuben had forfeited, was to fall to Joseph, a double portion in Israel.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 234.

'He ordained twelve'

3. How did Jesus form the basis of the new Israel? Mark 3:14.

NOTE: 'The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to be His representative on earth. No costly sanctuary was at their command, but the Saviour led His disciples to the retreat He loved, and in their minds the sacred experiences of that day were forever linked with the beauty of mountain and vale and sea. Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world. As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stand as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church.' *Desire of Ages*, page 291.

4. What role are the twelve to perform? Matthew 19:28. Compare Revelation 20:4.

NOTE: 'During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the Second Advent. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." Daniel declares that when the Ancient of days came, "judgment was given to the saints of the most High." Daniel 7:22. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Revelation 20:4. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, "the saints shall judge the world." 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.' *The faith I Live By*, page 216.

5. When Judas failed, how was the twelve restored to completeness? Acts 1:15-26.

NOTE: 'While they were awaiting the descent of the Holy Ghost, they supplied the office left vacant by Judas. Two men were selected, who, in the careful judgment of the believers, were best qualified for the place. But the disciples, distrusting their ability to decide the question farther, referred it to One that knew all hearts. They sought the Lord in prayer to ascertain which of the two men was more suitable for the important position of trust, as an apostle of Christ. The Spirit of God selected Matthias for the office.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, page 264.

‘Twelve gates’

6. How are the gates of the New Jerusalem named? Revelation 21:12. Compare Ezekiel 48:31-34.

NOTE: ‘The names of the twelve apostles in the foundations of the city show it to be a Christian and not a Jewish city; while the names of the twelve tribes on the gates show that all the saved, from this dispensation as well as from the former, are reckoned as belonging to some one of the twelve tribes; for all must enter the city through some one of these twelve gates. It is this fact which explains those instances in which Christians are called Israel and are addressed as the twelve tribes, as in Romans 2:28-29, Romans 9:6-8, Galatians 3:39, Ephesians 2:12-13; James 1:1; Revelation 7:4.’ Smith, *Daniel & the Revelation*, page 663.

7. What are we told about the gates of the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:21, first part, 25. Consider Revelation 7:14. Compare Acts 14:22.

NOTE: The pearl is formed when a piece of grit enters the shell of a mollusc, causing it pain and discomfort. The oyster or mussel then secretes a substance that covers and surrounds the grit, forming a beautiful object, hard and smooth, with a beautiful lustre, which is highly prized as a gem. (See Matthew 13:45-46.) The pearl is a wonderful symbol of the beauty that may be formed through suffering.

‘Each one will have a close struggle to overcome sin in his own heart. This is at times a very painful and discouraging work; because, as we see the deformities in our character, we keep looking at them, when we should look to Jesus and put on the robe of His righteousness. Everyone who enters the pearly gates of the city of God will enter there as a conqueror, and his greatest conquest will have been the conquest of self.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 31.

‘Could you be brought through the gates into the holy city, your probation closed and sins upon you, pride, folly, envy, evil surmisings, lustful passions, covetousness and these evil things, and gaze upon sinless angels, who never have fallen, never been in disobedience and transgression, and behold in every countenance the light of the glory of God as it shineth in the face of Jesus Christ, and see the redeemed saints that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, how would you feel? You hear a voice inquire, Who are these? And the answer is given, These are they which have come up through great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’ *Review & Herald*, April 12, 1870.

8. Who stands at the gates of the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:12. Compare Revelation 22:14.

NOTE: ‘At the gates’ means literally ‘in charge of the gates.’

‘The city had twelve foundations’

9. What are we told about the foundations of the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:14. Read verses 19-20. Compare Ephesians 2:19-20.

NOTE: ‘The apostles built upon a sure foundation, even the Rock of Ages. To this foundation they brought the stones that they quarried from the world. Not without hindrance did the builders labour. Their work was made exceedingly difficult by the opposition of the enemies of Christ. They had to contend against the bigotry, prejudice, and hatred of those who were building upon a false foundation. But in the face of imprisonment, torture, and death, faithful men carried the work forward; and the structure grew, beautiful and symmetrical. Through the ages that have passed since the days of the apostles, the building of God’s temple has never ceased. We may look back through the centuries and see the living stones of which it is composed gleaming like jets of light through the darkness of error and superstition. Throughout eternity these precious jewels will shine with increasing lustre.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 123.

10. What are the dimensions of the New Jerusalem? Revelation 21:16.

NOTE: Many interpreters take this figure of twelve thousand furlongs for the circumference of the city, not the length of each side. Even allowing for this interpretation, the area of the city would almost half as large again as New Zealand. Some insist that the word ‘equal’ must be rendered ‘proportionate.’

11. What is the height of the city wall? Revelation 21:17.

NOTE: One hundred and forty-four cubits is, of course, twelve times twelve. The need for a wall reminds us of the events of Revelation 20:9, where the resurrected nations, deceived by Satan, encircle ‘the camp of the saints and the beloved city’.

‘Before the purification of the earth by fire, the city comes down into the place prepared for it [Zechariah 14:1-9] by the feet of Jesus, and the evil host, when they surround the city, have an opportunity to see something of that eternal inheritance which might have been theirs, but which they bartered for the deceitful pleasures of sin.’ Keough, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, page 56.

‘The tree of life yielded her fruit every month’

12. What are we told about the fruit of the Tree of Life? Revelation 22:2.

NOTE: ‘Obedience through Jesus Christ gives to man perfection of character and a right to that tree of life. The conditions of again partaking of the fruit of the tree are plainly stated in the testimony of Jesus Christ to John: “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”’ *Lift Him Up*, page 22.

13. What are we told about the regular times of worship in the new earth? Isaiah 66:23.

NOTE: 'God teaches that we should assemble in His house to cultivate the attributes of perfect love. This will fit the dwellers of earth for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for all who love Him. There they will assemble in the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath, from one new moon to another, to unite in loftiest strains of song, in praise and thanksgiving to Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 37.

'On the mount Sion'

14. How are the final generation of God's people described? Revelation 7:4.

NOTE: 'They sing "a new song" before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb, a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song, for it is the song of their experience, an experience such as no other company have ever had. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5.) "These are they which came out of great tribulation"; they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments'. *Last Day Events*, page 268.

15. How is this number composed? Revelation 7:5-8.

NOTE: 'Christ says that there will be those in the church who will present fables and suppositions, when God has given grand, elevating, ennobling truths which should ever be kept in the treasure house of the mind. When men pick up this theory and that theory, when they are curious to know something it is not necessary for them to know, God is not leading them. It is not His plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the Word. It is not His will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand? This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question.' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 174.

Lesson 11: 'They shall see His face'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.' Revelation 22:4.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 470-471.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 3:1-7.

LESSON AIM: To consider what it means to see God face to face.

Introduction

'When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image, the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigour were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe, the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16), invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever.' *Education*, page 15.

'I was afraid'

1. After Adam and Eve had sinned, what was their reaction to the presence of God? Genesis 3:8.

NOTE: 'The great Lawgiver was about to make known to Adam and Eve the consequences of their transgression. The divine presence was manifested in the garden. In their innocence and holiness they had joyfully welcomed the approach of their Creator; but now they fled in terror, and sought to hide in the deepest recesses of the garden.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 57.

2. Why did they hide from the presence of God? Genesis 3:9-10.

NOTE: 'While [Adam] was engaged in his appointed work, he never thought of hiding from God, but responded as soon he heard his footsteps in the garden, and hastened to shorten the distance between him and his Maker. What precious communings he had with God! But after he sinned, he feared that every sound was the footstep of God. He did not want to see God, and when he heard him coming, he did not hasten to meet him, but hid himself. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" This, then, was the reason. He had broken the command of God; and the light of righteousness that had encompassed him as a garment had disappeared, leaving him naked, and he was afraid to meet God. Sin is the only nakedness,

the only degradation, the only dishonour, that we can know; it is the only thing that will make us afraid to meet God.' *Review & Herald*, January 26, 1897.

'There shall no man see Me and live'

3. How does God explain why man can no longer commune with God face to face? Isaiah 59:2.

NOTE: 'God has not separated from you, but your sins and your iniquities have separated your soul from God. You are sick, and you need a physician. Look into the mirror, God's holy law, which is the only standard of righteousness. It is the sin detector. Will you see your sins in the light of the law? Will you have faith in Jesus as the sin-pardoning Saviour? The royal law is before you, and you must meet its requirements. It is the only standard of righteousness; it measures your life and your character. I am sad to be compelled to tell you that you are a transgressor of the law. Practical faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing that will save you; the precious blood of Jesus alone will cleanse from every spot and stain of sin.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 21, page 159.*

4. When Moses asked to see God's face, what warning did God give him? Exodus 33:20. Compare 1 Timothy 6:16.

NOTE: 'We have heard some address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would not address an equal, or even an inferior. We have seen some behave themselves in the presence of God as they would not dare to do in the presence of an earthly friend. These show that they have not a proper view of God's character and the greatness of His power. They should remember that God's eye is upon them; He reads the thoughts of their hearts concerning him. He will not be mocked. God is greatly to be revered; wherever His presence is clearly realised, sinful man will bow in the most humble attitude, and from the depths of the soul cry out, "How dreadful is this place!"' *Signs of the Times*, February 26, 1880.

'Eternal Light! Eternal Light! How pure that soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight can live and look on Thee.
The spirits that surround Thy throne may bear the burning bliss;
But surely that is theirs alone
Who, undefiled, have never known a fallen world like this.
O how can I, whose native sphere is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear that uncreated beam.
There is a way for man to rise to that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies, an Advocate with God.
These, these prepare us for the sight of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light through the eternal Love.'
Thomas Binney

'There remained no strength in me'

5. When Isaiah was given a vision of God, what was his reaction? Isaiah 6:5.

NOTE: 'One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. How can anyone who is brought before the holy standard of God's law, which makes apparent the evil motives, the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips, and that lays bare the life, make any boast of holiness? His acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influences of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the greatness, the majesty, the pure and spotless character of Jesus Christ.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 63.

6. What was Daniel's reaction to the presence of God? Daniel 10:8.

NOTE: 'When the Spirit of Christ stirs the heart with its marvellous awakening power, there is a sense of deficiency in the soul, that leads to contrition of mind, and humiliation of self, rather than to proud boasting of what has been acquired. When Daniel beheld the glory and majesty surrounding the heavenly messenger that was sent unto him, he exclaimed, as he described the wonderful scene, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."' *Reflecting Christ*, page 63.

'They were sore afraid'

7. What was the reaction of the disciples to the presence of the glorified Christ and the voice of God? Matthew 17:6.

NOTE: 'As they beheld the cloud of glory, brighter than that which went before the tribes of Israel in the wilderness; as they heard the voice of God speak in awful majesty that caused the mountain to tremble, the disciples fell smitten to the earth. They remained prostrate, their faces hidden, till Jesus came near, and touched them, dispelling their fears with His well-known voice, "Arise, and be not afraid." Venturing to lift up their eyes, they saw that the heavenly glory had passed away, the forms of Moses and Elijah had disappeared. They were upon the mount, alone with Jesus.' *Desire of Ages*, page 425.

8. How did Saul react to the presence of the glorified Christ? Acts 26:13-14.

NOTE: 'Suddenly a light above the brightness of the sun shone round about him, "and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.'" The scene was one of the greatest confusion. The companions of Saul were stricken with terror, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light. They heard the voice, but saw no one, and to them all was unintelligible and mysterious. But Saul, lying prostrate upon the ground, understood the words that were spoken, and saw clearly before him the Son of God. One look upon that glorious Being, imprinted his image forever upon the soul of the stricken Jew. The words struck home to his heart with appalling force. A flood of light poured in upon the darkened chambers of his mind, revealing his ignorance and error. He saw that while imagining himself to be zealously serving God in persecuting the followers of Christ, he had in reality been doing the work of Satan.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 22.

'The presence of His glory'

9. How does Peter express the solemnity of appearing before God? 1 Peter 4:17-18.

NOTE: 'When Christ shall come in His glory, the wicked cannot endure to behold Him. The light of His presence, which is life to those who love Him, is death to the ungodly. When He shall appear, they will pray to be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.' *Maranatha*, page 88.

10. What precious promise is given to enable us to appear in God's presence? Jude vv. 24-25.

NOTE: 'The Lord loves you, and His guardian angels are round about you. If you are doers of the Word you will obey the instructions of Jesus Christ. In our own strength we are perfect weakness, but, when we put our whole trust in Jesus Christ, we are kept by His power, for He is fully able to keep every soul that puts his trust in Him. The peril to which every soul is exposed is very great. The great adversary of God, and the enemy of man, is watching to find an opportunity to take us when we are off our guard. Jesus has told us of our danger and warned us against the wily foe. He has repeatedly enjoined upon us the duty of always watching and praying, lest we enter into temptation. Believe in Jesus, trust in Jesus with living, constant faith, and rely without doubt upon Jesus to keep and save you. One mighty to save has hold upon you, and as long as you will submit to be led by Him, to learn of Him, to confide in Him, He will keep you from falling. And, when God engages to keep you, He is a sure defence.' *The Upward Look*, page 19.

'We shall be like Him'

11. What precious promise is made to those who inherit the kingdom? Revelation 22:4.

NOTE: 'To those who receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If during this life they are loyal to God, they will at last "see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.'" Revelation 22:4. And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God and know Him as Father?' *The Faith I Live By*, page 130.

12. What will be the condition of those who are able to see the glorified Christ as He is? 1 John 3:2. Compare Matthew 5:8.

NOTE: 'We cannot now see the glory of God, but it is only by receiving Him here that we shall be able by and by to see Him face to face. God would have us keep our eyes fixed on Him, that we may lose sight of the things of this world. We have no time for any of us to delay that preparation which will enable us to see the face of God.' *That I May Know Him*, page 364.

March 16-22

'New heavens and a new earth'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.' Isaiah 65:17.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 674-678.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 65:17-25.

LESSON AIM: To study what we are told about life in the earth made new.

Introduction

'The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored. "Thus saith the Lord . . . that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." Isaiah 45:18. God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever." Psalm 37:29.' *Great Controversy*, page 674.

‘A new heavens and a new earth’

1. What assurance are we given that the heavens and the earth will be renewed? Revelation 21:1.

NOTE: ‘No human language can fully describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. We cannot comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God. Yet we have glimpses of that land even now; for “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 2:10. Precious to our hearts are the pictures of that country which the Bible gives. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations.’ *The Story of Jesus*, page 184.

People have speculated about the words ‘there shall be no more sea.’ Some have suggested a spiritual significance, seeing the sea as something that divides friends and forms a barrier between loved ones. Others, noting the prophetic symbolism of the sea (e.g. Revelation 17:15, Daniel 7:2 and Isaiah 57:20-21), think that this means that there will no longer be strife among peoples. Both interpretations are based on truth and there is no need to choose between them. Certainly the sea was part of the original creation and the prophecy of Zechariah 14 seems to imply that the literal sea will still exist when the kingdom of God is established upon the earth.

2. How did God express the completeness of this new creation? Revelation 21:5.

NOTE: ‘Oh, what happiness we shall enjoy, gathered round about the throne, clothed in the white robes of the righteousness of Christ. No more sorrow, no more separation, but to dwell in peace, to dwell in happiness, to dwell in glory through the ceaseless ages of eternity. What a happy, happy company we may be! . . . When we consider the infinite sacrifice of our Saviour that we might become children of God and members of the royal family, when we consider this exaltation, when we consider that all these privileges will be ours and may be ours every day, that we may have the privileges which belong to the sons and daughters of God, how can any one of us have any word of complaint? How can anyone utter one word of murmuring? How can it dwell in our hearts? We ought to be the most grateful people on the face of the earth. Our happiness is dependent on our faith in God, our confidence in Him. And then when we think of what a hope we have, of what a faith we have, that it reaches right into the other world; when we know that it will continue unto the ceaseless ages of eternity, I want to know how you feel in regard to these pleas that have been presented to you?’ *This Day With God*, page 333.

‘The former shall not be remembered’

3. What are we told about the memories of this life? Isaiah 65:17.

NOTE: The marginal reading for the latter part of the verse is: ‘The former shall not be remembered nor come upon the heart.’ ‘Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness. The former things “shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 372.

4. What single reminder will remain of this world? Zechariah 13:6.

NOTE: ‘One reminder alone remains: our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory, “He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.” [Habakkuk 3:5, marginal reading] The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 361.

‘The former things are passed away’

5. What are some of the things that will not be there? Revelation 21:4, Isaiah 65:18-19.

NOTE: ‘Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed, there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.’ *Christian Experience & Teachings*, page 235.

6. How had Isaiah prophesied this glorious prospect? Isaiah 25:8.

NOTE: ‘The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime utterances of the sacred writers. The psalmist sang of the power and majesty of Israel’s King: “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad . . . before the Lord: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.” Psalm 96:11-13. Said the prophet Isaiah: “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 25:8.’ *Maranatha*, page 21.

7. What human afflictions are we told will be gone forever? Isaiah 35:5-6.

NOTE: ‘It is “this same Jesus” that is coming again, the One who, when He was on earth, “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.” The voice of the mighty Healer penetrated the deaf ear. A word, a touch of His hand, opened blind eyes. He rebuked disease and banished fever. His voice reached the ears of the dying, and they arose in health and vigour. In whole villages there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick.’ *Southern Watchman*, October 3, 1905.

‘Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands’

8. What activities will there be for those in the new earth? Isaiah 65:21.

NOTE: ‘There will be employment in Heaven. The redeemed state is not one of idle repose. In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 362.

9. In what particular way will these activities differ from this world? Isaiah 65:22-23.

NOTE: ‘There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realised. And still there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 362.

‘They shall not hurt nor destroy’

10. How will the animal creation differ from how it is at present? Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:25.

NOTE: ‘The time has come to which holy men have looked with longing since the flaming sword barred the first pair from Eden, the time for the “redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14). The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored. God’s original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 361.

11. What change will we see in the plants of the new earth? Isaiah 35:1-2, Isaiah 41:18-19, Isaiah 55:13.

NOTE: ‘There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God’s people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.’ *Maranatha*, page 353.

‘No more curse’

12. What consequence of sin will be gone forever? Revelation 22:3. Compare Genesis 3:17-19.

NOTE: “‘I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.’” Revelation 21:1. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.’ *Great Controversy*, page 674.

13. What counsel did Peter give to those who put their trust in the promise of new heavens and a new earth? 2 Peter 3:13-14.

NOTE: ‘When you feel an angry spirit arising, take firm hold of Jesus Christ by faith. Utter no word. Danger lies in the utterance of a single word when you are angry, for a volley of passionate utterances will follow. The man who gives way to folly in speaking passionate words, bears false witness; for he is never just. He exaggerates every defect he thinks he sees; he is too blind and unreasonable to be convinced of his madness. He transgresses the commandments of God, and his imagination is perverted by the inspiration of Satan. He knows not what he is doing. Blind and deaf, he permits Satan to take the helm and guide him wherever he pleases. The door is then thrown open to malice, to envy, and to evil surmisings, and the poor victim is borne helplessly on. But there is hope while the hours of probation linger, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” 2 Peter 3:14. This is the standard for which every Christian must strive, not in his own natural ability, but through the grace given him of Jesus Christ. Let us wrestle for the mastery over every sin, and be able to check every impatient, fretful expression.’ *Our High Calling*, page 235.

Lesson 13: ‘I saw the holy city’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.’ Revelation 22:5.

STUDY HELP: *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 369.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:10-27.

LESSON AIM: To study the ‘city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.’

Lesson compiler’s note: There are some who are so concerned to emphasise that the New Jerusalem is a literal city that they suspect any consideration of its symbolical significance to be an attempt to spiritualise it away. But the tabernacle in the wilderness should teach us that something may be both literal and symbolic; it is unwise to insist that something literal may not also be symbolic, or that something symbolic cannot also be literal.

Introduction

'In the city of God "there shall be no night." None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning, and shall ever be far from its close. "And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light." Revelation 22:5. The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the Holy City with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 363.

'He looked for a city'

1. For what did Abraham look forward to? Hebrews 11:10.

NOTE: 'It is said of Abraham that he believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. At the call of God, he left his country and people, and went out, "not knowing whither he went." "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."' *Youth's Instructor*, July 8, 1897.

'It is stated of Abraham that he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. So with every one of us. We are only pilgrims and strangers in this world. We are seeking the city which Abraham looked for, whose builder and maker is God.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 112.

2. What has God prepared for those faithful to Him? Hebrews 11:16.

NOTE: 'The heritage that God has promised to His people is not in this world. We must dwell as pilgrims and strangers here if we would gain "a better country, that is, an heavenly."' *Conflict & Courage*, page 55.

'We profess to be pilgrims and strangers on earth, journeying to a better country, even an heavenly. If we are indeed but sojourners here, travelling to a land where none but the holy can dwell, we shall make it our first business to become acquainted with that country; we shall make diligent inquiry as to the preparation needed, the manners and character which we must have in order to become citizens there. Jesus, the King of that land, is pure and holy. He has commanded His followers, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). If we are hereafter to associate with Christ and sinless angels we must here obtain a fitness for such society. This is our work, our all-important work. Every other consideration is of minor consequence. Our conversation, our deportment, our every act, should be such as to convince our family, our neighbours, and the world that we expect soon to remove to a better country.' *That I May Know Him*, page 169.

'A wall great and high'

3. How did John describe the city God has prepared for those who love Him? Revelation 21:10-11.

NOTE: 'There is the New Jerusalem, the metropolis of the glorified new earth, "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." Saith the Lord: "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people." "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Isaiah 62:3; Revelation 21:11, 24; Isaiah 65:19; Revelation 21:3.)' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 369.

4. What surrounds the city of God? Revelation 21:12, first part, & 17.

NOTE: 'There the Saviour's love surrounds His people, and the city of God is irradiated with the light of His countenance, a city whose walls, great and high, are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, and whose streets are pure gold, as it were transparent glass. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The shadows of night never fall on that city; it has no need of the sun, neither of the moon; its inhabitants rejoice in the undimmed glory of the Lamb of God.' *Review & Herald*, June 3, 1880.

5. What does this wall symbolise? Zechariah 2:5. Compare Isaiah 26:1.

NOTE: 'The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.' *Our High Calling*, page 137.

'Twelve gates'

6. What did John see at intervals in this wall, great and high? Revelation 21:12. See also verse 25. Compare Isaiah 60:11 and Ezekiel 48:31-34.

NOTE: 'Every provision has been made to meet the needs of our spiritual and our moral nature. Light and immortality are brought to light through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has said that He has set before us an open door, and no man can shut it. The open door is before us, and through the grace of Christ, beams of merciful light stream forth from the gates ajar.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 19.

7. Who are the ones who will be granted the right to enter through those gates? Revelation 22:14. Contrast Revelation 21:27. Compare Isaiah 26:2.

NOTE: 'Today there is a class in our world who are self-righteous. They are not gluttons, they are not drunkards, they are not infidels; but they desire to live for themselves, not for God. He is not in their thoughts; therefore they are classed with unbelievers. Were it possible for them to enter the gates of the city of God, they could have no right to the tree of life, for when God's commandments were laid before them with all their binding claims they said, No. They have not served God here; therefore they would not serve Him hereafter. They could not live in His presence, and they would feel that any place was preferable to heaven.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 270.

'To measure the city'

8. What did John see the angel do concerning the city? Revelation 21:15-17. Compare 1 Kings 6:20.

NOTE: The length, breadth and height of the city are equal. It is interesting that when Solomon made the Most Holy Place (the Oracle) in his temple, it was equal in length, breadth and height. Like the Most Holy Place, the New Jerusalem will be the place where God reveals His presence to His people.

9. How was John shown that God's people must also be measured? Revelation 11:1.

NOTE: Since the city measures 12,000 furlongs in length and breadth, its area would be 144,000 square furlongs. It is surely not a coincidence that those who receive the seal of God are also reckoned as 144,000.

'Who can measure the responsibilities of the influence of every human agent whom our Redeemer has purchased at the sacrifice of His own life? What a scene will be presented when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened to testify the salvation or the loss of all souls! It will require the unerring decision of One who has lived in humanity, loved humanity, given His life for humanity, to make the final appropriation of the rewards to the loyal righteous, and the punishment of the disobedient, the disloyal, and unrighteous. The Son of God is entrusted with the complete measurement of every individual's action and responsibility. To those who have been partakers of other men's sins and have acted against God's decision, it will be a most awfully solemn scene.' *Faith & Works*, page 17.

10. On what basis will God's people be measured? Ephesians 4:13.

NOTE: 'Everything in our character that can not enter the city of God will be reprov'd; if we will submit to the Lord's refining, all the dross and the tin will be consumed. As the Lord's chosen ones will receive the light appropriate for this time, they will not be led to exalt themselves. They will not manufacture a standard whereby to measure their own character; for the Lord has given one standard, by which every character is to be tested. There is not one standard for the poor, and another for the rich; for all will be tested by that law which bids us to love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves. Those who win the treasure of heaven will be those who have laid up their treasure above. God gives us light and opportunities to learn from Christ; that we may be like Him in spirit and character; but we are not to conform to any human standard. We are to receive the truth of God into the heart, that it may regulate the life and form the character.' *1888 Materials*, page 1101.

'Twelve foundations'

11. How does the Bible describe the foundation of the city? Revelation 21:14, 19-20. Compare Ephesians 2:19-22.

NOTE: 'The apostles built upon a sure foundation, even the Rock of Ages. To this foundation they brought the stones that they quarried from the world. Not without hindrance did the builders labour. Their work was made exceedingly difficult by the opposition of the enemies of Christ. They had to contend against the bigotry, prejudice, and hatred of those who were building upon a false foundation. But in the face of imprisonment, torture, and death, faithful men carried the work forward; and the structure grew, beautiful and symmetrical. Through the ages that have passed since the days of the apostles, the building of God's temple has never ceased. We may look back through the centuries and see the living stones of which it is composed gleaming like jets of light through the darkness of error and superstition. Throughout eternity these precious jewels will shine with increasing lustre. But the structure is not yet complete. We who are living in this age have a work to do, a part to act. We are to bring to the foundation material that will stand the test of fire--gold, silver, and precious stones. . . . The Christian who faithfully presents the word of life, leading men and women into the way of holiness and peace, is bringing to the foundation material that will endure, and in the kingdom of God he will be honoured as a wise builder.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 123.

12. What lesson may we learn from this? 2 Timothy 2:19.

NOTE: 'Our people need to understand the reasons of our faith and our past experiences. How sad it is that so many of them apparently place unlimited confidence in men who present theories tending to uproot our past experiences and to remove the old landmarks! Those who can so easily be led by a false spirit show that they have been following the wrong captain for some time, so long that they do not discern that they are departing from the faith, or that they are not building upon the true foundation. We need to urge all to put on their spiritual eyeglasses, to have their eyes anointed that they may see clearly and discern the true pillars of the faith. Then they will know that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). We need to revive the old evidences of the faith once delivered to the saints.' *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 25.

'The bride, the Lamb's wife'

13. What term is used both for the New Jerusalem and the people of God? Compare Revelation 21:9-10 with Revelation 19:7-8.

NOTE: 'God is the husband of His church. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Every true believer is a part of the body of Christ. Christ regards unfaithfulness shown to Him by His people as the unfaithfulness of a wife to her husband. We are to remember that we are members of Christ's body.... The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. She should keep herself pure, sanctified, holy. Never should she indulge in any foolishness; for she is the bride of a King.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7*, pages 985-986.

14. How are we to make ourselves ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb? Revelation 19:8, Matthew 25:1-10.

NOTE: 'To those who go out to meet the Bridegroom is this message given. 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.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 420.