

Problems with Bible translations

1. *Was Christ a liar?*
2. *Does obedience matter?*
3. *Is Jesus the angel that fell from heaven?*
4. *What did Christ teach us to pray?*
5. *Did Christ pardon the woman taken in adultery?*
6. *Do we need power to become sons and daughters of God?*
7. *Does it matter whether Christ was God manifest in the flesh?*
8. *Were tongues ecstatic utterances?*
9. *Should we confess our sins to another human being?*
10. *Do our thoughts perish when we die?*
11. *What about the last verses of Mark's Gospel?*
12. *Are there Three bearing witness in heaven?*
13. *Does it matter?*

Problems with Bible versions

General Introduction.

'Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, "It is written." To every suggestion of the adversary, He opposed the wisdom and power of the word. In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over church and state.' *Great Controversy*, page 51.

'Bible reading, the critical examination of Bible subjects, essays written upon topics which would improve the mind and impart knowledge, the study of the prophecies or the precious lessons of Christ, these will have an influence to strengthen the mental powers and increase spirituality. A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers, and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan.' *Messages to Young People*, page 397.

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only light
By which the bark of man can navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss securely."

'Why should not this book, this precious treasure, be exalted and esteemed as a valued friend? This is our chart across the stormy sea of life. It is our guide-book, showing us the way to the eternal mansions, and the character we must have to inhabit them. There is no book the perusal of which will so elevate and strengthen the mind as the study of the Bible. Here the intellect will find themes of the most elevated character to call out its powers. There is nothing that will so endow with vigour all our faculties as bringing them in contact with the stupendous truths of revelation. The effort to grasp and measure these great thoughts expands the mind. We may dig down deep into the mine of truth, and gather precious treasures with which to enrich the soul. Here we may learn the true way to live, the safe way to die.

'A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers, and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan. The Bible is the sword of the Spirit, which will never fail to vanquish the adversary. It is the only true guide in all matters of faith and practice. The reason why Satan has so great control over the minds and hearts of men, is that they have not made the word of God the man of their counsel, and all their ways have not been tried by the true test. The Bible will show us what course we must pursue to become heirs of glory. Says the psalmist, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." But this is not the case when it is left unopened and unread.' *Review & Herald*, January 4, 1881.

Compiler's Foreword. The Bible proclaims itself to be the inspired Word of God. For this reason, the devil has waged an incessant war against the Scriptures, seeking whatever methods he can employ to keep its message from the world. In the early days of the church, Marcion, who lived from around 85 to 160, proposed a New Testament consisting of only eleven books grouped into two sections: a version of the Gospel of Luke, and a selection of ten letters of Paul the Apostle who Marcion considered the correct interpreter and transmitter of Jesus' teachings. Both sections were purged of elements relating to Jesus' childhood, to Judaism, and of material challenging Marcion's teaching that the God of the Old Testament was not the same God spoken of by Jesus.

Starting around the same time, a flood of forged 'scriptures' began to appear, emanating from Gnostic writers. These books, purporting to be written by New Testament people like Barnabas, Philip, Thomas, Mary, Judas and many others, taught many

strange doctrines, including the ideas that the creation was performed by an inferior god, that the key to salvation is a mysterious, esoteric 'knowledge' and that all material things are essentially evil and only spiritual things are good.

Origen, who lived from about 185 to 254, introduced a new way of interpreting the Scriptures. He 'corrected' the Scriptures and advocated adding certain books to the New Testament. His method of interpreting Scripture was to treat scripture allegorically. He developed certain doctrines to harmonise the Bible with Greek philosophy. He wrote that the soul passes through successive stages of incarnation before eventually reaching God. He imagined even demons being reunited with God. For Origen, God was the First Principle, and Christ, the Logos, was subordinate to Him.

In the 4th century, Constantine legalised Christianity and one of his acts was to provide an official bible. He delegated Eusebius of Caesarea to produce fifty copies, which were produced in great haste, probably by dictation, rather than by copying. It is thought that two of these bibles survive today, the so-called Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. These two bibles are riddled with inaccuracies. The early owners of Codex Sinaiticus tried to correct it; it is estimated that it contains 14,800 corrections in several different hands. Eventually it was laid aside as unusable and forgotten until its rediscovery in 1844.

In Europe, during the Dark Ages of papal supremacy, study of the Bible was forbidden to the people. The Bible was available only in Latin and the version used, the so-called Vulgate, was full of inaccuracies and errors. In the prevailing darkness, the Waldenses were prominent in possessing the uncorrupted Scriptures in their native tongue and Waldensian missionaries travelled throughout Europe taking the Scriptures to the people. Such was their faithfulness, that the papacy waged a war of extermination against these faithful people. In the 14th century, John Wycliffe dared to translate the Vulgate Latin Bible into English and he and his followers suffered much opposition and persecution from supporters of the papacy.

In the 16th century, Erasmus produced an edition of the Greek New Testament, and this opened the way for translations of the Bible into modern languages. Martin Luther's great work was his translation of the Bible into German, while William Tyndale chose exile from England in order to translate the Bible into English. He was martyred before his work was finished but others took up the work and completed it. In other European countries, faithful souls accepted the task of giving the Scriptures to the people. But the work languished in the centuries that followed as the Reformation lost its initial zeal.

In the early 19th century, the Bible Societies took up the neglected work of translating the Scriptures. By 1800 the Bible, or parts of it, had been translated into only 71 languages. By 1844 a further 86 languages had received the Scriptures. It was in that pivotal year that Pope Gregory XVI condemned the Bible Societies as enemies of Catholicism and confirmed the papal decrees condemning the publication, distribution, reading and possession of Bibles translated into the language of the people. The Bible was added to the Index of Forbidden Books.

But it was too late to forbid people to read the Bible. The devil began a different strategy: in 1844, Codex Sinaiticus was rediscovered and acclaimed as 'the earliest and most reliable Bible manuscript' despite its many errors and inaccuracies. Its publication, along with its 'bedfellow', Codex Vaticanus, led to a flood of new Bible versions, beginning in England with the Revised Version. These new versions contained many differences from the existing Bibles. In the last few years, these recent versions have been heavily promoted and many churches have now set aside their Bibles for these modern versions.

The popular author, A. S. Maxwell, proposed: 'If your Bible happens to be a copy of the King James Version of 1611, or the Douai Version of 1582, or the Revised Standard Version of 1952, or a modern version such as that of Weymouth, Moffat, Goodspeed, Knox or Phillips, never mind. Read on. Read all the versions you can obtain.'

But increasingly, those producing new versions have departed from strict translation, and many of the popular versions are loose paraphrases of the Scriptures.

This series of lessons is designed to look at some of the changes found in these recent versions, in the light of the above statement that it doesn't really matter which version you use, as the differences found do not seriously affect the Bible's teachings.

Lesson 1: June 26-July 2 **'Thy word is truth'**

MEMORY VERSE: 'I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.' 1 John 2:21.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 179.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: John 7:1-14.

LESSON AIM: To study John 7:8 and the versions who render this verse so as to make Jesus tell a lie

Introduction

'Truth has a spiritual influence. It enters the mind, direct and uncorrupted, from One who is truth. The reception of truth in the inward parts is charged with the greatest results. Truth is to be received into the heart, and developed and expressed in the character. No lie is of the truth. On every occasion possible, Satan is on hand to introduce the leaven of his deceptive fallacies. Listen not a moment to the interpretations that would loosen one pin, remove one pillar, from the platform of truth.' *Paulson Collection*, page 74.

'I go not up yet unto this feast'

1. When asked by His brothers whether He would attend the Feast of Tabernacles, how did Jesus reply? John 7:8.

NOTE: 'The brothers had said, "Show yourself to the world." [See verse 3.] Jesus differs by a whole heaven from His brothers. In going up to the feast, their purpose, however 'religious' it may be, is yet altogether worldly. So let them go by themselves. . . The proper time has not yet arrived for Jesus to go up. He will go, but not immediately. . . Hence, having said these things, He remained a little while longer in Galilee. But after His brothers had gone up, He goes up also.' William Hendriksen, *An Exposition of the Gospel of John*, pages 6-7.

2. Did Jesus attend the Feast of Tabernacles? John 7:10, 14.

NOTE: 'As the close of His ministry drew near, there was a change in Christ's manner of labour. Heretofore He had sought to shun excitement and publicity. He had refused the homage of the people, and had passed quickly from place to place when the popular enthusiasm in His favor seemed kindling beyond control. Again and again He had commanded that none should declare Him to be the Christ. At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles His journey to Jerusalem was made swiftly and secretly. When urged by His brothers to present Himself publicly as the Messiah, His answer was, "My time is not yet come." John 7:6. He made His way to Jerusalem unobserved, and entered the city unannounced, and unhonoured by the multitude.' *Desire of Ages*, page 485.

'Not yet'

3. How is John 7:8 rendered in a number of recent Bible versions?

- The Revised Standard Version: 'Go to the feast yourselves; I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.'
- The [Roman Catholic] New Jerusalem version: 'Go up to this festival yourselves; I am not going to this festival, because for me the time is not ripe yet.'
- Today's New International Version: 'You go to the Feast. I am not going up to this Feast, because my time has not yet fully come.'
- The Good News: 'You go on to the festival. I am not going to this festival because the right time has not come for me.'

NOTE: A large number of recent versions omit the word 'yet'. A real difficulty has been created by reading 'not' instead of 'not yet.' Those who prefer 'not' have attempted convoluted ways of explaining Christ's 'lie', for example, that the word 'publicly' should be understood, that is, I am not going publicly but secretly. Some claim that Jesus changed His mind, or the Father changed His mind for Him. There are textual scholars who recognise that although a few manuscripts, including Codex Sinaiticus, read 'not', the balance of textual support is for 'not yet.' And clearly 'not yet' has the support of the context, both the immediate and the wider context, and is therefore correct.

'Those who, by their human construction, shall make the Scripture to utter that which Christ has never placed upon it, weaken its force, making the voice of God in instruction and warnings to testify falsehood, to avoid the inconvenience incurred by obedience to God's requirements, have become signboards, pointing in the wrong direction, into false paths, which lead to transgression and death.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 386

4. What difference is made by omitting the word 'yet' from this verse? John 8:46.

NOTE: 'All who make untruthful statements are serving him who has been a liar from the beginning. Let us be on our guard against untruthfulness, which grows upon him who practises it. I say to all, make truth your girdle. Be true to your faith. Put away all prevarication and exaggeration. Never make a false statement. For the sake of your own soul and the souls of others, be true in your utterances. Never speak or act a falsehood. The truth alone will bear to be repeated. A firm adherence to truth is essential to the formation of Christian character. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14).' *In Heavenly Places*, page 179.

'There shall in no wise enter in'

5. What will be the fate of those who tell lies? Revelation 21:8, 27.

NOTE: 'Falsehood and deception of every cast is sin against the God of truth and verity. The word of God is plain upon these points. Ye shall not "deal falsely, neither lie one to another." "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." God is a God of sincerity and truth. The word of God is a book of truth. Jesus is a faithful and true witness. The church is the witness and ground of the truth. All the precepts of the Most High are true and righteous altogether. How, then, must prevarication and any exaggeration or deception appear in His sight? For the falsehood he uttered because he coveted the gifts which the prophet refused, the servant of Elisha was struck with leprosy, which ended only with death.' *Testimonies, volume 4*, page 336.

6. What are we warned concerning tampering with God's Word? Proverbs 30:5-6. Compare Revelation 22:18-19.

NOTE: 'Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing in any manner that which He has revealed or commanded. . . All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting.' *Great Controversy*, page 268.

'Many study the Scriptures for the purpose of proving their own ideas to be correct. They change the meaning of God's Word

to suit their own opinions. And thus they do also with the testimonies that He sends. They quote half a sentence, leaving out the other half, which, if quoted, would show their reasoning to be false. God has a controversy with those who wrest the Scriptures, making them conform to their preconceived ideas.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 82.

'I tell you the truth'

7. How did Jesus affirm that He was not a liar? John 8:54-55.

NOTE: 'The Jewish rulers did not love God; therefore they cut themselves away from Him, and rejected all His overtures for a just settlement. Christ, the Beloved of God, came to assert the claims of the Owner of the vineyard; but the husbandmen treated Him with marked contempt, saying, We will not have this man to rule over us. They envied Christ's beauty of character. His manner of teaching was far superior to theirs, and they dreaded His success. He remonstrated with them, unveiling their hypocrisy, and showing them the sure results of their course of action. This stirred them to madness. They smarted under the rebukes they could not silence. They hated the high standard of righteousness which Christ continually presented. They saw that His teaching was placing them where their selfishness would be uncloaked, and they determined to kill Him. They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. His whole life was a reproof to their selfishness.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 293.

8. What testimony did even His enemies give of Jesus? Matthew 22:16.

NOTE: 'Jesus spake as never man spake. He poured out to men the whole treasure of heaven in wisdom and knowledge. He is the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world. Every phase of truth was evident to him. He did not come to utter uncertain sentiments and opinions; but only to speak truth established upon eternal principles.' *Christian Education*, page 78.

'Full of grace and truth'

9. What was Jesus' testimony of Himself? John 14:6. Compare John 8:40, 45.

NOTE: 'To human eyes Christ was only a man, yet He was a perfect man. In His humanity He was the impersonation of the divine character. God embodied His own attributes in His Son, His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His purity, His truthfulness . . . The centuries that have passed since Christ was among men have not lessened the confidence of our testimony that Christ is all that He claimed to be. Today the question may be repeated, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42), and without a moment's hesitation the answer may be given, "He is the light of the world, the greatest religious thinker and teacher the world has ever known." All who hear His voice today, all who study the principles set forth in His teaching, must say, in truthfulness, as did the Jews of His day, "Never man spake like this man." "Is not this the Christ?" (John 7:46; 4:29).' *That I May Know Him*, page 111.

10. What testimony was given of Jesus by His disciple, Peter? 1 Peter 2:21-22. Compare John 1:14.

NOTE: 'Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He corrupted not human nature, and, though in the flesh, He transgressed not the law of God in any particular. More than this, He removed every excuse from fallen man that He could urge for a reason for not keeping the law of God. Christ was compassed with the infirmities of humanity, He was beset with the fiercest temptations, tempted on all points like as men, yet He developed a perfectly upright character. No taint of sin was found upon Him.' *Signs of the Times*, January 16, 1896.

'No lie is of the truth'

11. How may we be certain that truth and lies do not mix? 1 John 2:21.

NOTE: 'Truthfulness and frankness should be ever cherished by all who claim to be followers of Christ. God and the right should be the motto. Deal honestly and righteously in this present evil world. Some will be honest when they see that honesty will not endanger their worldly interests; but all who act from this principle will have their names blotted out of the book of life. Strict honesty must be cultivated. We can go through the world but once; we cannot come back to rectify any mistakes; therefore every move made should be with godly fear and careful consideration. Honesty and policy will not harmonise; either policy will be subdued, and truth and honesty hold the lines of control, or policy will take the lines, and honesty cease to direct. Both cannot act together; they can never be in agreement. When God makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be His chosen ones, His treasures. Angels are preparing crowns for such; and light from the throne of God will be reflected in its splendour from these star-gemmed diadems.' *Review & Herald*, Dec. 29, 1896.

'To all students we would say, In the name of the Lord do not permit yourselves to be held where the spiritual atmosphere is poisoned with scepticism and falsehood. Those who have had the evidence of truth, but who for days, weeks, months, and years have had about them a subtle influence that gives a distorted representation, a false colouring, to the truth of God, are not fit for teachers for our youth. Where falsehoods regarding the word and work of God are reported as truth is no place for students who are preparing for the future, immortal life. We are seeking heaven, wherein can enter none who have changed the truth of God into a lie.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 12*, page 125.

12. Who is the source of truth and who is the source of lies? John 1:14, John 8:44.

NOTE: 'Truth has a spiritual influence. It enters the mind, direct and uncorrupted, from One who is truth. The reception of truth in the inward parts is charged with the greatest results. Truth is to be received into the heart and developed and expressed in the character. No lie is of the truth. On every occasion possible Satan is on hand to introduce the leaven of his deceptive fallacies. Listen not a moment to the interpretations that would loosen one pin, remove one pillar, from the platform of truth.

Human interpretations, the reception of fables, will spoil your faith, confuse your understanding, and make of none effect your faith in Jesus Christ. Study diligently the third chapter of Revelation. In it is pointed out the danger of losing your hold upon the things that you have heard and learned from the Source of all light. "Remember . . . how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent" [Revelation 3:3]. Why repent? Because there have come in faults in the form of theories so subtle that by the influence of mind upon mind, through the agency of those who have departed from the faith, the wily foe will cause you imperceptibly to be imbued with the spirit that will draw you away from the faith.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 12*, pages 125-126.

Lesson 2: July 3-9

'They that do His commandments'

MEMORY VERSE: '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.' Revelation 22:14.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 472-473.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Revelation 22:11-15.

LESSON AIM: To study Revelation 22:14 and to see whether obedience is a condition of eternal life.

Introduction

'None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of His government in earth and in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised His law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes. The character building is to go on during the hours of probation. Day by day their actions are registered in the books of heaven, and they will in the great day of God be rewarded as their works have been. It will then be seen who receives the blessing. "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" (Revelation 22:14).' *Faith & Works*, page 43.

'Right to the Tree of Life'

1. How does Jesus Himself express the entitlement to enter the New Jerusalem and eat of the Tree of Life? Revelation 22:14.

NOTE: '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 widespread 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 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.' *Maranatha*, page 325.

2. What was it that led to Adam and Eve being barred from eating of the Tree of Life? Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:11, 17-19, 24.

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.

'Take away his part out of the book of life'

3. How is this verse rendered in the majority of recent Bible versions?

- **New International Version:** 'Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they might have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.'
- **Good News Version:** 'Happy are those who wash their robes clean and so have the right to eat the fruit from the tree of life and to go through the gates into the city.'
- **The [Roman Catholic] New Jerusalem Version:** 'Blessed are those who will have washed their robes clean, so that they will have the right to feed on the tree of life and can come through the gates into the city.'
- **The Revised Standard Version:** 'Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.'

NOTE: Early in the history of the Christian Church, a group grew up which denied the importance of obedience to God. Their influence remains widespread even today. It is not surprising that Satan has attacked this verse especially. By carefully

tampering with a few letters in the Greek, it has been possible to remove obedience from this verse and replace it with 'wash their robes,' the reading preferred in practically all recent English versions and found in their preferred manuscript, the notoriously corrupt Codex Sinaiticus. (The book of Revelation is completely absent from Codex Vaticanus.) 'Commandments' in koine Greek is 'entolas', 'robes' is 'stolas.' The difference between 'do' and 'wash' is 'poiountes' and 'pluontes.' Tertullian, living in the 2nd century, and Cyprian, living in the 3rd century, both quote this verse as 'do His commandments.' But Athanasius, living in the 4th century and Primasius, at the turn of the 6th century, quote this verse as 'wash their robes.' Codex Sinaiticus was produced in the 4th century. Scholars believe that this manuscript was produced by dictation, rather than copying, because some of its errors appear to be the result of the scribe mishearing. (On one occasion he actually writes two alternative versions of a verse!) It is possible that this wrong version of Revelation arose from the scribe mishearing what was being dictated to him. This change to the verse found its way into the Latin Vulgate, and is found in the Douay Version and subsequent Catholic versions in English. Writers of recent English versions, denying the need for obedience to God's commandments, also prefer this change in Revelation 22:14.

4. What warning is given concerning tampering with the words of the book of Revelation? Revelation 22:18-19.

NOTE: 'Regarding the messages he had written out, John the Revelator declared: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things," to lessen the force of their meaning, "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." . . . God declares that His judgments shall fall with increased dreadfulness upon any one who shall try to change the solemn words written in this book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Study these words.' *Review & Herald*, August 2, 1906.

'If thou wilt enter into life'

5. How does Paul emphasise the crucial importance of obedience? Romans 6:16.

NOTE: "'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" How are we to do it though? It is to present the obedience to Jesus Christ. And when we present the perfection that there is in His requirements, in His commandments, in His law, we are presenting that which will loose the bands of wickedness, and in the place of making men fast, in the place of shackling them with sin, it will loose the bands of wickedness, and those that are oppressed by the enemy. Who is the enemy? Who is observing us on the right and on the left? It is the one who rebelled against the law of God in heaven. It is the one that fell because of his disloyalty, and when we work in his lines we are fastening the shackles of oppression. "His servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey." If it is Christ you obey you are free, because He came to make us free. If we are on Christ's side we stand under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ. The blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel testifies that we are free, made free in Jesus Christ, because He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for all who shall believe on His name. That is the freedom that we want. "To let the oppressed go free." What can we say to them? We can show them that obedience to the requirements of Jesus Christ is freedom, liberty, and salvation. It is indeed the perfection of Jesus Christ revealed in our world in His character.' *Manuscript Releases, volume 5*, pages 37-39.

6. What counsel did Jesus give to one who sought eternal life? Matthew 19:17.

NOTE: "'If thou wilt enter into life," [Christ] added, "keep the commandments." The character of God is expressed in His law; and in order for you to be in harmony with God, the principles of His law must be the spring of your every action. 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.

'This is life eternal'

7. How did Jesus warn against those who disobey even one of God's commandments and teach others to do the same? Matthew 5:19.

NOTE: 'Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while wilfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. "Sin is the transgression of the law." And "whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:6. Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2:4, 5. Here is the test of every man's profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God's only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth. If men feel no weight of the moral law, if they belittle and make light of God's precepts, if they break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of Heaven, and we may know that their claims are without foundation.' *Great Controversy*, page 472.

8. How did John show that keeping God's commandments is evidence that a person knows God? 1 John 2:3-4.

Consider John 17:3.

NOTE: 'There are those who profess holiness, who declare that they are wholly the Lord's, who claim a right to the promises of God, while refusing to render obedience to His commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God; but this is presumption on their part, for John tells us that true love for God will be revealed in obedience to all His commandments. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth, to make a profession of faith in Christ, to believe that Jesus is no impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments," John wrote, "is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." 1 John 2:4, 5; 3:24.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 562.

'This is the love of God'

9. Can a person love God while not obeying His commandments? 1 John 5:2-3. See also 2 John 1:6.

NOTE: 'It was a great sacrifice Christ made for us in dying for us upon the cross. What are we willing to sacrifice for His love? Jesus says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" not to select out one or two or nine, but the whole ten. All His commandments must be kept. John tells us of those who pretend to love but do not obey God's requirements. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." *Christ Triumphant*, page 78.

10. How did Jesus link obedience to the commandments with love for Him? John 14:15, 21.

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

'The saints'

11. What is in store for those who choose to be disobedient to God? Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:5-6.

NOTE: 'Human inventions please the carnal mind, and pacify the conscience as it clings to sin. It was not palatable to men to see and practise the faith that works by love and sanctifies the soul. Sin was not forsaken and despised, and in order to excuse it, a means had to be devised by which the edge of the sword of truth might be blunted; so men brought in human reasonings and assertions. If men had permitted the word of God to do its work upon the heart and intellect, they would have distinguished and separated the spurious from the true. If they had received the Scriptures in their simplicity, they would not have given themselves up to worldly pursuits, to fulfilling their temporal hopes. But they made of none effect the word of God through their traditions, and wrested the Scripture from its true meaning. The Lord says that the word of truth is able to make men wise unto salvation. It is a safeguard and shield, and protects men from the delusions of the enemy. "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them." *Signs of the Times*, June 4, 1894.

12. How are the saints of God identified? Revelation 14:12. Compare Revelation 12:17.

NOTE: 'Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of His requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end. If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a co-labourer with God. You are elected to wear the yoke of Christ, to bear His burden, to lift His cross. You are to be diligent "to make your calling and election sure." [2 Peter 1:10.] Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth.' *Christian Education*, page 118.

Lesson 3: July 10-16 'The bright and morning star'

MEMORY VERSE: 'I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.' Revelation 22:16.

STUDY HELP: *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 2.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:11-19.

LESSON AIM: To study whether Isaiah 14:12-14 refers to Christ, Satan or someone else?

Introduction

‘Lucifer had said, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. But Christ, “being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father’s side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the sceptre into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 22.

‘O Lucifer, son of the morning’

1. What are we told concerning the origin of evil? Isaiah 14:12-14.

NOTE: ‘Lucifer, “son of the morning,” was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honoured above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavour to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.’ *Christ Triumphant*, page 9.

2. What other passage shows something of the origin of evil? Ezekiel 28:12-19.

NOTE: This passage, it is claimed, refers not to the devil, but to a particular king of Tyre. The following points should be noted:

- Up to this point, Ezekiel’s prophecy has been directed against Tyre and the **prince** of Tyre. Ezekiel consistently uses the word ‘prince’ to mean ruler, e.g. prince in Jerusalem, prince of Israel, prince of Tyrus, prince of the land of Egypt, David a prince, prince of Meshech and Tubal. In this prophecy, a distinction is drawn between the prince of Tyrus (verses 1-10) and the king of Tyrus.
- The **king** of Tyrus is said to have been in Eden, the garden of God. This cannot be truly said of any human ruler of Tyre. Indeed, apart from the Lord and His angels, only Adam, Eve and the devil have been in Eden.
- The king of Tyrus is twice called ‘the anointed cherub that covereth.’ (Some popular versions change this.) Ezekiel elsewhere described the cherubim in detail as exalted spiritual beings. The human ruler of Tyre was most certainly not one of the cherubim. Nor had the human ruler of Tyre ever been on the holy mountain of God.
- The being described in these verses was described as perfect in his ways from the day he was created. No human king of Tyre was ever created (indeed only Adam and Eve among human beings could be said to have been created), and no human being, apart from Adam and Eve, was perfect in his ways from the beginning of his existence.
- It is therefore logical to conclude that behind the human prince of Tyre was the real ruler of Tyre, one who had once been one of the highest angels of heaven but who had turned from perfection to iniquity, in other words, the devil.

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

Lucifer – Shining One

3. How is Isaiah 14:12 rendered in the popular Bible versions of today?

- New International Version: ‘How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!’
- Good News Bible: ‘King of Babylonia, bright morning star, you have fallen from heaven! In the past you conquered nations, but now you have been thrown to the ground.’
- The [Roman Catholic] Jerusalem Bible: ‘How did you come to fall from heaven, Daystar, son of Dawn? How did you come to be thrown to the ground, you who used to enslave the nations?’ [The footnote links this passage to Phoenician mythology!]
- Revised Standard Version: ‘How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you that laid the nations low!’

NOTE: ‘The change in new versions does not spring from the original Hebrew language but from the “theology” of the new

versions' editors. The NIV's wording parallels *exactly* the view expressed by NIV committee member, R. Laird Harris. He asserts that Isaiah 14 is not about "Lucifer" but about a king of Babylon and his interment in the grave. The NIV's version of Harris' view is one link in a chain tied to New Age Luciferian, H. P. Blavatsky, who, like the new versions and new theologians, denies the fall of Lucifer. Blavatsky writes the script for the 20th century scribes saying: "Now there are many passages in the Bible that prove on their face, exoterically, that this belief was at one time universal; and the two most convincing are Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Christian theologians are welcome to interpret the great War before Creation . . . if they so choose, but the absurdity of the idea is too apparent." Riplinger: *New Ages Versions*, page 42.

4. What does Isaiah 14:12 actually say?

- Here is the word-for-word translation of this verse: 'How have you fallen from the heavens, O Shining One, son of the morning, you are cut down to the ground who weakens on the nations.'

NOTE: The Hebrew word 'Helel' is used nowhere else in the Bible. It is a name meaning 'Shining One.' When the Bible was translated into Latin for the Western churches, the Latin name 'Lucifer' (meaning Light-bearer) was chosen because it conveys a similar meaning to the Hebrew name.

'An examination of the original Hebrew will dispel any illusion that "morning star" is an acceptable substitute for the word "Lucifer". The Hebrew is "Helel, ben shachar," which is accurately translated as "Lucifer, son of the morning." The NIV and NASB give an English translation *as if* the Hebrew had said, "shachar kokab, ben shachar" or morning star, son of the morning (or dawn). Yet the word for star (kokab) appears nowhere in the text. Also "morning" appears only once, as the KJV shows, not twice as the new versions indicate. The word "kokab" is translated as star dozens of other times by the NIV translators; morning or dawn is likewise used hundreds of times. New version editors know "boger kokab" is morning star since it is used in Job 38:7. If God had intended to communicate "morning star" he could have repeated it here. The word he chooses, "helel" appears nowhere else in the Old Testament, just as "Lucifer" appears nowhere else.' Riplinger: *New Ages Versions*, page 42.

'The bright and Morning Star'

5. Whom does the Bible identify by the title "Morning Star"? Revelation 22:16. Consider 2 Peter 1:19.

NOTE: 'There is a great work to be done yet, and every effort possible must be made to reveal Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour, Christ as the sin-bearer, Christ as the bright and morning star, and the Lord will give us favour before the world until our work is done.' *Evangelism*, page 65.

6. If the one known in Scripture as the Morning Star were truly the one who fell from heaven because of his pride and ambition, what sense could we make of Revelation 2:28?

NOTE: 'Every converted soul has a work to do. We are to receive grace in order to freely give grace. We are to let the light shine forth from the Bright and Morning Star, to shed forth light in works of self-denial and self-sacrifice, following the example that Christ has given us in His own life and character. We are to draw from the root that substance that will enable us to bear much fruit. Every soul who has heard the divine invitation is to echo the message from hill to valley, saying to those with whom he comes in contact, "Come."' *This Day With God*, page 327.

'I will be like the Most High'

7. What was the sin of Lucifer? Isaiah 14:14, last part.

NOTE: 'Lucifer had said, "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12, 14); and the desire for self-exaltation had brought strife into the heavenly courts, and had banished a multitude of the hosts of God. Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.' *Desire of Ages*, page 435.

8. How did the Tempter seek to induce Eve to commit the same sin? Genesis 3:5, last part.

NOTE: 'Satan desired to make transgression appear a real blessing to them, and that in prohibiting them from taking of the fruit of the tree God was withholding from them great good. If you eat, your eyes shall be opened, he said, and you shall be as gods. You will be like God Himself in knowledge and in power. But what an opening it was! "Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." That knowledge was obtained, but what a knowledge it was! The curse of sin was the knowledge they gained. Eve coveted the thing God had forbidden. She revealed a distrust of God and His goodness, and a desire to be independent and do as she thought best. Eve offered the fruit to Adam and became his tempter. She would be a god. She would be a law unto herself. She would acknowledge no restraint. But that apparently smallest of sins constituted her a transgressor of the law of God.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 22.

'Thou art the anointed cherub'

9. How is Ezekiel 28:14 rendered in some popular Bible versions?

- **Good News Version:** 'I put a terrifying angel there to guard you. You lived on my holy mountain and walked among sparkling gems.'
- **Jerusalem Bible** [Roman Catholic]: 'I had provided you with a guardian cherub; you were on the holy mountain of

God; you walked amid red-hot coals.'

- **The Revised English Bible:** 'I appointed a towering cherub as your guardian; you were on God's holy mountain and you walked proudly among stones of fire.'

NOTE: 'Those who present a doctrine contrary to that of the Bible are led by the great apostate who was cast out of the courts of God. Of him before his fall, it was written, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. . . . I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee, All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."' With such a leader, an angel expelled from heaven, these supposed wise men of earth may fabricate bewitching theories with which to infatuate the minds of men.' *Youth's Instructor*, February 7, 1895.

10. What is the literal translation of this verse?

- Here is a word-for-word translation of this verse: 'You (were) the anointed cherub that covers and I had put you in the holy height of God (where) you were in the midst of the stones of fire. You walked up and down.'

NOTE: "'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.'" Lucifer disputed the justice of this requirement in heaven, and thought its existence altogether unnecessary. He said in his heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." He had been made beautiful, he had been highly exalted in heaven, and his heart was lifted up because of his beauty; he had corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness. Of him it had been said: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." "Thus saith the Lord God: Because thine heart was lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. . . . I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. . . . I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Under the symbol of the king of Tyrus, the Scriptures give us a description of the character and destiny of the first great rebel against the law of God.' *Signs of the Times*, September 24, 1894.

'Like the Most High'

11. If Christ truly were the rebellious one who fell from heaven because he was ambitious to be like the Most High, what are we to make of Philippians 2:6-7?

NOTE: 'While Lucifer counted it a thing to be grasped to be equal with God, Christ, the Exalted One, "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:7, 8. Now the cross was just before Him; and His own disciples were so filled with self-seeking, the very principle of Satan's kingdom, that they could not enter into sympathy with their Lord, or even understand Him as He spoke of His humiliation for them. Very tenderly, yet with solemn emphasis, Jesus tried to correct the evil. He showed what is the principle that bears sway in the kingdom of heaven, and in what true greatness consists, as estimated by the standard of the courts above. Those who were actuated by pride and love of distinction were thinking of themselves, and of the rewards they were to have, rather than how they were to render back to God the gifts they had received. They would have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they were identified with the ranks of Satan. Before honour is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God. The heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls.' *Desire of Ages*, page 436.

12. Does the Bible teach that Christ is truly 'like the Most High'? Hebrews 1:1-3, Colossians 1:12-15. Consider John 14:9.

NOTE: 'Who is Christ? He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought, as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God. Christ said to Philip, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." His words were the echo of God's words. Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 21.

Lesson 4: July 17-23 'Our Father which art in heaven'

MEMORY VERSE: 'After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.' Matthew 6:9-13.

STUDY HELP: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 103-120.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4.

LESSON AIM: To study the Lord's model prayer and the way it is presented in modern popular Bible versions.

Introduction

'Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard is assurance also to us.' *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 26.

'After this manner pray ye'

1. What pattern for our prayers did Jesus show us? Matthew 6:9-13.

NOTE: 'Jesus gives them no new form of prayer. That which He has before taught them He repeats, as if He would say, You need to understand what I have already given. It has a depth of meaning you have not yet fathomed. The Saviour does not, however, restrict us to the use of these exact words. As one with humanity, He presents His own ideal of prayer, words so simple that they may be adopted by the little child, yet so comprehensive that their significance can never be fully grasped by the greatest minds. We are taught to come to God with our tribute of thanksgiving, to make known our wants, to confess our sins, and to claim His mercy in accordance with His promise.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 103.

2. When asked by His disciples to teach them how to pray, with what words did He answer their request? Luke 11:2-4.

NOTE: 'The Lord's Prayer was twice given by our Saviour, first to the multitude in the Sermon on the Mount, and again, some months later, to the disciples alone. The disciples had been for a short time absent from their Lord, when on their return they found Him absorbed in communion with God. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued praying aloud. The Saviour's face was irradiated with a celestial brightness. He seemed to be in the very presence of the Unseen, and there was a living power in His words as of one who spoke with God. The hearts of the listening disciples were deeply moved. They had marked how often He spent long hours in solitude in communion with His Father. His days were passed in ministry to the crowds that pressed upon Him, and in unveiling the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis, and this incessant labour often left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and brothers, and even His disciples, had feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the sense of refreshment that seemed to pervade His presence. It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works. Now, as they listened to His supplication, their hearts were awed and humbled. As He ceased praying, it was with a conviction of their own deep need that they exclaimed, "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 102.

'Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory'

3. What is omitted from Christ's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 in most of the recent popular Bible versions?

- **New International Version:** 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'
- **Good News Bible:** 'Our Father in heaven: may your holy name be honoured; may your kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need. Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us. Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One.'

Practically all recent versions omit the closing words from our Lord's prayer. The reason for this omission is typically explained thus: 'This doxology does not appear in the oldest and best Greek manuscripts, and in those which do include it, there are considerable variations. . . Eminent textual authorities believe that it was added by later hands, probably to make the prayer more suitable for public worship.' (Note taken from 'The New Scofield Reference Bible.) In fact there is overwhelming documentary evidence for the authenticity of these words. They are omitted in a small number of unrepresentative and unreliable manuscripts, but are found, with no appreciable variations, in nearly all the existing manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel, as well as many other ancient Greek manuscripts used in public worship. The suggestion that they were added later was first made in 1514 in the Complutensian Polyglot, produced under the supervision of Cardinal Ximenes. Critics of God's Word continue to repeat this charge, despite the lack of adequate evidence.

4. What great truth is enshrined in the closing words of the Lord's Prayer? Matthew 6:13, last part.

NOTE: "'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.'" Matthew 6:13. The last like the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer, points to our Father as above all power and authority and every name that is named. The Saviour beheld the years that

stretched out before His disciples, not, as they had dreamed, lying in the sunshine of worldly prosperity and honour, but dark with the tempests of human hatred and satanic wrath. Amid national strife and ruin, the steps of the disciples would be beset with perils, and often their hearts would be oppressed by fear. They were to see Jerusalem a desolation, the temple swept away, its worship forever ended, and Israel scattered to all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore. Jesus said, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars." "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Matthew 24:6-8. Yet Christ's followers were not to fear that their hope was lost or that God had forsaken the earth. The power and the glory belong unto Him whose great purposes would still move on unthwarted toward their consummation. In the prayer that breathes their daily wants, the disciples of Christ were directed to look above all the power and dominion of evil, unto the Lord their God, whose kingdom ruleth over all and who is their Father and everlasting Friend.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 120.

The oldest and best manuscripts?

5. How do the modern popular versions render the prayer Christ taught his disciples in Luke 11:2-4?

- **New International Version:** 'Father, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day your daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'
- **Good News Bible:** 'Father: May your holy name be honoured; may your kingdom come. Give us day by day the food we need. Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone who does us wrong. And do not bring us to hard testing.'
- **Revised Standard Version:** 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.'

NOTE: Those who offer this truncated version of the Lord's Prayer claim that it is based on 'the oldest and best manuscripts.' The oldest (but not necessarily best) manuscripts are known as Aleph, A, B, C and D. Among these five, there is chaotic disagreement as to the Lord's Prayer in Luke's Gospel. D (Codex Bezae) inserts into Luke a paraphrase of Matthew 6:7. Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus) omit the 'Our' before Father and also 'which art in heaven. D omits 'thy' before 'name', adds 'upon us' and transposes the Greek words for 'Thy kingdom'. B omits 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth.' Aleph, however, includes these words, adding 'so' before 'also' and omitting a Greek article. Aleph omits the article before 'day by day' while D had 'this day' from Matthew. D has the 'debts' from Matthew instead of 'sins.' D also has 'our debtors' instead of 'everyone that is indebted to us'. Both B and Aleph omit 'deliver us from evil.' This is a partial summary of the lack of harmony in the manuscripts favoured by those who produce the modern popular versions. These manuscripts corrupt the forty-five words of the Lord's Prayer. They do not agree together on any single variation. On only one point do more than two of these manuscripts agree with each other, and this agreement is in a grammatical error! In thirty-two of the forty-five words, there is disagreement in these five manuscripts. Yet the writers of these modern versions would have us believe that these are 'the oldest and best manuscripts.' The version of the Lord's Prayer in the New International Version cannot be found in any single Greek manuscript but is assembled, piece by piece, from a variety of manuscripts.

6. What is the significance of the change from 'Our Father which art in heaven' to 'Father'?

NOTE: When this truncated version of the Lord's Prayer was first offered in Westcott and Hort's Revised Version, it was greeted with great joy by Madame Blavatsky, the Luciferian. She called it 'The Real Paternoster', 'the correct version' and attributed it to Marcion [an early Gnostic heretic and mutilator of the Scriptures]. For Madame Blavatsky, Lucifer was the real Father. This "Father" is, of course, entirely different from "Our Father which art in heaven". The phrase 'which art in heaven' clearly identifies the One to whom this prayer is addressed. Thus it was necessary to remove it in order to pervert this prayer to a different purpose. The One she labelled as 'the Sinaiatic Deity' was, she taught, subordinate to Lucifer. Eliphaz Levi, in his book, *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, describes this as the "occult version of the Paternoster." [Latin for "Our Father".]

'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'

7. Is there good reason for omitting the words 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'?

NOTE: The clause: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts, even the corrupt ones. It is missing in Codex Vaticanus, however. (Codex Vaticanus also lacks Revelation, Titus, 1 & 2 Timothy and Hebrews 9:14-13:25.) Once this clause is omitted, in addition to the words omitted at the beginning of the Prayer, heaven has been completely eliminated from the version of the Lord's Prayer found in Luke.

8. Is it important that we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven? Luke 11:2, last part. (Omitted in most modern versions.)

NOTE: 'The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the principles of this law are the principles of heaven. The angels of heaven attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do His will is the highest service that can engage their powers. But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. The petition, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," is a prayer that the reign of evil on this earth may be ended, that sin may be forever destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness be established. Then in earth as in heaven will be fulfilled "all the good pleasure of His goodness." 2 Thessalonians 1:11.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pages 109-110.

‘Deliver us from evil’

- 9. In view of the change of the phrase, ‘deliver us from evil’ in their version of Matthew in popular modern versions, and its removal in their version of Luke, is deliverance from evil something that Christians should pray for? John 17:15, 2 Timothy 4:18. Compare Galatians 1:4.**

NOTE: ‘Christ prayed to His Father in behalf of His followers, “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” Sin and pollution abound on every hand, and daily, hourly, the prayer should ascend to heaven, “Deliver us from evil.” The offering of this prayer by one who realises his weakness makes the temptation of the enemy powerless.’ *Signs of the Times*, March 29, 1905.

- 10. What reason might there be for changing or removing the words ‘Deliver us from evil’?**

NOTE: The notion that we may be delivered from the Evil One, without the need to be delivered from evil, lies at the heart of the ‘Once saved, always saved’ delusion. Here is a typical expression of this view: ‘Whoever **once** truly confesses that Jesus was raised from the dead and confesses that Jesus is Lord, will go to heaven when he dies...What if we sin? That is the most obvious question. The question is then often reshaped and put like this: What if a person who is saved falls into sin, stays in sin and is found in that very condition when he dies? Will he still go to heaven? **Answer: yes.** If he was truly saved in the first place, yes. If the answer to this question is no, this book is utterly unnecessary. . . I therefore state categorically that the person who is saved – who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead – **will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith.** In other words, no matter what sin (or absence of Christian obedience) may accompany such faith.’ R. T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved*, page 16 ff. (emphasis added.)

‘This final line is uprooted from the text [of Luke 11:2-4] and jettisoned away with all of the references to heaven. Words like good and evil, heaven and hell, paint a picture which is too black and white for the New Age which sees the world in varying shades of grey. The new versions don’t present an evil world, as seen in Galatians 1:4, but an evil age. They believe this evil Age of Pisces will soon become their glorious Age of Aquarius.’ Riplinger, *New Age Versions*, page 70.

‘If any man shall take away from the words’

- 11. Does it matter if we use Bible versions with words omitted? Revelation 22:19. Consider also Proverbs 30:5-6.**

NOTE: ‘Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing in any manner that which He has revealed or commanded. These solemn denunciations apply to all who by their influence lead men to regard lightly the law of God. They should cause those to fear and tremble who flippantly declare it a matter of little consequence whether we obey God’s law or not. All who exalt their own opinions above divine revelation, all who would change the plain meaning of Scripture to suit their own convenience, or for the sake of conforming to the world, are taking upon themselves a fearful responsibility. The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting.’ *Great Controversy*, page 268.

- 12. How did Jesus emphasise the importance of every word of the Scriptures? Matthew 4:4.**

NOTE: ‘Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation: “1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible.” The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth.’ *Review & Herald*, November 25, 1884.

Lesson 5: July 24-30 **‘A woman taken in adultery’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.’ John 8:11.

STUDY HELP: *Desire of Ages*, pages 460-462.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 7:53-8:11.

LESSON AIM: To study Christ’s encounter with the woman taken in adultery and whether it should remain in the Bible.

Introduction

‘Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. The greater the sinner’s guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. With His own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race.’ *Ministry of Healing*, page 89.

‘What sayest Thou?’

1. What trap did the Pharisees lay for Christ? John 8:3-6, first part.

NOTE: ‘A group of Pharisees and scribes approached Him, dragging with them a terror-stricken woman, whom with hard, eager voices they accused of having violated the seventh commandment. Pushing her into the presence of Jesus, they said, with a hypocritical display of respect, “Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?” John 8:4, 5. Their pretended reverence veiled a deep-laid plot for His ruin. Should Jesus acquit the woman, He might be charged with despising the law of Moses. Should He declare her worthy of death, He could be accused to the Romans as one who assumed authority belonging only to them.’ *Ministry of Healing*, pages 87-88.

2. How did Jesus respond to their question? John 8:6, last part-9.

NOTE: ‘Jesus looked upon the scene, the trembling victim in her shame, the hard-faced dignitaries, devoid of even human pity. His spirit of stainless purity shrank from the spectacle. Giving no sign that He had heard the question, He stooped and, fixing His eyes upon the ground, began to write in the dust. Impatient at His delay and apparent indifference the accusers drew nearer, urging the matter upon His attention. But as their eyes, following those of Jesus, fell upon the pavement at His feet, their voices were silenced. There, traced before them, were the guilty secrets of their own lives. Rising, and fixing His eyes upon the plotting elders, Jesus said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Verse 7. And, stooping down, He continued writing. He had not set aside the Mosaic law nor infringed upon the authority of Rome. The accusers were defeated. Now, their robes of pretended holiness torn from them, they stood, guilty and condemned, in the presence of infinite purity. Trembling lest the hidden iniquity of their lives should be laid open to the multitude, with bowed heads and downcast eyes they stole away, leaving their victim with the pitying Saviour.’ *Ministry of Healing*, page 88.

3. When the accusers had gone away, what were Christ’s words to the guilty woman? John 8:10-11.

NOTE: ‘Jesus did not palliate sin nor lessen the sense of crime; but He came not to condemn; He came to lead the sinner to eternal life. The world looked upon this erring woman as one to be slighted and scorned; but the pure and holy Jesus stooped to address her with words of comfort, encouraging her to reform her life. Instead of to condemn the guilty, His work was to reach into the very depths of human woe and degradation, lift up the debased and sinful, and bid the trembling penitent to “sin no more.”’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2*, page 351.

‘The earliest and most reliable manuscripts?’

4. What attitude is taken to this passage in the recent popular versions?

- **The New International Version:** ‘The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11.’ But the writers of the NIV include the passage.
- **The Good News Bible:** ‘Many manuscripts and early translations do not have this passage (8:1-11); others have it after John 21:24; others have it after Luke 21:38; one manuscript has it after John 7:36.’ The writers of the Good News Bible include the passage in square brackets.
- **The Jerusalem Bible:** ‘The author of this passage, John 7:53-8:11, is not John; it is omitted by the oldest witnesses.’

NOTE: ‘The notes printed in the modern versions regarding John 7:53 - 8:11 are completely misleading. For example, the R.S.V. states that most of the ancient authorities either omit 7:53-8:11 or insert it with variations of text after John 7:52 or at the end of John’s Gospel or after Luke 21:38. And the N.E.B. says the same thing and adds that the pericope de adultera [the story of the woman taken in adultery] has no fixed place in the ancient New Testament manuscripts. These notes imply that originally the story of the adulteress circulated as an independent narrative in many forms and that later, when scribes began to add it to the New Testament, they couldn’t agree on where to put it, some inserting it at one place and others at another. Von Soden (1902) showed long ago that the view implied by these notes is entirely erroneous. Although this scholar denied the genuineness of John 7:53 - 8:11, nevertheless, in his monumental study of this passage he was eminently fair in his presentation of the facts. After mentioning that this section is sometimes found at the end of the Gospel of John and sometimes in the margin near John 7:52 and that in one group of manuscripts (the Ferrar group) the section is inserted after Luke 21:38, von Soden continues as follows: “But in the great majority of the manuscripts it stands in the text between 7:52 and 8:12 except that in at least half of these manuscripts it is provided with deletion marks in the margin.” Thus the usual location of the pericope de adultera is in John between 7:52 and 8:12. The manuscripts which have it in any other place are exceptions to the rule.’ Edward Hills: *The King James Version Defended*, page 155.

5. What is the manuscript evidence against this passage?

NOTE: This passage is not found in its canonical place in any of the four earliest surviving Greek Gospel manuscripts; neither in the two 3rd century papyrus witnesses to John - P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵; nor in the 4th century Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although all four of these manuscripts acknowledge the existence of the passage by diacritical marks at the spot. During the 16th Century, Western European scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, sought to recover the most correct Greek text of the New Testament, rather than relying on the Vulgate Latin translation. At this time, it was noticed that a number of early manuscripts containing John’s Gospel lacked John 7:53-8:11 inclusive; and also that some manuscripts containing the verses marked them with signs like an asterisk. It was also noted that, in the lectionary of the Greek church, the set gospel reading for Pentecost runs from John 7:37 to 8:12, but skips over the twelve verses of this passage. Beginning with Lachmann (in Germany, 1840), reservations about the passage became more strongly argued in the modern period, and these opinions were

carried into the English world by Samuel Davidson (1848–1851), Tregelles (1862) and others; the argument against the verses being given body and final expression by Hort (1886). Those opposing the authenticity of the verses as part of John are represented in the 20th century by men like Cadbury (1917), Colwell (1935), and Metzger (1971).

‘Men loved darkness rather than light’

6. What is the manuscript evidence in favour of this passage?

NOTE: ‘Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad argue for John’s authorship of the passage. They suggest points of similarity between the passage’s style and the style of the rest of the gospel. They claim that the details of the encounter fit very well into the context of the surrounding verses. They argue that the passage’s appearance in the majority of manuscripts, if not in the oldest ones, is evidence of its authenticity. They comment: ‘If it is not an original part of the Fourth Gospel, its writer would have to be viewed as a skilled Johannine imitator, and its placement in this context as the shrewdest piece of interpolation in literary history!’ *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text with Apparatus*: second edition, by Zane C. Hodges (ed.), Arthur L. Farstad (ed.). Since even the oldest manuscripts indicate, by diacritical signs, that something has been omitted at this point, and since this passage fits seamlessly into the Gospel at this point, it seems most probable that the original manuscript as it came from the hand of John included this passage. It seems far less likely that someone invented such a controversial story and inserted it into the Gospel of John. The account is found in the 5th century manuscript D and it appears in early Latin manuscripts. Jerome (c.415) confirms that the story is found in many manuscripts, both Greek and Latin. References to this story are found in other early documents, *The Didascalia* and *The Apostolic Constitutions*, dating from the 3rd and 4th centuries, where the story is quoted to urge bishops to extend forgiveness to penitent sinners.

7. How does Christ’s treatment of the adulterous woman agree with other testimony in John’s Gospel? John 3:17-19. Compare John 8:11-12.

NOTE: ‘By rejecting the light that was shining upon them, by refusing to examine the evidence to see whether the messages were from heaven, the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Christ, the world’s Redeemer, was in the world. “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not. He came unto His own, and His own received him not.” The voice of His Spirit came to them, saying, “This is the Son of God; believe on Him.” But turning their faces from the light, they refused to listen, choosing, instead, to cultivate their unbelief. Thus the light which, if received, would have been to them a savour of life unto life, rejected, became a savour of death unto death, death to spirituality. The Pharisees were self-deceived. They rejected the teaching of Christ because He exposed the evil of their hearts and reproved their sins. They would not come to the light, fearing that their deeds would be reproved. They chose darkness rather than light. “This is the condemnation,” said Christ, “that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” *Review & Herald*, July 27, 1897.

‘For our learning’

8. What reasons might there be why this story came to be omitted from some Bible manuscripts?

NOTE: It is clear that from early times there were Christians who had scruples about this passage. Augustine commented: ‘Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord’s act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if He who had said “sin no more” had granted permission to sin.’ It is clear that some were so offended by this account of the Lord’s mercy towards the adulteress that they chose to delete this passage from the text of John’s Gospel.

9. What principle should we be aware of, even with Bible passages that some may find offensive? Romans 15:4.

NOTE: ‘It is not enough to study the Bible as other books are studied. In order for it to be understood savingly, the Holy Spirit must move on the heart of the searcher. The same Spirit that inspired the Word must inspire the reader of the Word. Then will be heard the voice of heaven. “Thy Word, O God, is truth” will be the language of the soul. The mere reading of the Word will not accomplish the result designed of Heaven; it must be studied, and cherished in the heart. The knowledge of God is not gained without mental effort. We should diligently study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His Word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell on the thought till it becomes our own, and we know “what saith the Lord.” *Lift Him Up*, page 111.

‘Moses in the law commanded us’

10. How does this story reveal the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees who brought this woman to Jesus, quoting to Him the law of Moses? Leviticus 20:10.

NOTE: Since, according to the testimony of the scribes and Pharisees, the woman had been taken in the very act of adultery, it could be asked why they did not arrest both the adulterer and the adulteress, since both were subject to the law of Moses. To bring the woman only, and to allow the offending man to go free revealed that their regard for the law of Moses was a pretence.

‘With all their professions of reverence for the law, these rabbis, in bringing the charge against the woman, were disregarding its provisions. It was the husband’s duty to take action against her, and the guilty parties were to be punished equally. The

action of the accusers was wholly unauthorised.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 461.

11. What principle did Christ reveal by His way of treating the offending woman? Exodus 33:19.

NOTE: ‘In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of perfect righteousness. While He does not palliate sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn, but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn; but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope. The Sinless One pities the weakness of the sinner, and reaches to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounce, Jesus bids her, “Go, and sin no more.”’ *Desire of Ages*, page 462.

‘Neither do I condemn thee’

12. What does this story teach us about Christ? John 8:11.

NOTE: ‘Were Christ on earth today, would He not hear many words of condemnation and harsh judgment? Would He not see men professing to be His followers crowding those who have erred into hard places, giving them no opportunity to recover themselves? Were He to say to them, as He said to the accusing Pharisees, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,” would they not, even as did the Pharisees, go away, filled with shame? If one errs, and is brought to repentance, let all receive his confession with a sense of what it cost him, and welcome him back with heartfelt joy and gratitude that he has been enabled to obtain the victory. Let every tempted soul who has been weaving strange threads into the web of life, who has been doing that of which he would be ashamed could he see the result, remember that Christ is ready to pardon every one who comes to Him. But the sin must be repented of, and restitution must be made.’ *Review & Herald*, November 25, 1902.

13. How should we follow our Lord’s example? Matthew 5:7, 2 Samuel 22:26. Consider James 3:17, Proverbs 11:17.

NOTE: ‘It is not Christ’s follower that, with averted eyes, turns from the erring, leaving them unhindered to pursue their downward course. Those who are forward in accusing others, and zealous in bringing them to justice, are often in their own lives more guilty than they. Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 462.

Lesson 6: July 31-August 6
‘Power to become the sons of God’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ John 1:12.

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 20.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: John 1:12.

LESSON AIM: To study John 1:12 and to find whether one needs power from above to become sons and daughters of God.

Introduction

‘The faith in Christ that saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. “Believe, believe,” is their cry; “only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.” While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).’ *Faith & Works*, page 52.

‘To them gave He power’

1. What is given to those who believe in Jesus Christ? John 1:12.

NOTE: ‘Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practising of the word of God.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 509

2. What is the character of those who are truly sons of God? Philippians 2:15.

NOTE: ‘As Christians submit to the solemn rite of baptism, He registers the vow that they make to be true to Him. This vow is their oath of allegiance. They are baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus they are united with the three great powers of heaven. They pledge themselves to renounce the world and to observe the laws of the kingdom of God. Henceforth they are to walk in newness of life. No longer are they to follow the traditions of men. No longer are they to follow dishonest methods. They are to obey the statutes of the kingdom of heaven. They are to seek God’s honour. If they will be true to their vow, they will be furnished with grace and power that will enable them to fulfil all righteousness. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”’ *Evangelism*, page

‘The right to become sons of God’?

3. How is this verse translated in some of the modern versions?

- **New International Version:** ‘Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.’
- **Good News Bible:** ‘Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God’s children.’
- **New American Standard Bible:** ‘But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.’

NOTE: The change from ‘power’ to ‘the right’ was first seen in Westcott and Hort’s Revised Version. It shifts ‘sonship’ from something achieved by divine power working in us, which effects a change in the motives and behaviour, to a right conferred upon us. This allows this verse to be used in support of the Calvinistic ‘once saved, always saved’ teaching that claims that salvation is not in any way dependent on amendment of life and obedience. Here is a typical expression of this view: ‘Whoever **once** truly confesses that Jesus was raised from the dead and confesses that Jesus is Lord, will go to heaven when he dies...What if we sin? That is the most obvious question. The question is then often reshaped and put like this: What if a person who is saved falls into sin, stays in sin and is found in that very condition when he dies? Will he still go to heaven? **Answer: yes.** If he was truly saved in the first place, yes. If the answer to this question is no, this book is utterly unnecessary. . I therefore state categorically that the person who is saved – who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead – **will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith.** In other words, no matter what sin (or absence of Christian obedience) may accompany such faith.’ R. T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved*, page 16 ff. (emphasis added.) In this version of salvation, no power is needed to make a person into a child of God. Instead sonship of God becomes an inalienable right conferred upon a man once he has made a single profession of belief.

4. How does the Bible picture the change that takes place in the one who receives Christ? Ephesians 3:14-21.

NOTE: ‘Divine sonship is not something that we gain of ourselves. Only to those who receive Christ as their Saviour is given the power to become sons and daughters of God. The sinner cannot, by any power of his own, rid himself of sin. But the promise of sonship is made to all who believe on His name. Every one who comes to Jesus in faith will receive pardon. God was to be manifest in Christ, “reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become “sons of God.” When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ.’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 53.

Exousia and dunamis

5. What is the Greek word used in by John in this verse and what does it mean?

NOTE: The Greek word used in John 1:12 is ‘exousia.’ Whenever the word ‘power’ appears in John’s Gospel, this is the word used. It is used 103 times in the New Testament. It is not an easy word to translate and the King James translators rendered it in different ways, according to context. Sixty-nine times it is translated as ‘power’, twenty-nine times as ‘authority’, once as ‘liberty’, once as ‘jurisdiction’ and once as ‘right’. Its basic meaning is connected with the power of choice. Thus it means the physical or mental power with which a person is endued which he possesses or exercises. It is often applied to kings, judges or even husbands as the power of rule or government. Here in John 1:12, it means that God gives those who believe in Him the physical and mental power to enable them to make right choices and decisions and thus become in truth sons and daughters of God.

6. What other Greek words are translated as ‘power’?

NOTE: The other Greek word most often translated as ‘power’ is ‘dunamis’ (from which our word ‘dynamo’ is derived.). It means strength, ability. This word appears 120 times in the New Testament and is translated as ‘power’ seventy-seven times, as ‘mighty work’ eleven times, as ‘strength’ seven times, as ‘miracle’ seven times, as ‘might’ four times, as ‘virtue’ three times, as ‘mighty’ twice and in nine other miscellaneous ways. Strong defines this word in various ways. This word is used in Ephesians 3:20. In this verse it appears to mean the moral power bestowed on the Christian by virtue of his having become a son of God. The word ‘kratos’ is used 12 times and is translated as ‘power’ six times, four times as ‘dominion’ and as ‘strength’ and ‘mighty’. Two or three other words are translated as power once or twice.

‘Ye do the deeds of your father’

7. In spiritual terms, what does it mean to be a son or daughter? John 8:39, 41-42. Compare 1 John 3:2.

NOTE: ‘In the sermon on the mount Christ said, “Not every one 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.” Matthew 7:21. The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but “What do ye more than others?” Matthew 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 272.

8. How did Jesus reveal the true parentage of these Jews? John 8:44.

NOTE: 'On one occasion when Christ was informed that His mother and brethren were without, desiring to speak with Him, He looked upon the men and women who were feasting on His words, and, stretching forth His hands toward them, said: "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." Precious, glorious truth, spoken to comfort all believers, who may indeed be encouraged by knowing how Christ regards them! "Ye do the deeds of your father," Christ said to the Jews, and they answered scornfully, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." "If God were your Father," Christ said, "ye would love Me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye can not hear My word." With faithful, unsparing hand Christ unmasked the men who had professed so much and done so little. Behind their pretentious piety there lay concealed deceitful malignity, the controlling principle of their lives. Children of Abraham, children of God, they were not, and neither could they be. By their works they bore evidence that they were the children of the enemy of God.' *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900.

'The power of God unto salvation'

9. What will make it possible for sinful men and women truly to become sons and daughters of God? Romans 1:16.

NOTE: The word 'power' used in this verse is 'dunamis', Christ's ability and strength to save from their sins all who believe and put their trust in this power.

'The gospel inculcates universal humility and benevolence. It produces the virtues of Christ's character in all who savingly accept it. Christ made the sacrifice of Himself to furnish man with grace and power. All who receive His spirit become sons of God, one with Christ in God. Those who attain to eternal life must overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. In order to be saved men must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, revealing a faith which works by love and purifies the soul. Love for God and man has been enjoined upon every human being. God works by His Holy Spirit in those who believe in Christ as their personal Saviour. He helps them to work out their own salvation, giving them grace for the grace which they impart to others.' *Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1900.

10. What is possible to those who have faith in Christ's power? Ephesians 3:20.

NOTE: 'God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil. And He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul to keep him from sinning. The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is attainable by every repenting, believing child of God. Christ gave Himself for the saving of the sinner. Those whose sins are forgiven, who love Jesus, will be united with Him. They will bear the yoke of Christ. This yoke is not to hamper them, not to make their religious life one of unsatisfying toil. No; the yoke of Christ is to be the very means by which the Christian life is to become one of pleasure and joy. The Christian is to be joyful in contemplation of that which the Lord has done in giving His only-begotten Son to die for the world, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" *Reflecting Christ*, page 293.

'Every man that hath this hope'

11. What is the practical outcome of realising that the sons and daughters of God are those who are like Him? 1 John 3:3.

NOTE: 'All who would enter the city of God must during their earthly life set forth Christ in their dealings. It is this that constitutes them the messengers of Christ, His witnesses. They are to bear a plain, decided testimony against all evil practices, pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He gives to all who receive Him, power to become the sons of God. Regeneration is the only path by which we can enter the city of God. It is narrow, and the gate by which we enter is strait; but along it we are to lead men and women and children, teaching them that, in order to be saved, they must have a new heart and a new spirit. The old, hereditary traits of character must be overcome. The natural desires of the soul must be changed. All deception, all falsifying, all evil-speaking, must be put away. The new life, which makes men and women Christlike, is to be lived.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 59.

12. What wonderful prospect awaits those who truly become sons and daughters of God? Revelation 22:4. (Read Revelation 21:1-22:5.)

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.

Lesson 7: August 7-13

‘God was manifest in the flesh’

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

STUDY HELP: *Lift Him Up*, page 74.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Hebrews 1-2.

LESSON AIM: To study the importance of Christ’s incarnation, that He is truly God and truly man, with special reference to 1 Timothy 3:16.

Introduction

‘Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No; the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person, the man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible. Christ, the sinless One, will save every son and daughter of Adam who accepts the salvation proffered them, consenting to become the children of God. The Saviour has purchased the fallen race with His own blood. This is a great mystery, a mystery that will not be fully, completely understood in all its greatness until the translation of the redeemed shall take place. Then the power and greatness and efficacy of the gift of God to man will be understood. But the enemy is determined that this gift shall be so mystified that it will become as nothingness.’ *Lift Him Up*, page 76.

‘The mystery of godliness’

1. What great truth does Paul describe as the mystery of godliness? 1 Timothy 3:16.

NOTE: ‘The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries. Christ was one with the Father, yet He was willing to step down from the exaltation of one who was equal with God. That He might accomplish His purpose of love for the fallen race, He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem’s manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 48.

2. How is this truth expressed elsewhere in the writing of Paul? Compare Hebrews 1:1-3, 8, Colossians 1:13-17, Philippians 2:5-6.

NOTE: ‘Christ accepted humanity, and lived on this earth a pure, sanctified life. For this reason He has received the appointment of judge. He who occupies the position of judge is God manifest in the flesh. What a joy it will be to recognise in Him our Teacher and Redeemer, bearing still the marks of the crucifixion, from which shine beams of glory, giving additional value to the crowns which the redeemed receive from His hands, the very hands outstretched in blessing over His disciples as He ascended. The very voice which said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” bids His ransomed ones welcome to His presence.’ *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 349.

‘He appeared in a body’

3. How is 1 Timothy 3:16 rendered in the popular modern translations?

- **The Good News Bible:** ‘No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion: He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven.’
- **The Revised Standard Version:** ‘Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.’
- **The New Jerusalem Bible** [Roman Catholic]: ‘Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is very deep indeed: He was made visible in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.’
- **Today’s New International Version:** ‘Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: he appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up into glory.’

NOTE: There is nothing mysterious about someone appearing in a body; every human being since the Creation has appeared in a body. The mystery to which Paul calls attention is that **God** manifested Himself in human flesh. This is a wonder beyond all wonders.

‘The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh. When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth.’ *Youth’s Instructor*, October 13, 1898.

4. How does John reveal the origins of the false teachings concerning Christ's incarnation? 2 John 1:7.

NOTE: 'John was filled with sadness as he saw these poisonous errors creeping into the church. He saw the dangers to which the church was exposed, and he met the emergency with promptness and decision. The epistles of John breathe the spirit of love. It seems as if he wrote with a pen dipped in love. But when he came in contact with those who were breaking the law of God, yet claiming that they were living without sin, he did not hesitate to warn them of their fearful deception. Writing to a helper in the gospel work, a woman of good repute and wide influence, he said: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, page 554.

'God was manifest in the flesh'

5. What is the manuscript evidence to support the traditional reading for this verse?

NOTE: The majority of Greek manuscripts, around 300, have the word 'God' (theos) in 1 Timothy 3:16. A mere handful have 'who' or 'which.' Witnesses from early in church history testify to the word 'God' in this verse; they include pseudo-Barnabas, Hippolytus and Ignatius from the 2nd century, and Dionysius of Alexandria, Diodorus of Tarsus, Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom from the 3rd century. Codex Alexandrinus in the British Museum, dating from the 5th century, has 'God', though sceptics have attempted to explain this away, because the first letters of this word have been inked in by a subsequent hand. This manuscript was presented to Charles 1 early in his reign (1625-1649). Patrick Young, who was custodian of the manuscript from 1628-1652, stated that the manuscript read 'God' in this verse. Many distinguished scholars examined this verse in the manuscript and attested to the fact that the word 'God' appears. The retouching appears to have been done because the manuscript was being worn away by so much scrutiny.

6. What is the manuscript evidence to support the reading followed in the modern popular versions?

NOTE: Only a handful of Greek manuscripts have alternatives to the word 'God' in this verse. In addition, the Latin Vulgate, which became the standard bible of the Roman Catholic Church, has the Latin word 'quod', meaning 'which'. The early Alexandrian manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, have the Greek word 'who' instead of 'God'. It has been demonstrated how the alteration probably came about. The Greek word for 'God' is 'theos' which has four letters in Greek. If the first two letters are omitted, you get 'who' and if the first two and the last letter are omitted, you get 'which'. Whether the original omission was accidental or deliberate cannot now be determined. But it was convenient for those who departed from the faith delivered to the saints. It is clear that the nature of Christ quickly became a contentious issue in some parts of the early church. On the one hand, there were the Gnostics who taught that the flesh is evil and only spirit is pure. These taught that Christ's humanity was an illusion and that He was really only a spirit. These would want 'God' omitted and to emphasise 'appeared.' On the other hand the Nestorian heresy denied that Jesus was both God and man, and manuscripts were changed to support this false teaching. Arius denied the deity of Christ, and manuscripts supporting his views also produced. Supporters of Arius' false teaching would certainly want the word 'God' changed.

'The Word was made flesh'

7. Does the Bible elsewhere speak of Jesus as God manifested in the flesh? John 1:1, 14.

NOTE: 'The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery, "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations." It is the great and profound mystery of godliness. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Christ took upon Himself human nature, a nature inferior to His heavenly nature. Nothing so shows the wonderful condescension of God as this. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." John presents this wonderful subject with such simplicity that all may grasp the ideas set forth, and be enlightened. Christ did not make-believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent. He is declared to be a man, even the Man Christ Jesus.' *Lift Him Up*, page 74.

8. What support is found for this teaching is found elsewhere in Scripture? Romans 1:3, Hebrews 2:14.

NOTE: 'When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the love of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, "No, it cannot be described." We can only do as did the beloved disciple, and say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." [1 John 3:1.] In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in His exaltation to the throne of God, He might also exalt those who believe in Him, to a seat with Him upon His throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in Him, shall be made whole.' *Christian Education*, page 77.

'This is that spirit of antichrist'

9. What is achieved by changing 1 Timothy 3:16 to remove the idea that Jesus came as God manifested in human flesh?

NOTE: 'Some adopt a casual attitude to such changes. They suggest that there are no grounds for concern since even in modern translations there are other passages supporting Christ's divinity. [Actually every one of them is queried or perverted in one or other of the modern translations.] Such thinking indicates that God provided surplus evidence that may be discarded at man's will without causing damage to the message of Scripture. But every passage of God's Word contains vital truth.' R. R. Standish & C. D. Standish: *Modern Bible Translations*, page 79.

10. What warning did John give concerning false teachings about the incarnation of Christ? 1 John 4:1-3. Consider 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

NOTE: 'While the mystery of godliness is explained, that God appeared in human flesh, Paul does not define the mystery of iniquity. Could this mystery be the denial that Christ is come in the flesh? Indeed, Scripture confirms this precise definition. In a letter to the Thessalonians, Paul prophesies of the emergence of the Papacy, whom he refers to "the man of sin" and "the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The apostle John uses alternative terminology to identify the papal apostasy. It is in relation to this synonym, "antichrist", that he reveals that the denial that Christ came in the flesh is the precise doctrine of the papal power [1 John 4:3, 2 John 1:7 quoted].' R. R. Standish & C. D. Standish: *Modern Bible Translations*, page 77.

The denial of the genuineness of Christ's humanity takes many forms. The papal version is 'the immaculate conception' of Mary. Protestants generally accept a variation of this which might be styled 'the immaculate conception of Jesus.' Elsewhere American Evangelicals refer to Christ as 'the God-Man', with a nature that was not truly human. A recent popular denial of Christ's humanity is expressed as 'He came in the nature of Adam before the Fall,' a nature He could not have received by His descent from Adam, since neither Adam, nor any of Christ's other ancestors, was capable of transmitting such a nature.

'The Man Christ Jesus'

11. What is the importance of the truth that Jesus was truly God manifested in human form? 1 Timothy 2:5.

NOTE: 'We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the pattern man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.' *Maranatha*, page 241.

12. Is this a Bible doctrine that really matters? Consider Philipians 2:5-11.

NOTE: "'God was manifest in the flesh.'" The union of divinity with humanity brings to the fallen race a value which we scarcely comprehend. The human and the divine were united in Christ, in order that He might represent those who should believe in Him. He took our nature, and passed through our experiences, and as our representative He assumed our responsibilities. The sins of men were charged to Christ, and, innocent though He was, He engaged to suffer for the guilty, that through faith in Him the world might be saved. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. O, what compassion and love are here revealed! How is humanity exalted through the merits of Christ! His sacrifice was ample and complete. The Holy One died instead of the unholy. He clothed Himself in our filthy garments, that we might wear the spotless robe of His righteousness, which was woven in the loom of heaven. He paid the whole debt for all who would believe in Him as their personal Saviour. His blood cleanseth from all sin and purifieth from all unrighteousness. In Him, through Him alone, we have forgiveness of sins. Through faith in His blood we have justification in the sight of God.' *Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895.

Lesson 8: August 15-20

'They began to speak with other tongues'

MEMORY VERSE: 'We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.' Acts 2:11.

STUDY HELP: *Testimonies*, volume 1, page 414.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 2:1-11, Acts 10:44-11:15, 1 Corinthians 14:1-28.

LESSON AIM: To study whether the tongues spoken of in the book of Acts were foreign languages or ecstatic utterance.

Introduction

'There is a great work to be done in our world. Men and women are to be converted, not by the gift of tongues nor by the working of miracles, but by the preaching of Christ crucified. Why delay the effort to make the world better? Why wait for some wonderful thing to be done, some costly apparatus to be provided? However humble your sphere, however lowly your work, if you labour in harmony with the teachings of the Saviour, He will reveal Himself through you, and your influence will draw souls to Him. He will honour the meek and lowly ones, who seek earnestly to do service for Him. Into all that we do, whether our work be in the shop, on the farm, or in the office, we are to bring the endeavour to save souls.' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 206.

Compiler's note: The word 'tongues', as used in the King James Bible, simply means 'languages.' As this usage is now obsolete, a good modern translation should always use 'languages', rather than 'tongues'. Versions that persist in using the word 'tongues' do so in order to lend support to the religious practice of glossolalia, the counterfeit 'gift of tongues'. Among the versions that retain the word 'tongue', rather than language are: the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the Good News version ('strange tongues'), the Revised Standard Version and others. That 'languages' is what is meant by 'tongues' can be verified by comparing Acts 2:6 with Acts 2:11.

'In his own language'

1. In what marvellous way did the Holy Spirit empower the early church for its work of taking the Gospel to the world? Acts 2:4.

NOTE: 'The Holy Ghost assuming the form of tongues of fire divided at the tips, and resting upon those assembled, was an emblem of the gift which was bestowed upon them of speaking with fluency several different languages, with which they had formerly been unacquainted. And the appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which they would labour, and the power which would attend their words.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

2. How does the Bible show that the gift of tongues is speaking the genuine languages of mankind? Acts 2:7-11.

NOTE: 'During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were labouring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

The language of ecstasy?

3. How was this wonderful gift being misused in the church at Corinth? 1 Corinthians 14:23.

NOTE: In the King James Bible, the word 'unknown' in 1 Corinthians 14:2 (see also verses 4, 13, 14, 19 & 27) has been supplied by the translators. The Greek simply says: 'glossa' which may mean the tongue as the organ of speech or the language of a particular people. The word 'unknown' has been inserted, because Paul is clearly speaking of those who are interrupting the services of the church by speaking in languages which are not understood by the congregation. If it is felt necessary to insert a word before 'glossa' to clarify its meaning, the best choice would probably be 'foreign'. Paul is not implying that the languages employed by these people were unknown to anyone on earth, simply to those in the church in Corinth.

4. How did one popular modern version render 1 Corinthians 14:2 and other verses in this chapter?

- **New English Bible:** 'When a man is using the language of ecstasy he is talking with God, not with men, for no man understands him; he is no doubt inspired, but he speaks mysteries.'
- **verse 4:** 'The language of ecstasy is good for the speaker himself.'
- **verse 13:** 'I say, then, that the man who falls into ecstatic utterance should pray for the ability to interpret.'
- **verse 19:** 'Thank God, I am more gifted in ecstatic utterance than any of you (Footnote: I say the thanksgiving; I use ecstatic speech more than any of you), but in the congregation I would rather speak five intelligible words, for the benefit of others as well as myself, than thousands of words in the language of ecstasy.'
- **verse 27:** 'If it is a matter of ecstatic utterance, only two should speak, or at most three, one at a time, and someone must interpret.'

NOTE: There is absolutely no manuscript evidence to support the view of the writers of the New English Bible that this passage refers to the practice of 'ecstatic utterance' or glossolalia, formerly a feature of several pagan religions but now found in some Christian groups.

'Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the Church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good.' *Maranatha*, page 154.

'The like gift'

5. What manifestation of the gift of tongues was later seen and what was the reason for it? Acts 10:44-46, first part.

NOTE: 'To that company of attentive hearers the apostle preached Christ, His life, His miracles, His betrayal and crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as man's representative and advocate. As Peter pointed those present to Jesus as the sinner's only hope, he himself understood more fully the meaning of the vision he had seen, and his heart glowed with the spirit of the truth that he was presenting. Suddenly the discourse was interrupted by the descent of the Holy Spirit. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision

which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” Thus was the gospel brought to those who had been strangers and foreigners, making them fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 138-139.

6. How can we be certain that the manifestation of this gift was identical to the gift received at Pentecost? Acts 11:15, 17.

NOTE: Peter identified the experience of Cornelius and his household as being identical to that of himself and the others ‘at the beginning’. It was the likeness of the two experiences that convinced Peter, as well as the other Jewish Christians that had accompanied him to Joppa, that Gentiles should likewise be accepted into the household of faith. As Peter recounted this experience to the other apostles and brethren in Jerusalem, emphasising the fact that God had poured out the Holy Spirit on those of Cornelius’ household as He had upon them on the day of Pentecost, they too perceived that ‘God gave them [the Gentiles] the like gift as He did unto us.’

‘They spake with tongues and prophesied’

7. What is the only other instance of this gift being manifested recorded in the Bible? Acts 19:6.

NOTE: ‘With deep interest and grateful, wondering joy the brethren listened to Paul’s words. By faith they grasped the wonderful truth of Christ’s atoning sacrifice and received Him as their Redeemer. They were then baptised in the name of Jesus, and as Paul “laid his hands upon them,” they received also the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to speak the languages of other nations and to prophesy. Thus they were qualified to labour as missionaries in Ephesus and its vicinity and also to go forth to proclaim the gospel in Asia Minor.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 283.

8. When this gift is listed among the gifts of the Spirit, where is it invariably placed? 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30.

NOTE: The unfortunate situation with regard to the misuse of this gift in the church in Corinth undoubtedly led Paul to place it last in both his lists of spiritual gifts, when writing to the Corinthians. There is no Biblical warranty for the prominence given to the practice of glossolalia, the counterfeit ‘gift of tongues’, that is given it among the Pentecostal and Charismatic sects today. Nothing in the Bible suggests that this gift is to be regarded as evidence of ‘the baptism of the Spirit’ or ‘the Second Grace’, as it is sometimes described.

‘Ye shall speak into the air’

9. How does Paul explain the uselessness of speaking in a way that no one understands? 1 Corinthians 14:7-9.

NOTE: ‘Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source. The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterised with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know themselves, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ.’ *Be Like Jesus*, page 198.

10. What principle did Paul give regarding speaking in church services? 1 Corinthians 14:19.

NOTE: ‘God has given us the gift of speech that we may recite to others the dealing of God with us, that His love and compassion may touch their hearts, and that praise may also arise from their souls to Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. The Lord has said, “Ye are my witnesses.” [Isaiah 43:10.] But all who are called to be witnesses for Christ must learn of Him, that they may be efficient witnesses. As children of the heavenly King, you should educate yourselves to bear testimony in a clear, distinct voice, and in such a manner that no one may have the impression that you are reluctant to speak of the mercies of the Lord. In social [testimony] meeting, prayer should be offered so that all may be edified, and those who take part in this exercise should follow the example given us in the Lord’s beautiful prayer for the world. The prayer of Jesus is simple, clear, comprehensive, and yet not long and spiritless as are the dry prayers that are often offered in public. These spiritless prayers better not be uttered; for they fail to bless or edify, and are a mere form without vital power.’ *Christian Education*, page 129.

‘Covet earnestly the best gifts’

11. Which gift did Paul regard as more to be desired than the gift of tongues? 1 Corinthians 14:1, 5.

NOTE: ‘After dwelling upon the superior excellence of charity, the apostle says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” Again, “Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.” And, “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 14:1, 12, 39, 40. Hence we see our anxiety should be for the upbuilding of the church through the manifestation of the gifts. Especially does he show that it is desirable that the gift of prophecy shall be manifest. In meditating upon the comparison which the apostle makes of the gifts in the church to the members of the body, it would appear that the gift of prophecy might well be denominated “the eyes of the church.” Its position is of counsel and advice for the upbuilding of the church, and as a counsellor against the wiles and snares of the enemy. As the eyes are

important in the real body to discern the dangers, and to reveal the right way, so the gift of prophecy in its counsels and cautions is eyes to the church of God.' J. N. Loughborough, *Review & Herald*, July 28, 1903.

12. Why is the gift of prophecy of greater value? 1 Corinthians 14:3-4.

NOTE: 'From the beginning the church of God has had the gift of prophecy in her midst as a living voice to counsel, admonish, and instruct.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 83.

'The precious sure word of prophecy reveals to him who is a searcher for truth, the riches of the grace of Christ. The word of God is a spiritual granary from whence the soul may receive that which will nourish its life. In perusing the word of God we find doctrines, precepts, promises, admonitions, exhortations, and words of encouragement, that will meet the case of emergency in every human mind.' *Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1893.

Lesson 9: August 21-27 'Confess your faults one to another'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' James 5:16.

STUDY HELP: *God's Amazing Grace*, page 87.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Luke 5:17-25.

LESSON AIM: To study whether the Bible teaches that we should confess our sins to human beings.

Introduction

'God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sinner's only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven. These lessons were taught to the chosen people of God thousands of years ago, and repeated in various symbols and figures, that the work of truth might be riveted in every heart, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. . . . Justice demanded the sufferings of man; but Christ rendered the sufferings of a God. He needed no atonement of suffering for Himself; all His sufferings were for us; all His merits and holiness were open to fallen man, presented as a gift.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 102.

'Confess your faults one to another'

1. In preparation to praying for healing, what are we counselled to do? James 5:16.

NOTE: 'The apostle says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offence to your friend or neighbour, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you have sinned against his Creator.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 128.

2. To whom are we told to confess our sins? 1 John 1:9.

NOTE: 'God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God. Do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 128.

Confess your sins to one another?

3. How is this verse rendered in the modern popular versions?

- **The New International Version:** 'Therefore confess your sins to each other . . .' (See also **New American Standard Bible, Revised Standard Version, Revised English Bible.**)
- **The Good News Bible:** 'So then, confess your sins to one another . . .'
- **The New Jerusalem Bible:** 'So confess your sins to one another.'

NOTE: 'The [Catholic] church's claim to the right to pardon leads the Romanist to feel at liberty to sin; and the ordinance of confession, without which her pardon is not granted, tends also to give license to evil. He who kneels before fallen man, and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart, is debasing his manhood and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest, an erring, sinful mortal, and too often corrupted with wine and licentiousness, his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. His thought of God is degraded to the likeness of fallen humanity, for the priest stands as a representative of God. This degrading confession of man to man is the

secret spring from which has flowed much of the evil that is defiling the world and fitting it for the final destruction. Yet to him who loves self-indulgence, it is more pleasing to confess to a fellow mortal than to open the soul to God. It is more palatable to human nature to do penance than to renounce sin.' *Great Controversy*, page 567.

4. Who alone has the power to forgive sins? Mark 2:7, Luke 5:21. Compare Mark 2:10, Matthew 9:6, Luke 5:24.

NOTE: 'God alone has the power to forgive sins; if we do not speak this message to the unconverted, our neglect may prove their ruin.' *Colporteur Ministry*, page 102.

Faults or sins?

5. What is the manuscript evidence for 'faults' in James 5:16?

NOTE: The majority of the Greek manuscripts have the word 'faults'. So if almost all of the Greek manuscripts in the world say 'faults' and a handful of corrupt manuscripts that do not even agree with each other say 'sins', it is evident that the body of Christ throughout history has rejected these few corrupt manuscripts. Because these few manuscripts do not appear ever to have been copied, the verdict of history is against them.

6. What is the manuscript evidence for 'sins' in James 5:16?

NOTE: Manuscripts Aleph [Codex Sinaiticus], B [Codex Vaticanus] and six other manuscripts do say 'sins'. There is also a quotation by Ephraim the Syrian that says 'sins'. But even textual critics like Griesbach and Alford retain the word 'faults' in their versions of the Greek text. Although claimed by the writers of popular modern Bible versions to be 'the oldest and most reliable manuscripts, a comparison of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus has estimated that they disagree with each other around three thousand times. The discoverer of Codex Sinaiticus, Tischendorf, discovered 14,800 corrections in the 346 pages he had found, made by nine separate correctors! This equates to around forty corrections per page. This is clear evidence that the manuscript was unsatisfactory to its early owners; it explains why it was never copied and why it was set aside and forgotten for 1500 years.

'Whose soever sins ye remit'

7. What further verses are used to justify the practice of confession to a priest who then prescribes a penance and pronounces absolution? John 20:22-23. See also Matthew 9:2-8, 1 Corinthians 11:27 & Matthew 16:17-20.

NOTE: The Council of Trent (*Session Fourteen, Chapter I*) quoted John 20:22-23 as the primary Scriptural proof for the doctrine concerning this sacrament, but Catholics also consider Matthew 9:2-8, 1 Corinthians 11:27, and Matthew 16:17-20 to be among the Scriptural bases for their sacrament of confession. Matthew 9:2-8, however, speaks only of Christ's power to forgive sins. 1 Corinthians 11:27 merely warns against coming to the Lord's Supper unworthily. Matthew 16:17-20 is their foundational passage for claiming that Peter, and therefore all the popes, as his supposed successors as bishops of Rome, is the rock on which the Church is built.

"Whosoever sins ye remit," said Christ, "they are remitted; . . . and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Christ here gives no liberty for any man to pass judgment upon others. In the Sermon on the Mount He forbade this. It is the prerogative of God. But on the church in its organised capacity He places a responsibility for the individual members. Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort," the Lord says, "with all long-suffering and doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:2. Deal faithfully with wrongdoing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbathbreaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:21. If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God's word is pronounced upon them in heaven. In choosing to sin, they disown Christ; the church must show that she does not sanction their deeds, or she herself dishonours her Lord. She must say about sin what God says about it. She must deal with it as God directs, and her action is ratified in heaven. He who despises the authority of the church despises the authority of Christ Himself.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 805.

8. When the church remits sins, how is this done? Galatians 6:1.

NOTE: 'But there is a brighter side to the picture. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted." Let this thought be kept uppermost. In labour for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. Let the shepherds have a tender care for the flock of the Lord's pasture. Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour. Let them encourage the sinner to repent, and believe in Him who can pardon. Let them declare, on the authority of God's word, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. All who repent have the assurance, "He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. Let the repentance of the sinner be accepted by the church with grateful hearts. Let the repenting one be led out from the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith and righteousness. Let his trembling hand be placed in the loving hand of Jesus. Such a remission is ratified in heaven.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 805-806.

'I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD'

9. What was the practice for confession in Bible times? Psalm 32:5.

NOTE: 'Remission of sins can be obtained only through the merits of Christ. On no man, priest or pope, but on God alone, rests the power to forgive sins. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." . . . "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "These things write I unto you, that

ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” *Review & Herald*, June 13, 1899.

10. To whom did Daniel confess his sins? Daniel 9:4-5, 20.

NOTE: ‘The prophet Daniel was an example of true sanctification. His long life was filled up with noble service for his Master. He was a man “greatly beloved” (Daniel 10:11) of Heaven. Yet instead of claiming to be pure and holy, this honoured prophet identified himself with the really sinful of Israel as he pleaded before God in behalf of his people: “We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.” “We have sinned, we have done wickedly.” He declares: “I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people.” (Daniel 9:18, 15, 20).’ *Maranatha*, page 235.

‘Who can forgive sins but God alone?’

11. Does it matter whether we confess our sins to God alone or to a man? Luke 5:21.

NOTE: ‘To whom should confession of sin be made? The Catholic says, To the priest, at the confessional. If, as the Catholic doctrine teaches, the priest is the one who has power to grant absolution from sin, such an answer might not be improper. But the doctrine is not true. God alone has the power to forgive sin. Every sin that men commit is against Him, and must have forgiveness from Him.’ E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, November 9, 1893.

12. Why are we to confess our sins? Psalm 32:5, Proverbs 28:13.

NOTE: ‘For what purpose do we confess our sins? What is accomplished by the act? To the priest, who presides over the confessional, one chief result is the gaining of knowledge which he did not before possess. But is this the object, or one of the objects, which confession is designed to accomplish? Do we confess in order to impart information to some one? Certainly this is not the object of confession to God, for He sees all our sins, and we can impart no information to Him. Nor do we do this when we confess to our brother the trespass that we have committed against Him, unless, as sometimes happens, it is a wrong the existence or the author of which he has not discovered. But no one will seriously contend that the proper object of confession is to impart information. We confess to an individual because he is the one concerned in the wrongful act which we have committed. We confess for our own good, that our spirit may bear witness with the heavenly Spirit that we are sinners, and also for his benefit, to manifest to him our contrition of heart, and take out of his way the stumbling block that our wrongdoing may have placed before him. Confession of sin, therefore, should only be made to the party or parties that have been wronged. God is always one of these parties, for every sin is a transgression of His law. A sin that is against God alone should be confessed to Him alone. One that is against our neighbour should be confessed to God and to our neighbour. God forgives the wrong that has been done to Him in the transgression of His law, and our neighbour forgives, or should forgive, the wrong done to him. And thus the one who committed the wrong is cleared from the guilt of his transgression. Man has no power to forgive sin, for sin is the transgression of the law of God, and no man has authority to say that the claims of that law are satisfied. Even God Himself could not say so had not the demands of that holy law been met in the death of Christ. Any man can forgive a wrong done to himself, but this would not free the wrong-doer from the claims of the law of God. But if a man will not forgive a wrong that is done him, he cannot hold the wrong-doer in guilt if the latter has made confession.’ E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, November 9, 1893.

Lesson 10: August 28-September 3
‘In that very day his thoughts perish’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.’ Psalm 146:4.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 175.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible teaches about the state of man in death and when that death will end.

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.

‘The dead know not anything’

1. What do the Scriptures teach about the state of man in death? Psalm 146:4.

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. 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.' *Darkness before Dawn*, page 17.

2. What word is consistently used throughout the Bible to describe the state of man in death? 1 Kings 2:10, Matthew 27:52, 1 Corinthians 15:20, 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

NOTE: Forty-five times in the Old Testament and eight times in the New Testament death is described as a sleep.

'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.' *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 44.

Thoughts or plans, breath or spirit?

3. How is Psalm 146:4 rendered in some of the popular modern versions?

- **New International Version:** 'When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.'

- **Good News Bible:** 'When they die, they return to the dust; on that very day all their plans come to an end.'

- **New Jerusalem Bible:** 'When his spirit goes forth, he returns to the earth, on that very day all his plans come to nothing.'

NOTE: With Old Testament verses, differences in translation cannot be justified by reference to different manuscripts since there is virtual agreement as to the exact wording of the Hebrew text. Differences therefore arise from the theological bias of those who produce the various Bible versions.

The word variously translated as 'breath' or 'spirit' is the Hebrew word 'ruach'. Its primary meaning is 'wind.' Thus it comes to mean 'breath'. The English word 'spirit' originally was connected with breathing, as we can see by its connected words today. The technical term for breathing is **respiration**. The Greek word 'theopneustos' which literally means 'God-breathed' is translated as '**inspiration of God**' in 2 Timothy 3:16. A person who breathes his last is said to **expire**. Since breathing was the principal sign of life, when a person stopped breathing, his breath (or spirit) was said to depart. The Hebrew word 'eshtonah' means 'thoughts.' There are a number of other Hebrew words (e.g. machashabah, mezimma or rea) which may be translated as thoughts, plans or purposes, but the Psalmist did not choose to use them in this verse.

4. How does Solomon emphasise that the dead are unconscious of anything happening? Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.

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." . . . 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.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 175.

'Paradise'

5. In view of the opinion, commonly held today, that the righteous dead in Old Testament times were confined to Paradise (an underground place) until the resurrection of Christ, when they were taken to heaven, what did Peter say about David on the day of Pentecost? Acts 2:29, 34.

NOTE: 'David died a natural death like other men; his sepulchre, with the honoured dust it contained, had been preserved with great care until that time. David, as king of Israel, and also as a prophet, had been specially honoured by God. In prophetic vision he was shown the future life and ministry of Christ. He saw His rejection, His trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension. . . Peter assures them that David's prophecy could not refer to himself, for he had not ascended into the heavens; he was resting in his sepulchre. If the soul of David had gone to Heaven, Peter could not have been so positive in his assurances to his brethren.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, pages 270-271.

6. What does the Bible tell us about Paradise? Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7.

NOTE: These three verses are the only ones in the entire Bible that speak of Paradise. A comparison of 2 Corinthians 12:4 with verse 2 will show that Paradise is the same as 'the third heaven' (the first being the place where we find birds and clouds, the second where we find the sun, moon and stars, and the third where God dwells). Regarding Luke 23:43, the wrong placing of the comma in Christ's words make the adverb 'today' appear to go with 'shalt thou be' rather than with 'I say unto thee' as it is in the original Greek. Thus the meaning of the verse is perverted. This error in the King James Bible (followed by most later versions) was at an early stage pointed by Roman Catholic scholars. One of the two early Syriac versions, the Curetonian Gospels, correctly translates Luke 23:43 "Today I tell you that you will be with me in paradise." Codex Vaticanus places a pause mark after the word 'today'. Classical Greek scholars, as opposed to Bible translators, generally support the reading: 'I tell you today that you will be with Me in Paradise.'

'Christ did not promise that the thief should be with Him in Paradise that day. He Himself did not go that day to Paradise. He slept in the tomb, and on the morning of the resurrection He said, "I am not yet ascended to My Father." John 20:17. But on the

day of the crucifixion, the day of apparent defeat and darkness, the promise was given. "Today" while dying upon the cross as a malefactor, Christ assures the poor sinner, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.' *Desire of Ages*, page 751.

'Their love . . . is now perished'

7. What does the Bible have to say about the notion that our dead continue to exercise interest in the lives of those whom they have left behind? Ecclesiastes 9:6. Compare Job 14:21.

NOTE: 'According to the popular belief, the redeemed in heaven are acquainted with all that takes place on the earth, and especially with the lives of the friends whom they have left behind. But how could it be a source of happiness to the dead to know the troubles of the living, to see them enduring all the sorrows, disappointments, and anguish of life?' *The Faith I Live By*, page 175.

8. What attempt has been made to nullify the meaning of Solomon's words?

• **The Living Bible:** Footnote to these verses: 'These statements are Solomon's discouraged opinion, and do not reflect a knowledge of God's truth on these points!'

NOTE: 'Satan has ever worked and is still working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to make the Word of God of none effect. He seeks to make mysterious that which is simple and plain. He has had long experience in this work. He knows the character of God, and through his subtlety he has captivated the world. It was through making the word of God of none effect that sin was brought into the world.' *Selected Messages, book 3*, page 345.

'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth'

9. How did Jesus speak about the death of His friend? 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.

10. When does the Bible teach that the sleep of death will end? Job 14:12. Consider 2 Peter 3:12, Revelation 6:14.

NOTE: 'Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: "Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!" Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 50.

'If the dead rise not'

11. What important Bible doctrine becomes neglected when the idea that the dead go to heaven when they die is accepted? 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

NOTE: 'It is an undeniable fact that the hope of immortal blessedness at death has led to a widespread neglect of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection. This tendency was remarked by Dr. Adam Clarke, who said: "The doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now! How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! So apostles preached, and so primitive Christians believed; so we preach, and so our hearers believe. There is not a doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!"' *Commentary, remarks on 1 Corinthians 15, paragraph 3.* *Great Controversy*, page 547.

12. How does the Bible picture the time when the sleep of death will end? 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

NOTE: 'The apostle carried the minds of the Corinthian brethren forward to the triumphs of the resurrection morn, when all the sleeping saints are to be raised, henceforth to live forever with their Lord. "Behold," the apostle declared, "I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, page 320.

Lesson 11: September 4-10

'Every word of God is pure'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Acts 16:9.

STUDY HELP: *My Life Today*, page 27.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Mark 16:9-20.

LESSON AIM: To study whether the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel should be in the Bible.

Introduction

'As an educator, the Holy Scriptures are without a rival. The Bible is the most ancient and the most comprehensive history that men possess. It came fresh from the Fountain of eternal truth; and throughout the ages a divine hand has preserved its purity.' *Messages to Young People*, page 263.

Compiler's foreword: The closing verses of Mark's Gospel are marked as not part of the original work of Mark in all the popular modern versions. Scholars are of the opinion that Mark's Gospel was the first of the four and, by striking out the last twelve verses, it has been suggested that the ascension was a later tradition added to the Gospel. Others suggest that, since the first eight verses contain no post-resurrection appearances of Christ, these too are a later tradition and were not part of the original Gospel story.

'He appeared'

1. What is found in the closing verses of Mark's Gospel? Mark 16:9-14. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:5-8.

NOTE: Most scholars are of the view that the Gospel of Mark was written **after** Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

'After His resurrection, Christ did not show Himself to any save His followers, but testimony in regard to His resurrection was not wanting. It came from various sources, including from the five hundred who assembled in Galilee to see their risen Lord. This testimony could not be quenched. The sacred facts of Christ's resurrection were immortalised.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 286.

2. What importance does Paul place upon these appearances of Christ after His resurrection? 1 Corinthians 15:12-14.

NOTE: 'In the lowering of the moral standard among the Corinthian believers, there were those who had given up some of the fundamental features of their faith. Some had gone so far as to deny the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul met this heresy with a very plain testimony regarding the unmistakable evidence of the resurrection of Christ. He declared that Christ, after His death, "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," after which "He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also." With convincing power the apostle set forth the great truth of the resurrection. "If there be no resurrection of the dead," he argued, "then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 319-320.

Missing in some manuscripts

3. What is said of Mark 16:9-20 in the popular modern versions?

- **The Good News Version** describes these verses as 'An old ending to the Gospel' and adds 'Another old ending' of two verses. The footnote says: 'Some manuscripts and ancient translations do not have this ending to the Gospel.'
- **The New International Version** breaks the text after verse 8, inserting the note: 'The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.'
- **The New Jerusalem [Catholic] Version** has this footnote to verse 8: 'Originally Mark probably ended abruptly on this note of awe and wonder. The next twelve verses, missing in some manuscripts, are a summary of material gathered from other New Testament writings.'

NOTE: While popular scholarship asserts that the genuine portion of Mark's Gospel ends with verse 8, there is total disagreement among them as to why this is so. Although Dean Burgon set out the arguments for the genuineness of these verses in 1871, hostile scholars have been unable to come up with a plausible theory which accounts for Mark's Gospel ending at verse 8. Some suggest that verse 8 was the intentional ending. They don't agree why! The New Jerusalem Version adopts the view put forward by Lightfoot in 1937. The majority of scholars do not believe that Mark intended to end his Gospel at verse 8. Some suggest that death prevented Mark from finishing. But four ancient witnesses state that Mark lived to publish his Gospel. Perhaps the most popular opinion is that the last page of Mark's Gospel was lost accidentally. But this theory fails to account for the problem that it would have to be lost from **all** the existing copies! And there would be an overwhelming interest in replacing the lost portion from copies which had not lost the final page. The further back you put the proposed loss, the nearer you get to the likelihood that the author himself was within reach to supply what was lost.

4. What is the manuscript evidence concerning this passage?

NOTE: Eusebius is cited as stating that anciently many copies were without these verses. It has proved to be true that a few surviving manuscripts omit these verses. (Manuscript Aleph, B, L, a few cursives, which include an obviously spurious

alternative ending, one corrupt Old Latin version, two Armenian versions and an Arabic lectionary.) Eusebius himself did not doubt the genuineness of these verses. They were known to Irenaeus, who died around 202, and to Justin Martyr, 103-165. Codex Vaticanus omits the passage but leaves a space exactly the right length for them to be inserted! Codex Sinaiticus, however, goes straight on from verse 8 to begin the Gospel of Luke. The overwhelming majority of existing manuscripts contain the verses, as well as the majority of ancient translations, and 44 ancient witnesses have left us more than 90 testimonies in favour of this passage. Dean Burgon believed that the error arose from a single faulty copy where the scribe mistook the word 'end' (telos), placed after the end of this passage in the margin, as a guide for scripture reading in church, for the end of the Gospel. (The scribe possibly didn't turn the page of the manuscript he was copying at this point.) Copies of a faulty copy will probably perpetuate the original errors. Manuscripts exist which do indeed have the word 'telos' in the margin after verse 8. At least one manuscript has this word at the bottom of the page.

Did Jesus appear bodily after the Resurrection?

5. Why do scholars want to cast doubt on these verses?

NOTE: Here is an expression of the conclusion reached by those who deny the authenticity of these verses: 'Matthew and Luke used and copied Mark . . . Unlike the other evangelists [Mark] did not feel the need to depict [Jesus] walking about or eating and drinking after his crucifixion. Not only do Matthew, Luke and John feel this need. Other Christians decided to supplement the harsh ending of Mark himself. The extra verses we already quoted were probably added by a presbyter named Aristion in the early second century*. . . No one doubted that the author of Mark's Gospel believed that Jesus was somehow still alive. But whether this conviction depended on the belief that Jesus had also 'bodily' appeared after death to his followers was now an open question.' James Bentley: *Secrets of Mount Sinai*, pages 141, 145. [*Bentley provides no evidence to support this theory!]

6. Why would the fact that Christ rose *bodily* from the dead be under attack?

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

'It is an undeniable fact that the hope of immortal blessedness at death has led to a widespread neglect of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection. . . This has continued until the glorious truth of the resurrection has been almost wholly obscured and lost sight of by the Christian world. Thus a leading religious writer, commenting on the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, says: "For all practical purposes of comfort the doctrine of the blessed immortality of the righteous takes the place for us of any doubtful doctrine of the Lord's second coming. At our death the Lord comes for us. That is what we are to wait and watch for. The dead are already passed into glory. They do not wait for the trump for their judgment and blessedness.'" *Great Controversy*, page 547.

'The Word was made flesh'

7. Why would some early Christians want to remove these verses from Mark's Gospel? Consider 1 John 4:3, 2 John 7.

NOTE: Perhaps the earliest heresy to arise among Christians was Gnosticism whose central teaching has been called Docetism. This is the belief that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was His crucifixion; that is, Jesus only *seemed* to have a physical body and only *seemed* to die physically, but in reality He was a pure spirit, and hence could not physically die. Those who taught this heresy would naturally deny the physical resurrection and thus the physical appearances of Jesus after the Resurrection. One of the manuscripts that omits Mark 16:8-20, the Old Latin manuscript *k*, also shows signs of having been tampered with by Docetists in verse 4, which is changed to say: 'Suddenly, moreover, at the third hour of the day, darkness fell upon the whole world, and angels descended from heaven and as the Son of God was rising in brightness, they ascended at the same time with Him, and straightway it was light.' The Gnostic *Gospel of Peter* has a more elaborate version of this story.

8. What does Paul tell us about this early corruption of the Scriptures? 2 Corinthians 2:17.

9. NOTE: 'Two classes are set before us in the word of God: those who "follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of," and those who, with Paul, can say, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." We are to decide between the false and the true.' *Review & Herald*, December 12, 1899.

'These signs shall follow them that believe'

10. What else is to be found in these disputed verses? Mark 16:15-18.

NOTE: 'When the Saviour said, "Go, . . . teach all nations," He said also, "These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The promise is as far-reaching as the commission. Not that all the gifts are imparted to each believer. The Spirit divides "to every man severally as He will." 1 Corinthians 12:11. But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. "These signs shall follow them that believe." This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an endorsement of faith. "They

shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” This world is a vast lazar house, but Christ came to heal the sick, to proclaim deliverance to the captives of Satan. He was in Himself health and strength. He imparted His life to the sick, the afflicted, those possessed of demons. He turned away none who came to receive His healing power. He knew that those who petitioned Him for help had brought disease upon themselves; yet He did not refuse to heal them. And when virtue from Christ entered into these poor souls, they were convicted of sin, and many were healed of their spiritual disease, as well as of their physical maladies. The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?’ *Desire of Ages*, page 823.

11. What would be lost if these verses were removed from Scripture? Consider Mark 16:20, Acts 2:43, Acts 4:29-30, Acts 5:12, Acts 14:3.

NOTE: ‘The promise of the gifts is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. “These signs shall follow them that believe.” The gifts of Him who has all power in heaven and in earth, are in store for His children, gifts so precious that they come to us through the costly sacrifice of the Redeemer’s blood; gifts that will satisfy the deepest craving of the heart; gifts lasting as eternity.’ *Signs of the Times*, March 15, 1910.

‘Thy Word is truth’

12. What further truth is lost if the closing verses of Mark’s Gospel are regarded as unreliable? Mark 16:19.

NOTE: Hostile critics of the Scriptures have noted that neither Matthew nor John mention Christ’s ascension to heaven. If Mark’s witness, as, supposedly, the earliest Gospel, is discounted, then only Luke testifies to the ascension. This, in their eyes, casts doubt on the reliability of the ascension story.

‘The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 358.

13. Of what may we be assured as we study the Scriptures? John 17:17.

NOTE: ‘Satan had urged on the papal priests and prelates to bury the word of truth beneath the rubbish of error, heresy, and superstition; but in a most wonderful manner it was preserved uncorrupted through all the ages of darkness.’ *Great Controversy*, page 69.

Lesson 12: September 11-17

‘Three that bear record in heaven’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.’ 1 John 5:7.

STUDY HELP: *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7A*, pages 441-442.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: 1 John 5:1-13.

LESSON AIM: To study 1 John 5:7 to see whether the verse teaches Bible truth and whether it should be in the Bible.

Introduction

‘Another dangerous error is the doctrine that denies the divinity of Christ, claiming that He had no existence before His advent to this world. This theory is received with favour by a large class who profess to believe the Bible; yet it directly contradicts the plainest statements of our Saviour concerning His relationship with the Father, His divine character, and His pre-existence. It cannot be entertained without the most unwarranted wresting of the Scriptures. It not only lowers man’s conceptions of the work of redemption, but undermines faith in the Bible as a revelation from God. While this renders it the more dangerous, it makes it also harder to meet. If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the divinity of Christ, it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” [1 Corinthians 2:14.] None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man’s redemption.’ *Great Controversy, 1888 edition*, page 524.

Compiler’s note: 1 John 5:7 is known by textual critics as the Johannine Comma.

‘The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost’

1. What testimony to the Triune God is found in 1 John 5:7?

NOTE: ‘There are three living Persons of the heavenly Trio; in the name of these three great powers, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptised and these powers will co-operate with the obedient.’ *In Heavenly Places*, page 336.

2. Where elsewhere in Scripture do we find the Three? Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14.

NOTE: 'Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, "The Lord Our Righteousness." Jeremiah 23:6. Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptised in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 295.

The Johannine Comma

3. Why is 1 John 5:7 omitted from nearly all popular modern versions?

- **New International Version** footnote: 'Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that testify on earth: the (not found in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century) [This statement is untrue.]

- **The Good News Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible** simply omit most of verse 7 without comment.

NOTE: The following story has been widely circulated by opponents of the *Johannine Comma*, but its detail has been shown to be unreliable: 'Erasmus omitted the *Johannine Comma* from the first edition (1516) of his printed Greek New Testament on the ground that it occurred only in the Latin version and not in any Greek manuscript. To quiet the outcry that arose, he agreed to restore it if but one Greek manuscript could be found which contained it. When one such manuscript was discovered soon afterwards, bound by his promise, he included the disputed reading in his third edition (1522) and thus it gained a permanent place in the Textus Receptus. The manuscript which forced Erasmus to reverse his stand seems to have been 61, a 15th or 16th century manuscript now kept at Trinity College, Dublin. Many critics believe that this manuscript was written at Oxford for the special purpose of refuting Erasmus, and this is what Erasmus himself suggested in his notes.' Edward Hills: *The King James Bible Defended*, page 209.

4. What is the manuscript evidence in favour of this verse?

NOTE: The *Johannine Comma* is also found in thirteen other Greek manuscripts. It is not found in 501 Greek manuscripts, only eight of which are older than the oldest surviving manuscript containing the disputed words. Jerome, writing in the late 4th century, testifies that 'much error has occurred at the hands of **unfaithful translators contrary to the truth of faith**, who have kept just the three words water, blood and spirit in this edition, omitting mention of Father, Word and Spirit in which especially the catholic faith is strengthened and the unity of substance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is attested.' The earliest of many mentions of this passage was by Cyprian (around 250) at Carthage. Two 4th century Spanish bishops, Priscillian, who was executed in 385, and Idacius Clarus, who was Priscillian's main accuser, also quoted this verse. In the 5th century, the verse was frequently quoted to defend the deity of Christ against Arian heretics who denied this truth. Cassiodorus (480-570) in Italy mentioned this verse, as do two other Latin manuscripts of the 5th or 6th century. 98% of Latin manuscripts contain this verse. It also forms part of the Waldensian Bibles.

'The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. (See Appendix.) Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated.' *Great Controversy*, page 65.

'These Three are One'

5. What internal evidence exists in favour of this verse?

NOTE: The omission of the *Johannine Comma* involves grammatical difficulty. If the words are omitted, the remaining words in verse 8, *spirit, water and blood*, are neuter, yet they are treated as if they are masculine. But the words 'The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost' are masculine and if they are left in the text, the grammatical problem disappears. For this reason, some scholars are convinced that Greek manuscripts that omit the *Johannine Comma* must be defective at this point. This grammatical problem was noted by Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389). (Other grammatical and contextual problems arise from omitting these words.) What may have happened is that a scribe copying his manuscript may have confused two consecutive lines beginning with identical words; starting to copy verse 7, perhaps his eye dropped to verse 8 and so what he wrote included the opening five words [in the Greek] of verse 7 followed by the remaining words from verse 8. This is a not uncommon copying error, known technically as *homoiototeuton* (similar ending).

6. Why might it have been dropped from the Greek manuscripts?

NOTE: During the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Eastern Church suffered from a number of heresies related to the Godhead. One of these, Sabellianism (named after Sabellius, its original promoter), taught that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were literally one in the sense that They were identical. Thus Sabellians believed that the Father, being identical with Christ, suffered and died upon the cross. In the light of this controversy, the statement 'These Three are One' might be said to teach the Sabellian heresy. And if, during the course of this controversy, manuscripts were discovered which did not have these words, it is easy to see how those opposed to Sabellianism would promote the mutilated manuscripts as representing the true text and consider the *Johannine Comma* are a heretical addition. In the West, however, where Sabellianism made little or no impact, the *Johannine Comma* remained and seems to have been undisputed. It thus is found in the Latin manuscripts that circulated among Western Christians.

‘I and My Father are one’

7. Does the Johannine Comma conflict with Scripture? John 10:30.

NOTE: ‘Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father, one in nature, in character, in purpose, the only Being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace” (Isaiah 9:6). His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus said, “I and My Father are one.” The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as He put forth the claim that He and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes. The Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father.’ *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7A, page 437.*

8. What verses show that the Holy Spirit is God? Compare Acts 5:3 with Acts 5:4.

NOTE: ‘The Holy Spirit works in us, that we may work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is striving to teach us. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”’ *Messages to Young People, page 147.*

‘The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God.’ *Evangelism, page 616.*

‘Damnable heresies’

9. What heresies are circulating today concerning the Godhead? Consider 2 Peter 2:1.

NOTE: The Jehovah’s Witnesses deny the deity of Christ, proposing, in their ‘New World’ version of John 1:1 that Christ is ‘a god’, rather than God. They also deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. These errors have been widely circulated through the door-to-door ministry of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Mormons teach that God was once a man and that all men will eventually become God.

10. What other old heresy has recently been revived?

NOTE: Recently an error, first proposed by an 11th century Catholic monk of Compiègne in France called Roscelin, has resurfaced. Roscelin taught that there are three separate gods. He taught that the only way in which they could be said to be one is in purpose. This error, *Tritheism*, has never been accepted by any Christian church. (Mormons, however, teach something similar to this.) Advocates of this old heresy call their view ‘The Godhead’. They claim that the doctrine that God is One who has revealed Himself to mankind in Three Persons is a heresy invented by the Roman Catholics, and that the word ‘Trinity’, coined by Theophilus of Antioch in 170 to express this truth, is actually a Roman Catholic word. Both these claims are historically untrue.

‘There is one God; and there is none other but He’

11. Why is it important to accept Christ as God? Read Hebrews 1 and consider John 20:28.

NOTE: ‘There are those who claim to have great light . . . who deny the divinity of Christ, and in so doing deny the Father whom Christ represented on earth. “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.” The classes who deny the Father and the Son are rapidly increasing in the world, and the name given to this class by the Bible is antichrist. There are many who have their names upon the church records, who claim to possess superior piety; and yet should Christ appear among them, they would rebuke the Son of God. There are men who profess to be ministers of the gospel who are teaching heresy, and deceiving many, and leading thousands in the way of apostasy.’ *Youth’s Instructor, September 27, 1894.*

12. Does the Bible teach that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, rather than three gods? Matthew 28:19. Consider Isaiah 44:6, Isaiah 45:5, James 2:19.

NOTE: Notice that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost have one Name.

‘The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man’s uplifting. Here is love, the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer.’ *Counsels on Health, page 222.*

‘Many which corrupt the Word of God’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.’ 2 Corinthians 2:17 .

STUDY HELP: *In Heavenly Places*, page 132.

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Proverbs 30:5-6.

LESSON AIM: To consider whether the accuracy of a Bible translation actually matters.

Compiler’s note: Arthur Maxwell, in his book, *Your Bible and You*, wrote: If your Bible happens to be a copy of the King James Version of 1611, or the Douai Version of 1582, or a modern version such as that of Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Knox or Phillips, never mind. Read on. Read all the versions you can obtain. You will find great good in every one of them.’ These lessons have pointed out that not all versions are saying the same or teaching the same. Should we, as Maxwell said, obtain all the versions we can? Should we regard them all as equally valid in conveying the Word of God? Or do we need to be aware that some versions are actually corrupting the Word of God?

Introduction

‘Satan could no longer keep the Bible from the people; it had been placed within the reach of all. But he led thousands to accept false interpretations and unsound theories, without searching the Scriptures to learn the truth for themselves. He had corrupted the doctrines of the Bible, and traditions which were to ruin millions were taking deep root. The church was upholding and defending these traditions, instead of contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. And while wholly unconscious of their condition and their peril, the church and the world were rapidly approaching the most solemn and momentous period of earth’s history, the period of the revelation of the Son of man.’ *The Story of Redemption*, page 355.

‘A light unto my path’

1. To what are the Scriptures likened? Psalm 119:105.

NOTE: ‘The Bible is a book which discloses the principles of right and truth. It contains whatever is needful for the saving of the soul, and at the same time, it is adapted to strengthen and discipline the mind . . . God cares for us as intellectual beings, and He has given us His Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway. “The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” [Psalm 119:130.] It is not the mere reading of the word that will accomplish the result that is designed by Heaven, but the truth revealed in the word of God must find an entrance into the heart, if the good intended is obtained.’ *Christian Education*, page 108.

2. How are we warned that what we think of as light may be in fact darkness? Luke 11:35. Compare Isaiah 5:20.

NOTE: ‘God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If there were no light, there would be no shade. But while the shade comes by the sun, it is not created by it. It is some obstruction that causes the shadow. So darkness emanates not from God, but is the result of an intruding object between the soul and God. Disregard of the light that God has given brings the sure result. It creates a shadow, a darkness that is more dark because of the light which has been sent . . . Satan is constantly working to lead men to deny the light. It is but a step from the straightforward path to a diverging one, in which Satan leads the way, and where light is all darkness, and darkness light.’ *Our High Calling*, page 26.

‘If the trumpet give an uncertain sound’

3. How does Paul warn of the dangers that arise when the message is confusing? 1 Corinthians 14:8.

NOTE: A consequence of the variety of Bible versions, with their conflicting readings, is that in the course of Bible study one or another will say: But it doesn’t say that in my bible. Thus uncertainty and confusion arise over the message of God’s Word. Preachers may be tempted to select readings from a version that supports their own ideas, rather than allowing the Word of God to shape their ideas. Congregational reading or quoting in unison becomes harder or impossible when a variety of versions is being used. And when the variations actually change the meaning of Scripture, then indeed the trumpet gives an uncertain sound.

4. What parable did Jesus tell concerning such confusion? Luke 6:39.

NOTE: ‘It is not safe to commit this work of searching the Scriptures to any other man to do for us, however learned he may be. If he has not a living connection with God, he will mislead the mind, and cause the destruction of many souls. “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?”’ *Bible Echo*, December 3, 1894.

‘Many which corrupt the Word of God’

5. What did Paul say about those in his day who were corrupting the Word of God? 2 Corinthians 2:17, first part.

NOTE: A feature of recent years has been the emergence of Bible versions designed to promote the views of particular sectarian groups or doctrinal ideas. The most influential of these, though not in itself very successful, was the Revised Version of Westcott and Hort [1881]. Westcott and Hort’s heavily revised Greek New Testament has influenced practically every

subsequent translation. Westcott and Hort were Anglo-Catholics with a strong involvement in necromancy.

6. What principle did Christ give, which may help us in deciding which Bible versions to avoid? Matthew 7:15-18. Compare James 3:11-12.

NOTE: Can we expect that translations produced by those who preach 'another gospel which is not another' will be a sure guide to the people of God? In view, especially of the Roman Catholic Church's long war against the scriptures, should we expect to find Roman Catholic versions trustworthy?

'Teachers of falsehood will arise to draw you away from the narrow path and the strait gate. Beware of them; though concealed in sheep's clothing, inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Jesus gives a test by which false teachers may be distinguished from the true. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," He says. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" We are not bidden to prove them by their fair speeches and exalted professions. They are to be judged by the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 19:27. What message do these teachers bring? Does it lead you to reverence and fear God? Does it lead you to manifest your love for Him by loyalty to His commandments? If men do not feel the weight of the moral law; if they make light of God's precepts; if they break one of the least of His commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of heaven. We may know that their claims are without foundation. They are doing the very work that originated with the prince of darkness, the enemy of God.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 145

'Add thou not unto His words'

7. Against what form of corruption of God's Word are we especially warned? Proverbs 30:6.

NOTE: 'Those who, by their human construction, shall make the Scripture to utter that which Christ has never placed upon it, weaken its force, making the voice of God in instruction and warnings to testify falsehood, to avoid the inconvenience incurred by obedience to God's requirements, have become signboards, pointing in the wrong direction, into false paths, which lead to transgression and death.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 386.

8. What warning was given to those who tamper with the book of Revelation? Revelation 22:18-19.

NOTE: 'The testimony of the Alpha and Omega in regard to the punishment for making nonessential one word spoken by the mouth of God is the fearful denunciation that they shall receive of the plagues that are written in the book; their names shall be taken out of the book of life, and from the holy city.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 387.

'Every word of God'

9. How did Jesus emphasise the importance of every word of God? Matthew 4:4. Compare Deuteronomy 8:3.

NOTE: 'Would you become assimilated to the divine image? Would you drink of the water which Christ shall give you, which shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life? Would you bear fruit to the glory of God? Would you refresh others? Then with heart hungering for the bread of life, the Word of God, search the Scriptures, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Your soul's sanctification and righteousness will result from faith in the Word of God, which leads to obedience of its commands. Let the Word of God be to you as the voice of God instructing you, and saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Isaiah 30:21. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 21.

'Every sentence and every word is of weight and consequence.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 311.

10. How did Paul emphasise the importance of God's Word? Hebrews 4:12.

NOTE: 'The truths of the Bible, treasured in the heart and mind and obeyed in the life, convince and convert the soul, transform the character, and comfort and uplift the heart. The Word makes the proud humble, the perverse meek and contrite, the disobedient obedient. The sinful habits natural to man are interwoven with the daily practice. But the Word cuts away the fleshly lusts. It is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the mind. It divides the joints and marrow, cutting away the lusts of the flesh, making men willing to suffer for their Lord.' *Our Father Cares*, page 129.

'My two witnesses'

11. In what prophecy are we shown Satan's long war against the Scriptures? Revelation 11:3-12.

NOTE: 'The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy. "They shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth." During the greater part of this period, God's witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. When the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authority; when its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it; when those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried in dungeon cells, martyred for their faith, or compelled to flee to mountain fastnesses, and to dens and caves of the earth, then the faithful witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Yet they continued their testimony throughout the entire period of 1260 years. In the darkest times there were faithful men who loved God's word and were

jealous for His honour. To these loyal servants were given wisdom, power, and authority to declare His truth during the whole of this time.' *Great Controversy*, page 267.

How is Satan waging his war against the Scriptures today?

12. Why should those who take upon themselves the task of translating the Word of God be cautious? Proverbs 30:5, Psalm 12:6.

NOTE: 'Are the Scriptures vague and inconsistent? Is there any foundation for the conflicting opinions and various sentiments and doctrines that find credence in the religious world? If so, then we may entertain doubts of their divine origin, for it is not the inspiration of God that leads people to come to diverse opinions. Those who undertake to interpret the Bible have corrupted the Word of God and wrested the Scripture from its true meaning, by seeking to harmonise the truth of God with the inventions and doctrines of men. The Scriptures are perverted and misapplied, and the gems of truth are set in the framework of error. These teachers are blinded, and cannot clearly discern what is the true meaning of the Scriptures.' *This Day With God*, page 164.