A lit candle in a dark holder, casting a warm glow on an open book. The candle is the central focus, with its flame bright and steady. The book is open, and the pages are visible, though the text is not legible. The background is dark, making the candle and the book stand out.

Know Your Bible

COURSE

**25 LESSONS
FOR INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
BIBLE STUDY**

Know Your Bible COURSE



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Welcome

The Know Your Bible Course has been specially prepared to help you become skillful in the use and understanding of the Bible. The subjects in the Course will lay a foundation for your study of the Holy Scriptures and for your personal walk with God. A clear understanding of the Bible impacts our present happiness and our eternal destiny.

The Course has three sections:

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Whenever you read or study your Bible, pray for divine guidance in understanding God's word.

Study each lesson carefully, concentrating on the Bible texts. Some verses are written out, and others are not. For the greatest benefit, look up in your own Bible all of the Bible texts (printed in bold), whether they are written out or not. That way you will confirm for yourself and impress on your mind the basic truths that are essential for life. Highlight what you find especially important, and add your own notes.

After you study each lesson, go to the Questionnaires booklet and answer as many questions as you can from what you remember from your study. Then, refer back to the lesson material to check your answers and to complete those that you were unsure of.

God bless you as you search His great Book! May you make many wonderful, life-saving discoveries!



1–The Holy Scriptures

The Book of books, the Bible, is unknown and unloved by many people in our modern times. Even though it is a best-selling book, few realize its deep significance and the power of its influence. Many have never made an honest effort to read or study the Bible. Interest in it has been stimulated, however, by archaeological finds, particularly the Dead Sea Scrolls, which have confirmed its validity and accuracy. The background and content of the Scriptures are fascinating and vitally relevant for modern man; they deserve our close scrutiny and careful study.

Background

Actually, what is the Bible? Where did it come from?

The Bible is a collection of writings. *Biblia*, the Greek word, means “little books”; *Bible* means “collection of books.” The Holy Scriptures consist of 66 books, divided into 2 main parts—the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. The books were written over a period of about 1,500 years by 35 to 40 authors, beginning with Moses about 1,400 years before Christ. The Old Testament was written before the birth of Christ; the New Testament, after.

The Scriptures are called “the book of the Lord.” **Isaiah 34:16**. They are also called the “word of God.” **Hebrews 4:12**. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.” **Psalms 119:105, 89**. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” **Matthew 4:4**.

Old and New Testament writings

The books of the *Old Testament* can be divided into three categories, according to their content. Jesus mentioned these in **Luke 24:44, 45**: “And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the *law of Moses*, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms*, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”

The New Testament can also be divided, as follows: The *historical* books, such as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and The Acts of the Apostles; the *prophetic* book of The Revelation; and the *letters*, or

epistles, written by apostles such as John, Peter, and Paul.

The entire Bible is God’s word and should be thoroughly searched. It is not sufficient for us to study only the New Testament or to rely heavily on only one or two of the books.

Given by inspiration

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” **2 Timothy 3:16, 17**.

Although all the books of the Bible were written by human instruments, the actual Author was God Himself, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” **2 Peter 1:21**. Angels played an important part in the writing of the Scriptures. See **Daniel 9:21**. There is an orderly channel through which divine revelation was given, as explained in **Revelation 1:1**: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.” See also **Hebrews 1:1**.

Man must learn under divine inspiration

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.... Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But 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 2:11-14**.

To learn divine truth, man must be guided by the Holy Spirit in his study of God’s word. As he perseveres in study, he will become well acquainted with its Author. God’s love, mercy, and glory will become real to him, and he will be enabled to reach the goal of communion with God for eternity.

God wants men to teach His word. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the

To learn divine truth, man must be guided by the Holy Spirit in his study of God’s word.

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:..." **Matthew 28:19, 20.** This teaching must agree with the Scriptures in every respect. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." **Isaiah 8:20.** Adding to or taking away from God's word will bring upon the individual the curse of plagues and the loss of eternal life. **Revelation 22:18, 19.**

Some things cannot be understood

The Lord has not revealed all things to us. This is for our good. Therefore, in God's word we find some things which the human mind cannot grasp. Such mysteries often frustrate and confuse those who speculate as to the interpretation of these unrevealed passages of Scripture. But "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever..." **Deuteronomy 29:29.** See **2 Peter 3:16.**

Although we are not able to explain everything and cannot penetrate God's mysteries, we may rest assured that God has revealed everything that is necessary for our salvation. Even children can understand the great theme of the Bible—"God loves sinners"—and learn to love Jesus, the Center of all its teachings. The Bible is God's love letter to mankind!

Studying the Scriptures

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." **John 5:39.** We are not to be satisfied with what someone else says about the Bible but to search it daily for ourselves, as did the noble Bereans in Paul's day. See **Acts 17:11.** Before opening the Bible, one should pray earnestly for understanding, as did the prophet Daniel. **Daniel 9:2, 3.** God delights to enlighten the student's mind. "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." **Daniel 9:21, 22.** If we are willing to obey God's word, we will know His doctrine, the full truth. **John 7:17.**

For proper understanding, we must carefully compare the Scriptures, one with another. **Isaiah 28:10.** An excellent plan to follow is to study the Bible by subject, reading and comparing all the verses relating to that subject, tracing the thread

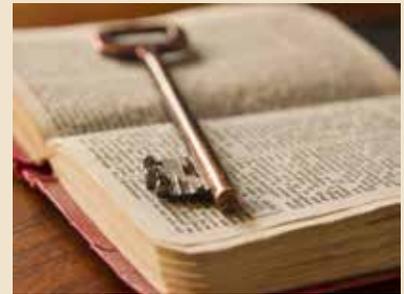
of truth through both the Old and New Testaments. This Bible Course follows this method. Divine truth can bear the test of careful scrutiny, and the gold of its genuineness will shine with added luster the more one investigates it.

The Scriptures are given for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, as noted earlier in this lesson. They are written to provide for man's deepest needs—learning, comfort, and hope. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." **Romans 15:4.**

Glorious are the promises given to the earnest seeker for truth! "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." **1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.**

They are written to provide for man's deepest needs—learning, comfort, and hope.

God's Word



The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and the principles revealed within its pages are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to sustain you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here, too, heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, a river of pleasure.

It is given you in life, will be opened in judgment, and be remembered forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

It is the Word of God which shall stand forever.

2—What about God?

In God's word, the Bible, we can find the answers to the most searching questions asked by man—questions such as, “Is there a God? If so, who is He, and where is He?” All men have a vacuum, a longing for a higher power to answer their deep questions, guide them, and give them a real reason for living. This longing for something better and higher was planted in the human heart by God Himself. He longs to bestow upon man all the blessings of His love and mercy, to fulfill his deepest needs, and to satisfy his most ardent longings. To understand life truly, one will seek God.

Part 1: GOD THE FATHER

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” **Exodus 20:2, 3**. “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” **Ephesians 4:6**. See also **1 Corinthians 8:6**.

Monotheism is the belief that there is only one superior being in the universe—its Creator and Ruler—and that nature reveals His power. The Bible expresses this truth throughout its sacred pages: There is only one God! In contrast to this is *polytheism*, a belief in many gods. The worship of more than one God is unscriptural.

God is a spiritual being as well as a Person

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” **John 4:24**. Although with our limited understanding we cannot fully explain or comprehend Him, the Bible gives us much evidence that God is a person. **John 14:6-9**. He spoke in an audible voice. “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” **Matthew 3:17**. See also **John 12:27-29**. God also sees and hears. **Psalms 94:9**.

He grieved 40 years for His people. **Psalms 95:10**. God revealed Himself as a personal Being through His Son, Jesus, even as sin drove a wedge between Him and man. **Isaiah 59:2**. Jesus is the most perfect revelation of God. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” **John 1:18**.

God's nature and character

God's nature is defined in the Scriptures as eternal. He is without beginning and end. “... Even His eternal power and Godhead;...” **Romans 1:20**. See **Revelation 21:6**. “But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king:...” **Jeremiah 10:10**.

He is *immortal*, or not subject to death. “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.” **1 Timothy 1:17**. Another characteristic of God is that He is unchangeable. **James 1:17**. The most important of all truths is that God is love. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” **1 John 4:8**. **Exodus 34:6** emphasizes that the Lord is *merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth*.

God is omnipresent; that is, although He is a personal Being, He is present everywhere. The primitive concept of God is to consider Him bound to a certain place, object, or even a nation. The other extreme is to regard God as an impersonal force, or spirit, which dwells in all animate and inanimate things. The Bible refutes both of these ideas. “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” **Acts 17:24**.

Everything we need to know about God is revealed in His word. Beyond the Biblical revelation of God's nature and character, all human opinions are mere speculation. On this point, silence is eloquent. “Be still, and know that I am God:...” **Psalms 46:10**. See also **Job 11:7**. Because no man has seen God, we must be content with what the Bible tells us about Him. “... The King of kings, and Lord of lords;... whom no man hath seen, nor can see:...” **1 Timothy 6:15, 16**.

God wants us to seek Him with all our hearts. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” **Jeremiah 29:11-13**. God promises that if we seek Him in this life we will have the privilege of seeing Him face to face in eternity. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” **1 Corinthians 13:12**.

Part 2: JESUS CHRIST

We already noted in Lesson 1 that Jesus Christ is the center of all the Bible's teachings and, in the first part of this lesson, that God revealed Himself as a personal Being in His Son, Jesus. See **John 1:18; 14:9**. Jesus Christ is the center of all true religion; and, more specifically, Christianity stands or falls with the significance of Jesus Christ. Who is He whom men worship and angels adore? The Scriptures call Him by many names—all of them appealing and beautiful.

- The Rock. **Deuteronomy 32:4**.
- Rose of Sharon, Lily of the Valley. **Song of Solomon 2:1**.
- Lamb of God. **John 1:36**.
- Bread of Life. **John 6:35**.
- The Good Shepherd. **John 10:14**.
- The Way, the Truth, the Life. **John 14:6**.
- Bright and Morning Star. **Revelation 22:16**.
- The Word. **John 1:1-4, 14**.
- Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:6**.

Christ's pre-existence

To many, Jesus was a baby born in a manger in Bethlehem; to others, He is the Saviour of the world who was born to Mary, grew up in Nazareth, preached for 3½ years in Israel, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to His Father in heaven. Christ is all of these and more—much more!

Did you know that Jesus existed in heaven with His Father before He was born as a baby in Bethlehem? This truth is plainly recorded in the Bible. "In the beginning was the Word,...""And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..."**John 1:1, 14**. Jesus took upon Himself the garb of humanity; He came to live and work as a man, enduring patiently every temptation man has been or ever will be called upon to face. God's Son, the Word, truly was made flesh. Note the middle part of **Verse 14**: "... (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father),..." "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." **John 17:5**. "For I came down from heaven,...""What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" **John 6:38, 62**.

Jesus is God's Son and the Messiah

Many years before His birth in Bethlehem, the prophet Isaiah foretold Jesus' mission on earth.

See **Isaiah 9:6**. To restore man to the relationship he had had with God the Father before sin entered, Christ came down from heaven—from God. Only a divine being could atone for man's sin and thus bridge the chasm between God and man. See **Hebrews 2:17**. Because of His perfect humanity, Christ was one with man; and at the same time, because of His divinity, He was one with God. While laying one hand upon humanity, He could lay the other upon God. In this way He could become the advocate, or Mediator, between God and man for reconciliation. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." **1 Timothy 2:5**. See also **Romans 5:10; Colossians 2:9**.

It may surprise some to learn that Jesus is not only the Son of God but also the Creator of all things. The Bible gives proof of this wonderful truth. "God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,... by whom He made the worlds." **Hebrews 1:1, 2**. "... All things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." **Colossians 1:12-17**. See also **John 1:3**.

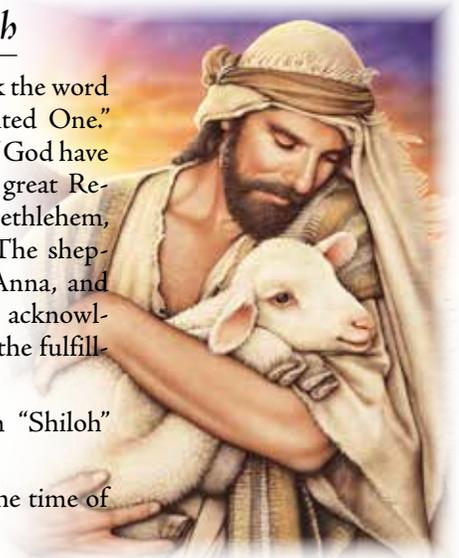
Prophecies relating to the Messiah

The Hebrew word "Messiah" is in Greek the word *Christos*. Both words mean "the anointed One." Ever since sin entered the world, men of God have looked for the promised Messiah, the great Redeemer. Yet when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, few recognized Him as the Messiah. The shepherds, the wise men, the prophetess Anna, and the devout Simeon were the few who acknowledged that the birth of this Infant was the fulfillment of prophecy.

- **Genesis 49:10**: Jacob called Him "Shiloh" (Bringer of Rest).
- **Daniel 9:25, 26**: Daniel indicated the time of His appearance.
- **Micah 5:2**: The exact city of Christ's birth was foretold.
- **Isaiah 7:14**: His name was to be "Emmanuel"; He was to be born of a virgin.
- **Matthew 1:23**: His name, "Emmanuel," means "God with us."
- **Matthew 1:18-21**: Prophecy was fulfilled when Mary conceived of the Holy Ghost.

In the Old Testament, there are more than 300 prophecies pointing directly to the coming, life and work, suffering, and victory of the Son of man. Everything Jesus did was in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Please take time to read **Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 4:14; 13:35; 27:35**.

Jesus is not only the Son of God but also the Creator of all things.



Jesus is our only hope

No knowledge of Christ, however great, which does not make us Christ-like is of any value. **Colossians 1:26, 27** stresses the importance of Christ being in us. The presence of Christ in our lives gives the genuine purpose for living. To know Christ is to experience the most that life can offer. Jesus is our only hope! "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." **1 John 5:11, 12.**

Part 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT

So far we have studied about two Persons of the Godhead—God the Father and God the Son. The third Person of the heavenly family is the Holy Spirit, also referred to in the Scriptures as the Holy Ghost. **Matthew 28:19.** The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit as an infinitely wise, holy, and tender Person. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, yet they are completely equal, united in character, holiness, and divinity; they pursue one goal, yet each has His own sphere of activity and form of revelation.

As a matter of fact, all three Persons of the Godhead were active in the creation of the world. The Father was the source of all things, Jesus created all things, and the Holy Spirit moved (brooded) over the waters to awaken life in the created beings. See **Genesis 1:2, 26.**

The Holy Spirit is also called the Comforter and the Spirit of truth. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." **John 14:16, 17.** It was necessary for Christ to return to heaven so the Comforter could come in power. **John 16:7.**

What does the Holy Spirit do?

The Holy Spirit and His activities are of the utmost importance to the believer. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth:... and He will shew you things to come." **John 16:13.** This truth is God's word. **John 17:17.** The Holy Spirit also reproves men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. **John 16:8-11.**



The Cross Was His Own

They borrowed a bed to lay His head,
When Christ the Lord came down;
They borrowed the ass in the mountain pass
For Him to ride to town.
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed the bread when the crowd He fed
On the grassy mountainside;
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which He satisfied.
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude;
He borrowed the nest in which to rest;
He had never a home so rude.
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed a room on the way to the tomb,
The Passover lamb to eat.
They borrowed the cave, for Him a grave,
They borrowed the winding sheet.
But the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

The thorns on His head were worn in my stead,
For me the Saviour died.
For guilt of my sin the nails drove in
When Him they crucified.
Though the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Were His own,
They rightly were mine—instead.

—*Author unknown*

The Scriptures are explained by the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 2:10, 11.** A most vital work accomplished by the Holy Spirit is the new birth of the repentant sinner. **John 3:5-8.** Thus, through belief in Christ, men are born of God, not of flesh or the will of man. **John 1:12, 13.** The Holy Spirit writes God's laws in the heart and mind. **Hebrews 8:10; 2 Corinthians 3:3.**

In addition to making these impressions on our hearts, the Holy Spirit assists our prayers. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know no what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." **Romans 8:26, 27.** The power of the Holy Ghost makes us able to witness for Christ. **Acts 1:8.** It is through His leading that we come in harmony with God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." **Romans 8:14.**

The most important work of the Holy Spirit is sealing men for salvation. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." **Ephesians 4:30.**

Comparison to air, fire, water, and oil

"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." **Job 33:4.** Air is necessary for life. Without it a person can survive only a few minutes. When you stop breathing for any length of time, you cease living. In the same manner, the Holy Spirit, symbolized by air or breath, brings life to a soul. See **Job 27:3.**

The power and zeal of the Holy Ghost are also portrayed as fire in **Matthew 3:11** and **Luke 12:49.**

John 7:37-39 compares a person who does not have the Holy Spirit with someone who is thirsty. The sin-scorched people in the world are crying for water that will satisfy the thirst of their souls. Only the Holy Spirit can give them relief.

In the parable of the ten virgins, the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the oil in the virgins' lamps. Read **Matthew 25:1-12.** Knowledge of the Bible amounts only to dry facts unless the Holy Spirit changes or anoints one's life in accordance with that knowledge. The oil, or the Holy Spirit, illuminates the truth in man's mind. It is through Him that Christ lives in His followers.

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

The unpardonable, fatal sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit consists of deliberately rejecting light, or divine truth. **Matthew 12:31, 32; Hebrews 6:4-6.** It is possible to grieve the Comforter, who calls sinners to repentance. If anyone persistently rejects the calling of the Holy Spirit and turns away from Him, the Spirit will go away and no longer speak to that person through his conscience.

Presumptuous or God-defying sins lead to this great transgression. **Psalm 19:13.** Committing blasphemy against the Holy Ghost means to be rejected by Christ. **Matthew 7:21-23** vividly portrays this rejection: "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." After the time of grace, or probation, is over, people will seek for God's word but will not find it, because the Holy Spirit, rejected for so long, will finally depart. **Amos 8:11, 12.**

Everyone may have the Holy Spirit today

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Holy Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness." —Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

Thus, the Godhead consists of three members—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Remember that they are three distinct Persons yet one in perfect harmony of purpose. Though it may be difficult to understand the personality of the Holy Spirit, we may accept by faith all that the Scriptures teach us regarding His marvelous work. Think of Him as you might the wind. Though we cannot see the wind, we see unmistakable evidence of its work. Similarly, the power of the Holy Spirit is clearly visible in the life of a born-again Christian. **Galatians 5:22, 23.** There will be a marked change in him. Old habits, old goals, old desires will all be laid aside, and a new, Spirit-filled life will radiate to all a warmth and glow that will make one a "living, lovable Christian." This is a supernatural work accomplished as a gift from Heaven—if we want it. The Bible speaks about other supernatural beings besides God, and they are presented in Lesson 3.



The power of the Holy Spirit is clearly visible in the life of a born-again Christian.

3—Supernatural Influences



Lesson 2 made reference to sin and Jesus' work to restore man to his original relationship with God. We learned that Jesus died on the cross to make it possible for men to be forgiven their sins and to inherit eternal life. Now we shall discover the origin of sin, which is the transgression of God's law. **1 John 3:4.**

Sin's originator

The cause of the existence of sin is not found in God! There is no valid reason for sin to exist. It is a mysterious intruder.

At one time or another, virtually everyone asks, "How is it possible that a loving, all-wise, powerful God could permit sin to enter this world and cause sickness, suffering, and death?" "Why does He allow this world to go on in this wretched condition?"

One thing is crystal clear: The cause of the existence of sin is not found in God! There is no valid reason for sin to exist. It is a mysterious intruder; to defend it is to excuse it and divest it of all sinfulness. See **Genesis 1:31; 1 John 4:8; Romans 11:33; Psalm 62:11.**

It may come as a surprise to many that sin originated in heaven—with Satan, who was once called Lucifer. **1 John 3:8.** Lucifer (the name means Lightbearer) was the only being, other than Christ, who was so highly honored by God and the angels. He was created perfect, being called the "son of the morning" (**Isaiah 14:12**) and the

covering cherub—one of God's throne watchers. **Ezekiel 28:14.**

Under the symbol of the King of Tyrus, the Bible reveals Lucifer's original state. He was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. **Ezekiel 28:12-15.** God created a perfect world and a perfect Lucifer. Yet, for unexplainable reasons, this highest created being became proud of his abilities and beauty and was overpowered by the passion of self-exaltation. He purposed in his heart to elevate himself above God. Notice in **Isaiah 14:13, 14** that the word "I" occurs five times. Unreasonable self-exaltation, ingratitude, pride, lack of love, and dissatisfaction in the heart of Lucifer were the source of his sin.

Satan was cast out of heaven

God did not prevent Lucifer's revealing what was in his heart, nor did He immediately destroy Lucifer when his rebellion became obvious. If God had done this, all the other angels and created beings would undoubtedly have remained loyal to Him because of fear. But God wants loving and intelligent, not fearful, service from all His created family. "Perfect love casteth out fear." **1 John 4:18.**

When Satan's rebellion became evident, all of the angels had to make their choice for or against God. Unfortunately, many chose to join the rebellion; thus there was war in heaven. Christ and His loyal angels fought against Satan and his rebellious angels. Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven. **Revelation 12:7-9, 4.**

Revelation 12:12 says, "... Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Satan's names and attributes

The Bible presents Satan as a personal being, which is evident from the many names given him:

- Abaddon and Apollyon—**Revelation 9:11**
- Accuser of our brethren—**Revelation 12:10**
- Roaring lion—**1 Peter 5:8**
- Beelzebub—**Matthew 12:24**
- Father of lies, murderer—**John 8:44**
- Prince of this world—**John 14:30**
- God of this world—**2 Corinthians 4:4**

His attributes also reveal him as a personal being:

- Presumptuous—**Job 1:6; Matthew 4:5, 6**
- Proud—**1 Timothy 3:6**
- Powerful—**Ephesians 2:2**

- Wicked—**1 John 2:13**
- Cunning—**Genesis 3:1, 4, 5**
- Deceptive—**2 Corinthians 11:14**

Satan works by four methods

Satan is the inventor of all forms of idolatry, through which he darkens men's thoughts and draws them away from the worship of the true God. His principal work is to deceive man and turn him against God's commandments, because he knows very well that obedience to God's commandments is the source of man's happiness and eternal life.

Here are Satan's methods of working to destroy man:

Deception

Genesis 3:1; 1 Timothy 2:14—He disguised himself and spoke through the serpent to deceive Eve.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15—He transforms himself into an angel of light; and, his deceitful ministers into apostles of Christ.

Ephesians 6:12—He works through religious and governmental powers.

Revelation 16:14—He deceives by miracles.

Accusation

Genesis 3:1—He accused God to Eve.

Job 1:8-11; 2:4, 5—He accused Job to God.

Revelation 12:10—He is the accuser of the brethren.

Affliction

Job 2:7—He smote Job with terrible boils.

Luke 13:16—He bound a woman in sickness for 18 years.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9—He buffeted Paul's flesh.

Persecution

Revelation 12:17—He hates Christ and persecutes His true church—God's commandment keepers.

1 Peter 5:8—Like a roaring lion, he seeks to destroy every true Christian.

Satan can be overcome

From Adam's time to today the great enemy, the devil, or Satan, has used his power to tempt man to sin—to break God's commandments—and to

destroy God's creation. All who look to Jesus and seek to follow Him will encounter this merciless foe. But Christ has promised the victory to those who accept His sacrifice and call on Him for help. He came to this world to destroy the works of the devil. **1 John 3:8**. "The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us." —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 125.

The grace of Christ in the heart of the believer creates enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would stay Satan's captive. Satan promises freedom, but in reality he makes man a slave. **Romans 6:16**. Jesus says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me;" and He makes man truly free. **Matthew 11:29, 30; James 1:25**.

To overcome Satan, we must put on the whole armor of God. Study **Ephesians 6:10-18** carefully, and you will find out what this armor consists of. We can overcome the devil by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. **Revelation 12:11**. We can resist Satan through God's help and by relying on the Bible's truth. **James 4:7; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, 11**. Evil can be overcome by good. **Romans 12:21**. God promises that Satan will be completely overthrown and destroyed: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,..." **Revelation 20:10**.

"There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings." —Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 136.

Angels—evil and good

We have already seen that a large number of angels sided with Lucifer in his rebellion against God. These fallen angels, now called evil angels, or evil spirits, assist Satan in his work of deception, persecution, and destruction. Particularly through spiritualism they communicate with humans, pretending to be dead loved ones or friends, and thus carry on Satan's relentless work of deception in his age-long controversy with Christ. In **Deuteronomy 18:9-12**, God strongly denounces spiritualism, for He knows its end.

However, we can be so thankful that there are good angels, who are loyal to God and a blessing to man. They are called "ministering spirits," who assist and protect man and have an active role in the plan of salvation. Actually, what are angels? **Psalms 8:4, 5**

"There is a mighty power in prayer."

tells us that angels are created beings made higher than man. **Genesis 32:1, 2** and **1 Kings 22:19** call the angels God's host, or army. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" **Hebrews 1:14**.

Physical characteristics

Genesis 3:24 shows that angels (here called *cherubims*) are actual beings. They guarded the entrance of the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were sent out of it. **Genesis 18** tells the story of three travelers who talked and ate with Abraham on their way to Sodom and Gomorrah. In **Chapter 19**, it is revealed that two of these were angels. Veiling their glory, they appeared to Lot in Sodom and ate and drank with him. **Genesis 19:10, 11** shows the amazing power of the angels, for they reached out and smote the troublemakers at Lot's door with blindness. See also **Hebrews 2:13**.

Angels are extremely strong. They "excel in strength,..." **Psalms 103:20**. They are *invisible* to the naked eye, and yet God sometimes opens the eyes of men so they can see angels. See **2 Kings 6:14-17**. Even the eyes of dumb animals are opened at times to see these holy beings. **Numbers 22:22-33**. The *speed* of angels is beyond comprehension; in one Biblical example, Daniel began praying; and before his prayer was finished, the answer was brought by the angel Gabriel from heaven. **Daniel 9:21**. At times angels are described as *glorious* and *beautiful* heavenly beings. The angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulcher at the resurrection of Christ was described like this: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." **Matthew 28:3**. **Isaiah 6:2** and **Ezekiel 1:6, 9** reveal that angels have wings. They are *happy* beings! Read about their joyful part in the birth of Christ. **Luke 2:8-15**. They rejoice when sinners turn to God. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." **Luke 15:10**.

Angels' work

Each child of God has a guardian angel. **Matthew 18:10**. Angels cooperate with the Father and the Son in the plan of salvation. **1 Timothy 5:21**. Jacob, in his dream at Bethel, saw angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth on a ladder, ever ready to do the will of God in helping mankind. **Genesis 28:12-15**. Countless Bible stories tell about the protecting care and assistance angels have rendered to men. For example, **Psalms 34:7** says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." As proof of this, read about

Daniel's miraculous preservation in the lions' den. Daniel's own testimony was: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:..." **Daniel 6:22**.

Another part of the heavenly angels' work was to strengthen Christ during His life on earth. He was strengthened by angels after His temptation in the wilderness. **Matthew 4:11**. Again, strengthening power for prayer was given to Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as He submitted to the will of God for His death on the cross. **Luke 22:39-44**. Sometimes angels have been sent by God to destroy wicked people who have passed the limits of mercy. Read the amazing stories in **2 Kings 19:35** and **Acts 12:21-23**.

There are various orders of angels—seraphims, cherubims, angel of prophecy, angels who restrain war on earth, and angels directing the last warning messages to man on earth. See **Isaiah 6:2, 6**; **Exodus 25:16-18**; **Daniel 10:21**; **Revelation 1:1; 7:1; 14:6-12**.

Numbers of angels

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." **Hebrews 12:22**. This text shows that there are vast numbers of holy angels in heaven. **Daniel 7:10** and **Revelation 5:11** reveal the same thought—"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels.

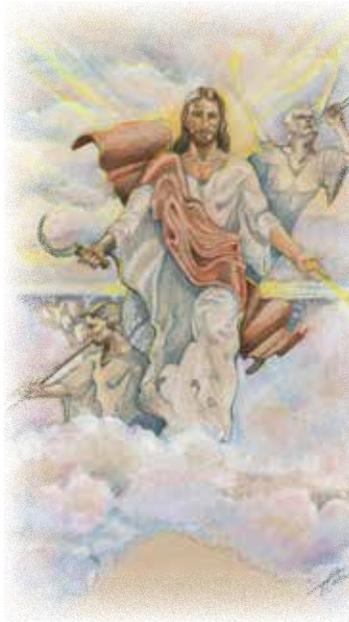
The Scriptures reveal that at Christ's second coming all of these holy angels will come with Him. **Matthew 16:27; 24:31**. Then we will be able to see them, for sin will be gone and will no longer block our vision.

The angels are perfectly organized and will appear like armies when they accompany Christ on His return. "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." **Revelation 19:14**.

To everyone who overcomes sin through the grace of Christ will be granted for all eternity the privilege of seeing and conversing with the angels who have ministered to us so kindly during our earthly pilgrimage.

O, may Thine angels, while I sleep,
Around my bed their vigils keep;
Their love angelical instill,
Stop every avenue of ill.
May they celestial joys rehearse
And thought to thought with me converse.

—Bishop Kent



Each child of God
has a guardian angel.

4—Origins

We have so far established from Scripture that Jesus Christ, in cooperation with His Father and the Holy Spirit, created all things. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” **Genesis 1:1**. See also **Colossians 1:12-17**. With these simple words the Bible explains the origin of the universe and the material world. In fact, the holy pages contain the only authentic record of creation. Here is found the true history of the origin of the human race, a record unmarred by human bias or prejudice.

Creation

“There is a constant effort made to explain the work of creation as the result of natural causes; and human reasoning is accepted even by professed Christians, in opposition to plain Scripture facts....

“Just how God accomplished the work of creation He has never revealed to men; human science cannot search out the secrets of the Most High. His creative power is as incomprehensible as His existence.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 113.

The idea that God needed matter to create the world has no basis in the Scriptures. God was not dependent upon the preexistence of matter at the time He created the world. All things, material and spiritual, came into being by “the spirit of His mouth.”

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth....” **Psalm 33:6-9**.

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things,...” **Isaiah 40:26-28**.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,...” **Hebrews 11:3**.

Creation vs. Evolution

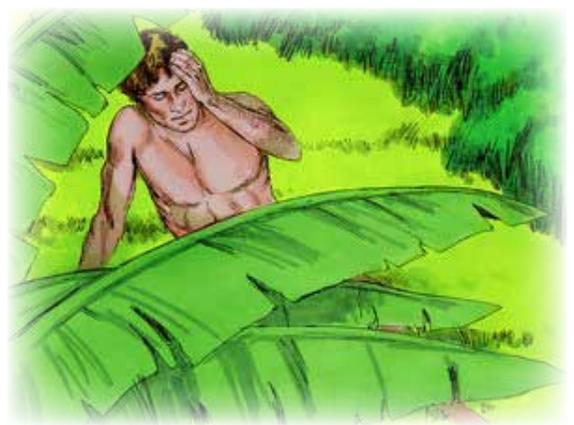
The popular theory of evolution teaches that man developed from lower forms of life, such as mollusks and four-footed creatures, or even that he is the product of development of certain germs or cells. In this way, the evolution of the human race is said to cover a period of millions of years. Yet the Scriptures teach plainly that the earth was created in six literal 24-hour days, each consisting of a dark and a light period as we know them today. Read the Genesis account of creation

(**Genesis 1 and 2**), and you will see the simplicity and clearness of this miraculous event. Everything we need to know is told us; all we do not need to know God knows, and that knowledge belongs to Him and is His prerogative to reveal or keep secret, according to His own infinite wisdom. Science reveals the amazing order and complexity of all life forms and is at a loss to satisfactorily explain how they came into being except by the hand of an all-wise Creator. Notice even in **Exodus 20:8-11**, in the fourth commandment, how precisely God spells out that “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day:...” And the last book of the Bible calls on men to “worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” **Revelation 14:7**.

The theory of evolution is opposed by the Bible when it states that man was created in God’s image. God made no mystery of this fact. There is no evidence for anyone to suppose that man or any other kind of life was evolved by slow degrees of development from lower forms of vegetable or animal life. Man loses his rich heritage and lowers his conception of himself to the level of his own narrow earthly thoughts by accepting such erroneous teachings as evolution. There is overwhelming evidence of the Creator’s master mind all around us—beauty in nature, love, the human mind, the miracle of birth, the environment, and far more. Read the following verses carefully: **Genesis 1:26, 27; Psalm 139:14; Ephesians 2:10**.

Man’s happiness—dependent on obedience to all of God’s laws

To Adam, created in the image of God, pure in body and mind, perfect and sinless, was given a life companion—Eve. The first pair was placed in a lovely garden and given dominion, or rulership, over the whole earth. What more could man desire than that his perfect world would continue forever? Man’s happiness and welfare were dependent on obedience to all the laws of God—moral and physical. These laws were made to regulate and



There is overwhelming evidence of the Creator’s master mind all around us—beauty in nature, love, the human mind, the miracle of birth, the environment, and far more.



control all that God had created and were for the benefit of all the creation. An all-wise God knew that disaster would result if the universe were lawless. In love and mercy, He made natural and moral laws that were just, reasonable, and good.

In **Genesis 1:1-29** are ten fundamental physical laws created by God, including the law of light and the law of the atmosphere. In addition to these laws, man, as the crown of creation, was given five special laws to insure his happiness.

- The law of a healthful diet. **Genesis 1:29.**
- The law of useful labor. **Genesis 2:5, 15.**
- The law of rest. **Genesis 2:1-3.**
- The law of God's authority. **Genesis 2:17.**
- The law of marriage. **Genesis 2:18, 24.**

Looking at these five natural laws a little more closely, we can readily understand how God was interested in every aspect of man's being. In the plant life He provided nourishing food for both man's and the creatures' physical health. Much disease today is a result of violating this law.

"To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, 'to dress it and to keep it.' Their occupation was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50.

A day of rest was given to man. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." **Genesis 2:1-3.**

Man was to labor six days; and on the seventh day, he was to follow God's own example in resting. The Sabbath was not merely for physical rest, for neither God's nor man's work was tiring to them. Rather, the rest day was to be a special, holy time for worship and spiritual refreshing. God gave the Sabbath to man in Paradise as time to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, to contemplate the works of God more fully, and to meditate upon His power and goodness.

The prohibition against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the opportunity given to man to show his love for and loyalty to his Creator. God's authority is the first and last issue of the great controversy between light and darkness, good and evil. Love cannot be forced. God's kingdom can be established only on the freewill love and respect of His creatures.

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,..." **Genesis 1:27, 28.** "Marriage is honourable..." **Hebrews 13:4.** Notice that God Himself instituted marriage—one man and one woman, the cornerstone of the family and human society.

"... It [marriage] was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

God is love

Thus we see from God's word that the origin of all things is God Himself. We need never be fooled or confused by the theories of man. The Bible has all the knowledge on these vital issues of life that we need to know. We may understand from the pages of sacred writings that God is, indeed, a God of love. He made man perfect and provided everything for his needs and happiness that he could ever desire. It was the Creator's purpose that he should continue in this Paradise on earth forever. It was not God's plan that man should become familiar with evil, and we will learn in the next lesson more of the depth of God's love—how He provided a plan whereby man could be redeemed should he fall into sin.

The Extravagance of God

Have you ever thought about the extravagance of God?

More sky than man can see
 More sea than he can sail
 More sun than he can bear to watch
 More stars than he can scale
 More breath than he can breathe
 More yield than he can sow
 More grace than he can comprehend
 More love than he can know

—Anonymous

God gave the Sabbath to man in Paradise as time to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven.

5—God’s Plan

Adam and Eve, the first human pair, were the crown of God’s creation; their physical condition was perfect, and they were pure of heart. All things were under their dominion. Furthermore, they had the special privilege of communing with God face to face and had the companionship of holy angels.

Man was given everything he needed for happiness

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” **Genesis 2:8, 9.**

“Everything that God had made was the perfection of beauty, and nothing seemed wanting that could contribute to the happiness of the holy pair; yet the Creator gave them still another token of His love, by preparing a garden especially for their home. In this garden were trees of every variety, many of them laden with fragrant and delicious fruit.... There were fragrant flowers of every hue in rich profusion. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, surpassing in glory all other trees. Its fruit appeared like apples of gold and silver, and had the power to perpetuate life.” —Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 46, 47. Physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually, man had everything.

A test

Created in God’s image and the crowning work of creation, man was given the capacity of choice. God could have created man without this choice, but then he would have been a mere automaton, no higher than the animals and as such incapable of communicating with God. “... While everything in nature is governed by natural laws, man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man,... God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 52.

What was the test that would reveal man’s choice? “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:



But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [*dying thou shalt die*, margin].” **Genesis 2:16, 17.** This test would show whether man would obey the first great commandment. Compare **Deuteronomy 6:5; 5:6, 7;** and **Matthew 22:37, 38.** All intelligent beings in the universe are likewise tested. We learned in Lesson 3 that Lucifer and a good number of angels chose not to obey their loving Creator; they preferred to love themselves more than God.

Temptation and fall

Only in perfect obedience to God could man be safe from the temptations of the rebel against God, who was now seeking a base for his rule. There was no reason for the first pair to yield to Satan, nor any excuse for sin, for they had been clearly warned to avoid the forbidden tree. Had not God Himself given them every good thing? Did they have any reason to be disloyal to Him?

The Bible records the tragic story of how man yielded to temptation and became a slave to Satan and his cruel works.

Satan chose a serpent as a medium to conceal his deceptive work. **Genesis 3:1-3.** The serpent was well suited to his purpose, as it was the wisest, most beautiful creature on earth, with wings and a glittering appearance; the beholder was entranced by its beauty.

Eve’s first mistake was leaving her husband’s side and approaching the forbidden tree. This allowed Satan to speak to her and ask a question intend-

There was no reason for the first pair to yield to Satan, nor any excuse for sin, for they had been clearly warned to avoid the forbidden tree.

ed to create doubt in her mind concerning the express command of God never to touch or eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He twisted the meaning of God's command by asking, in other words, "Really? Did God actually say you could never eat from this lovely tree?" Eve's answer showed that she understood God's command perfectly.

Now Satan pronounced his first lie to man. "Ye shall not surely die." **Genesis 3:4, 5**. In actuality he declared, "God is a liar and doesn't mean what He says!" Satan promised man natural immortality if he would transgress God's command. Here he laid the foundation for later heathenism and spiritualism, which we shall discuss in a later lesson.

The immediate result of Eve's disobeying God was that her eyes were opened, which was an acknowledgment of sin. **Genesis 3:6, 7**. She was deceived and fell into sin. But when she took some of the forbidden fruit to Adam and urged him to eat it, he sinned with open eyes from love for and loyalty to his life companion. See **1 Timothy 2:14**. Both proved unfaithful to their loving Creator. The cause of their fall was covetousness—wanting something they did not have. **1 John 2:16**. In actuality, by failing this small test, they broke a number of God's commandments. See **Exodus 20:1-3, 15, 17**.

Results of the fall

- The radiance of heavenly purity, with which the heretofore sinless pair had been clothed, departed from them. **Genesis 3:7**.

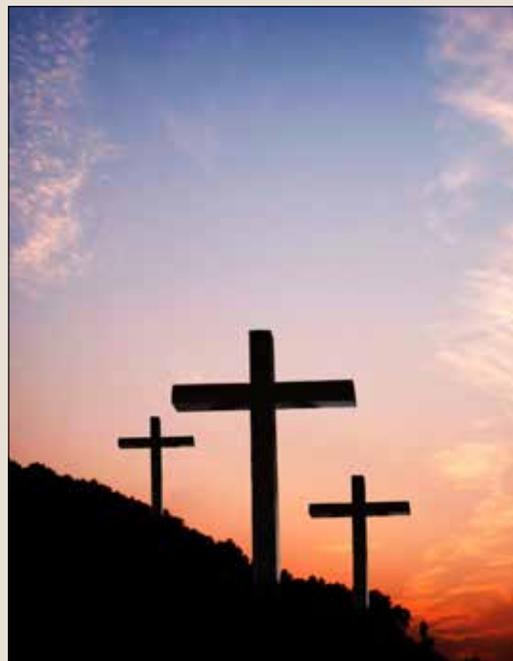
- Happiness turned to fear and a guilty conscience. **Genesis 3:10**.
- The first curse fell upon the serpent. **Genesis 3:13, 14**.
- Next, punishment fell on the woman. **Genesis 3:16**.
- The greatest punishment was for Adam. For his sake the earth was cursed. **Genesis 3:17-19**.

Man was not left without hope

God had created man holy and happy; the earth, as it came forth from the Creator's hand, bore no shadow of corruption, pollution, or any imperfection. Because of the transgression, or breaking, of God's law of love, death and misery entered the world. Satan was delighted to have triumphed over man. He hoped this would lead to triumph over God Himself.

In the midst of the suffering that sin brought, however, God revealed a wonderful plan for man's redemption. He told Adam, and thus all mankind, that He was willing to give His only Son, Jesus, to die in man's place. This would restore man once more to fellowship with God. Jesus' death would provide forgiveness for man's sin and grant him the privilege of eternal life. Satan's eventual overthrow and destruction would be made sure, and man could rejoice in the hope of the restoration of God's image in him. **Genesis 3:15**. The promise of salvation bridged the abyss of sin and filled man's heart with hope and joy. Through faith in Jesus, man could be saved! Oh, wondrous love of God!

The cause of their fall was covetousness—wanting something they did not have.



Did you ever think what this world would be
If Christ hadn't come to save it?
His hands and feet were nailed to the tree,
And His precious life—He gave it.
But countless hearts would break with grief,
At the hopeless life they were given,
If God had not sent the world relief,
If Jesus had stayed in heaven.

Did you ever think what this world would be,
If Christ had stayed in heaven,
No home in bliss, no soul set free,
No life, or sins forgiven?
But He came with a heart of tenderest love,
And now from on high He sees us,
And mercy comes from the throne on high.
Thank God for the gift of Jesus!

—Author unknown

6–Two Ways

When Adam and Eve sinned, they became subject to death. Their previous immortality was conditional on their obedience to God, who gave them access to the tree of life. The Lord had told them that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. To Adam and Eve, who had never witnessed death in any area of life, it must have been heart-rending to see the leaves begin to die and fall from the trees, and the lovely roses fade and fall dead to the ground. Later, when their firstborn son Cain killed his brother Abel, they were brought face to face with the stark reality of the sorrow death brings to the human race.

Death is a mystery

Death has always been a mystery to mankind. From the earliest times, people have wondered, What comes after death? Efforts made to lift the veil that surrounds death have resulted in varying opinions, from the most primitive representations of heathenism to the theories of theologians and the modern doctrines of spiritualism.

In all of man's speculations regarding death, the idea of the natural immortality of the soul (or the belief in a conscious existence immediately after death) plays an important role. In reality, however, the only true source of information about what takes place when a man dies is in the Bible.

What does the Bible teach about death?

- Man is *mortal*, or subject to death. "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" **Job 4:17**.
- Actually, contrary to common belief, only God is *immortal*—not subject to death. He lives forever. "Now unto the King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever." **1 Timothy 1:17**. "The King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who *only* hath immortality." **1 Timothy 6:15, 16**.
- Man seeks for immortality, or eternal life, because he is mortal. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." **Romans 2:7**.
- At creation, DUST + BREATH OF LIFE = A LIVING SOUL. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." **Genesis 2:7**.



- At death, THE LIVING SOUL – BREATH OF LIFE = DUST. "... Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return...." **Genesis 3:19**. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit [breath of life] shall return unto God who gave it." **Ecclesiastes 12:7**.
- Man is *not conscious* in death. His thoughts perish. **Psalm 146:4**. The dead know nothing; their love, hatred, and envy perish. **Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6**. The dead do not praise the Lord. **Psalm 115:17**.
- Death, then, is like a sleep. David spoke of the sleep of death. **Psalm 13:3**. Solomon slept with his fathers. **1 Kings 11:43**. Many bodies of the saints which slept arose at Christ's death. **Matthew 27:52**. Jesus Himself spoke of death as a sleep when He referred to the death of Lazarus. **John 11:11-14**. "But man dieth, and wasteth away:..." "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." **Job 14:10, 12**. David is not ascended into the heavens. **Acts 2:29, 34**.
- All men go to the grave. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" **Psalm 89:48**.

A warning against spiritualism

From the earliest times, God has denounced communication with familiar spirits, supposed to be the "dead." Read **Deuteronomy 18:9-12**, and you will find a severe warning against black magic, calling on evil spirits or fortune tellers, being

From the earliest times, God has denounced communication with familiar spirits.

a serpent charmer, medium or wizard, or calling for the “spirits of the dead.” The dead are asleep in their graves, so any attempt to communicate with them is futile. Satan and his evil spirits, however, are glad to impersonate the dead. This is spiritualism, which in all its myriad forms seeks to draw people away from the clear truths of the Bible and to make them believe the first lie that the devil told Eve in the garden of Eden: “Ye shall not surely die.” **Genesis 3:4**. He has been telling this same falsehood ever since, under a cloak of religion, education, amusement, or any guise that will deceive people.

The Bible foretold just such things. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” **2 Corinthians 11:14, 15**. See also **1 Timothy 4:1**; **Revelation 16:14**. We are admonished to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” **1 John 4:1**. It is impossible to play with fire without being burned, and therefore people are strongly warned against experimenting with any and all forms of spiritualism and the occult.

The resurrection—man’s only hope

The sorrow and mystery surrounding death need not make anyone afraid or unsure of the future. The Scriptures make this fact very plain: Those

who love and serve the Lord in this life, but who die before His coming, will receive eternal life in the resurrection at Christ’s second coming! Precious promise! Wonderful hope! “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Romans 6:23**. When Jesus was here on earth, He left this comforting promise: “Let not your heart be troubled:... I go to prepare a place for you.... I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **John 14:1-3**.

Read **1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16** for the description of this wonderful resurrection. The dead in Christ will rise first. They are raised incorruptible and then given immortality. **1 Corinthians 15:51-54**. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” **John 5:28, 29**. (The resurrection of the wicked will be discussed in a later lesson.)

When Jesus comes, He brings His reward with Him for everyone. **Revelation 22:12**. Thus, our only hope regarding death lies in the resurrection, for only then is eternal life bestowed. Job realized this fact when he said: “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.” “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” **Job 14:14; 19:25, 26**.

People are strongly warned against experimenting with any and all forms of spiritualism and the occult.

Out of the Ark



They dreamed not of danger, those sinners of old,
Whom Noah was chosen to warn:
By frequent transgression their hearts had grown cold;
They laughed his entreaties to scorn:
Yet daily he called them, “O come, sinners, come,
Believe, and prepare to embark!
Receive the glad message, and know there is room
For all who will come to the Ark.”

O sinners, the heralds of mercy implore;
They cry like the patriarch, “Come.”
The Ark of salvation is moored to your shore;
O enter while yet there is room!
The storm cloud of justice rolls dark overhead,
And when by its fury you’re tossed,
Alas, of your perishing souls ’twill be said,
“They heard—they refused and were lost.”

And now, while this message—“Christ’s coming is near!”—
God’s servants by thousands proclaim,
Say not like those sinners of old, with a sneer,
“All things shall continue the same.”
The prophets have spoken; their words are unsealed;
The judgment will shortly be o’er;
The arm of God’s justice will soon be revealed,
And mercy invite you no more.

—Kate Harrington

7—History’s Climax

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I got to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:1-3.

Here is a solemn, precious promise made by Jesus Himself! The believers in all ages have cherished this hope of the future return of Jesus.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.” Jude 14.

Job believed in the Redeemer’s return and the resurrection of his body. Job 19:25-27.

Paul called Christ’s coming our hope, joy and crown of rejoicing. 1 Thessalonians 2:19.

Jesus’ second coming is also called the blessed hope and the glorious appearing. Titus 2:13.



How will He come?

1. **Visibly**—in the clouds, just as He ascended to heaven after His resurrection. See Acts 1:9-11. “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him...” Revelation 1:7. See also Matthew 24:27; Mark 13:26.
2. **Audibly**. “And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet...” Matthew 24:31. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...” 1 Thessalonians 4:16. (The Archangel is Christ, also called Michael in the Scriptures. See Jude 9; Daniel 12:1.)
3. **In glory and power**. “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.” Matthew 25:31; Luke 9:26. The power of just one angel was demonstrated in the incident in Matthew 28:2-4. The wicked will cry for the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from such great power and glory. Revelation 6:15-17. They will be destroyed by the brightness of His glorious coming. 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

4. **As a thief in the night to the wicked**, who are unprepared. 2 Peter 3:10. “... In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:42-44. However, the righteous, who are prepared to meet their Saviour because they have accepted Him as their Redeemer during their life on earth, will not be taken unawares. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5.

When will Jesus come?

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, nor the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” Matthew 24:36, 42. “The proper attitude of a Christian is to be always looking for his Lord’s return.” —Dwight L. Moody.

For what purpose will He come?

1. **To raise the righteous dead to eternal life.** 1 Thessalonians 4:16. At the trumpet call, the dead are resurrected to immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:52, 53.
2. **To catch up the living righteous** to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
3. **To take all the redeemed—the righteous ones—to heaven**, to the heavenly mansions Christ has prepared for them. John 14:2, 3.



The very first step
is to come to Jesus
now.

4. *To change the vile, or mortal, bodies of the living righteous* and make them like Christ's glorious body. **Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.**
5. *To destroy the wicked*; see points 3 and 4 in "How will He come?" above. **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:8.**

Prepare to meet thy God

The Scriptures have clearly revealed Christ's promises that He will come again. God has taken great pains in the Scriptures to explain that Christ will come in person, visibly, and audibly in glory. The purpose of His coming is to raise the righteous dead, destroy the wicked, and take all the righteous to heaven. Now the important question is, How can we be ready to meet Him? The very first step is to come to Jesus now. **John 6:37; Hebrews 3:15.** The next step is to seek, through the grace of Christ, to be like Him. **1 John 3:2, 3.** Then we will earnestly look for the Lord's coming (**2 Timothy 4:7, 8**) and tell others what Christ has done for us personally. **Revelation 12:11.**

If we love Jesus with all our hearts, we will be able to do these things and to say with joy at His return, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." **Isaiah 25:8, 9.** In later lessons, we will study more deeply into the personal preparation needed for Christ's coming.

Signs of Christ's coming

How will anyone know the time when Christ is about to come? Does the Bible tell us? When any great event is about to take place, there are always signs that precede it, and this greatest of all events is no exception. **Matthew 24:32, 33.** Every year at the beginning of spring, the earth gives clear evidence of a renewal, of a new burst of life everywhere. Anyone who has seen spring arrive can recognize many of these signs. So, most surely, the coming of Christ is preceded by definite signs. Let us see what they are.

When Christ was on earth, His disciples proudly showed Him around the temple site, but they were shocked to hear Him say, "... Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." **Matthew 24:1, 2.** Naturally, they asked Him in return, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" **Matthew 24:3.** The disciples thought the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world would take place at the same time. In

the whole chapter of Matthew 24, Jesus outlined the conditions that would prevail before both of these events; but we will examine only the signs related to Jesus' coming and the end of the world.

Politics

Jesus explained what signs in the political world should alert the believers, as well as non-believers, to the imminence of His second coming at the end of the world.

1. *Fear, perplexity, and distress of nations.* **Luke 21:25-28.**
2. *Wars and rumors of wars.* **Matthew 24:6, 7; Joel 3:9-14; Revelation 11:18.** The devil is the force behind all this strife, for he delights in war. He was a "murderer from the beginning." **John 8:44.**
3. At the same time wars are going on, there will be *efforts toward peace.* "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." **1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Jeremiah 6:14.**

Society

1. *Increase in knowledge*—of Biblical prophecy and of science. **Daniel 12:4.** The past 200 years stand apart from all previous history in terms of inventions, scientific achievement, and general learning. The use of electricity, motors, mass communication, and much more came into being only in the last century. Today we have tiny electronic devices that can travel in arteries, as well as huge rockets and lunar and planetary exploration equipment, which have propelled man's works into the surrounding universe. Alongside this, the understanding of God's prophetic word has been opened. The books of Daniel and The Revelation are now readily understandable to the diligent searcher. And the Bible itself is available worldwide for the spread of God's truth concerning the last events of this world.
2. *Rapid travel and communication.* In addition, men are running "to and fro" across the earth at unprecedented speeds and in a large variety of ways. Because of this, the distances between continents have "shrunk," and modern statesmen and businessmen can transact business in foreign capitals across the seas and then be back in their own offices by the next day. Through rapid communication, such as satellite transmission and the Internet, messages can be flashed across and around the world in seconds.



3. **Moral decay.** **Matthew 24:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-5.** One only needs to walk down the streets of any major city today to see evidence of the very conditions which existed prior to the flood in Noah's day. See **Matthew 24:37-39.** Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire for their immorality and godless pleasure seeking. See **Genesis 18:20; 19:1-7, 13, 28, 29.** The standards of human decency, the sacredness of the marriage relation and the home, modest dress, and upright behavior are all scoffed at and considered foolish today. Homosexuality, common-law marriage, abortion, and other debasing habits and practices are commonplace.
4. **Conflict between capital and labor.** **James 5:1-8.** The age-long conflict between employer and employee has reached gigantic proportions. Strikes cripple whole nations, and in some places they even affect such vital services as health care, education, and transportation.

Nature

1. **Earthquakes, famines, and pestilences.** **Revelation 6:12.** The Lisbon earthquake, centering in Portugal in 1755, extended over approximately 1,500,000 square miles and was the worst earthquake ever recorded. Each year brings an increase in earthquake frequency, extent, and intensity. **Matthew 24:7.** "On average, magnitude 2 and smaller earthquakes occur several hundred times a day worldwide. Major earthquakes, greater than magnitude 7, happen more than once per month. 'Great earthquakes,' magnitude 8 and higher, occur about once a year." — Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS).

Along with earthquakes, there are famines and pestilences. War, revolution, and drought are causes of famine and its suffering, even in developed countries which normally would not be subject to this scourge. Today the world is struggling for food supplies. Due to population growth, the impact of huge agricultural systems, and changing climate, food reserves are low, and severe problems may result.

2. **Dark Day and the Falling of the Stars.** On May 19, 1780, as foretold in **Matthew 24:29; Joel 3:15; and Revelation 6:12,** the sun was darkened at about noon in the heavily populated areas of New England. When night came, it was so dark that one could not see his hand in front of his face. The moon rose but had the color of dark red, giving no light. Many thought the world was coming to an end.

Then, on November 13, 1833, the greatest meteoric shower on record occurred. It lasted for 4 to 6 hours over most of North America.

This, too, had been prophesied—in **Matthew 24:29** and **Revelation 6:13.** Thus, spectacular signs of Christ's second coming have already occurred, and others are still going on in the natural world.

Religion

1. Christ warned His disciples strongly against **false christs and teachers.** See **Matthew 24:4, 5; 2 Peter 3:3, 4.**
2. **Spiritualism and interest in the occult** have skyrocketed in recent years. Libraries and book stores are flooded with books on subjects such as witchcraft, black magic, satanism, astrology, and the like, for the demand for them is great. As of 2018, 500 million copies in 69 languages had been sold of the seven *Harry Potter* books (approximately 71 million copies each). Although the Bible is readily available, few people go to it for answers; as a result, fables and outright falsehoods concerning death and the afterlife foster widespread spiritualistic practices.
3. **Moral decay,** as mentioned earlier, is becoming worse and worse. Men love pleasure more than God. **2 Timothy 3:1-5.**
4. There is a **lack of the simple, childlike faith** required for salvation. "... When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" **Luke 18:8.**
5. "And because **iniquity shall abound,** the love of many shall wax cold." **Matthew 24:12.**
6. "And this **gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness** unto all nations; and then shall the end come." **Matthew 24:14.**

Fables and outright falsehoods concerning death and the afterlife foster widespread spiritualistic practices.



8—Eternity—Where?



The second coming of Christ to this earth and the signs preceding this glorious event are the central theme of the Bible and have been the hope of all mankind throughout all the ages of earth's history. The events that will take place after Christ's coming are just as thrilling and even more wonderful in that they will unfold day after day, year after year, through eternity! Imagine! Time without end! It is difficult for man to comprehend such a thing, but God's word is full of wonderful promises, and what He promises is sure!

The millennium

In Lesson 7, we learned that the living righteous will be taken to heaven along with the resurrected righteous at Christ's second coming. At this moment the 1,000-year period (millennium) will begin. Some people think the millennium will be a time of peace and prosperity here on earth. But remember that Satan is "walking about as a roaring lion" (**1 Peter 5:8**) in these last days, and his studied purpose is to mislead and ensnare. Therefore, it is important for us to be sure we are not deceived.

The Scriptures are clear concerning the millennium. During the 1,000 years, only the devil will be upon this earth, which is represented as a bottomless pit, for the wicked will all be dead and the righteous will be in heaven. Read **Revelation 20** carefully, and you will discover the sequence of events in the millennium.

The greatest earthquake ever will strike at Christ's coming. **Revelation 16:17-20**. Every mountain and island will be moved out of its place. **Revelation 6:14-17**. Hail weighing a talent (about 58 pounds) will fall, as the last of the seven plagues, God's judgments on an unrepentant world. See **Revelation 16:21**.

Conditions during the 1,000 years

Due to the devastation left by the seven last plagues, particularly the great earthquake and the fire that destroy the wicked at Christ's coming, this earth will be in a state of utter chaos, ruin, and darkness. **Jeremiah 4:23-27** describes the terrible scene—an empty, desolate earth, a giant ghost world!

Revelation 20:1-3 pictures Satan and his evil angels' condition during this time: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Satan will be "bound" in the sense that he will be confined to the desolate earth and there will be no living person for him to deceive. For 1,000 years he can meditate on his long career of rebellion and its tragic results. He will also have time to plan his

final assault on the city of God, about which we will learn later.

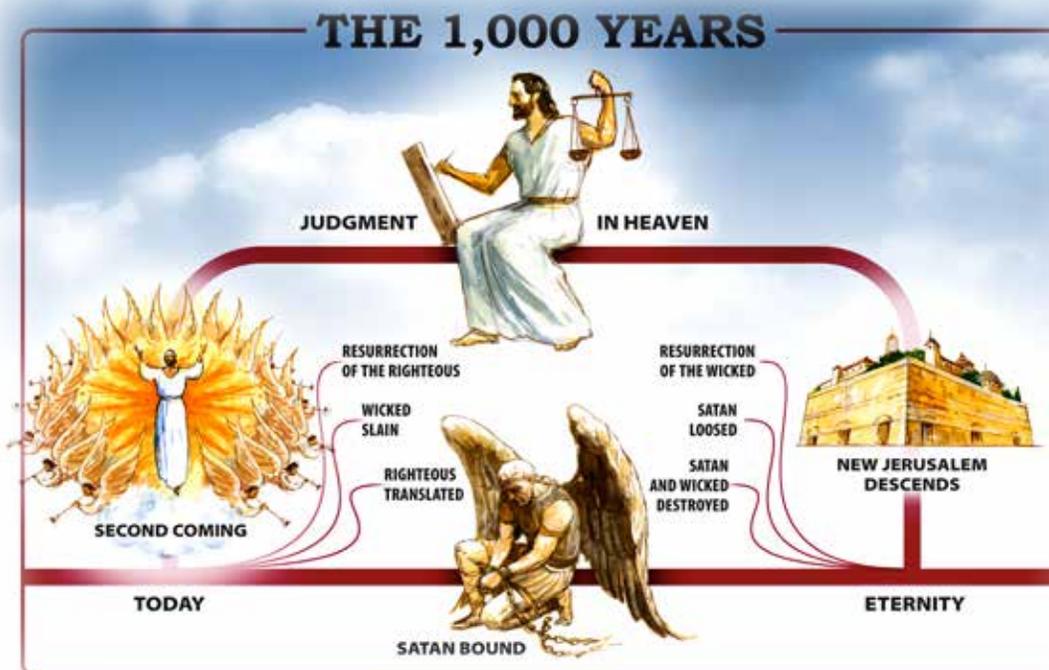
During the same period of time, the righteous will be in heaven engaged in the work of judgment. But why have a judgment when all the cases have already been decided? There are two reasons: First, the wicked will be resurrected at the end of the 1,000-year period to receive their punishment of the second death, so prior to this time their punishment must be decided. Second, God would not allow a single doubt to mar His plan for the salvation of all men. Therefore, also during this time, the righteous will have access to the books of heaven in which are recorded both the good and bad thoughts, words, and deeds of all men. It will be made clear to them just how God worked to save everyone and how the wicked turned against Him. Thus when the wicked are punished, all will acknowledge God as just in destroying them. **Revelation 20:4** portrays the judgment scene. The righteous will also judge the evil angels, as indicated in **1 Corinthians 6:1-3**. Please read these texts carefully and note the sequence of events.

At the end of the millennium

1. The Holy City, New Jerusalem, the capital city of the new earth, will come down from heaven with Christ and the redeemed. **Revelation 21:2**.
2. The second resurrection takes place. **Revelation 20:5, 13**. After Christ calls them back to life, the wicked will face the judgment. See **John 5:28, 29**.

3. Satan will be loosed for renewed activity and will go out to deceive the nations once more. **Revelation 20:7, 8**. It is evident that he has not repented of his evil ways, for he gathers the wicked together for battle against Christ and the righteous ones one last time.
4. Satan will marshal the wicked to attack the Holy City. **Revelation 20:9**.
5. The wicked will then be arraigned before the bar of God at the great white throne. **Revelation 20:11, 12**.
6. The wicked and the devil will be destroyed in the lake of fire. **Revelation 20:9, last part, 10, 14, 15**. This is the second death. Please read **2 Peter 3:12** and **Malachi 4:1, 3** as well. This fire will purify the earth and destroy the last traces of sin. Remember that the wicked and Satan will burn up completely. They will be as ashes under the feet of the righteous. No eternally burning hell will dim the joy of the righteous who inherit the new earth.
7. A new earth will be created—an eternal home for the godly. **Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22**. Read **Revelation 21:1-8**, and thrill to the reality of the perfect environment that God will re-create! "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." Whether or not we are among God's people in the Holy City on the new earth depends on whether we

The wicked and Satan will burn up completely.



are overcomers now. Won't you give Him your heart today?

Hell—eternal death for the wicked

To grasp the destiny of the wicked, we need to understand the meaning of “hell,” a word inseparably connected with the topic of death and the judgment. These are subjects one doesn't particularly relish thinking about, but it is necessary to understand their meaning as the Bible explains them.

In the original Biblical languages, more than one word was used, but in our Bibles they are all translated as “hell.” First, the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek word *Hades* mean “grave.” **Psalm 16:10; Revelation 20:13, 14.** Secondly, the Greek word *Tartarus* means “darkness.” **2 Peter 2:4.** The third meaning, “a place of burning” (*Gehenna* in the Greek), is the one to be discussed here.

On the day of judgment, the earth will become a lake of fire (hell) that will destroy the wicked and the present world. **2 Peter 3:7, 10.** This destruction by fire is called the second death. **Revelation 21:8.** The wages of sin is death. **Romans 6:23.** The soul who sins will die the second death. **Ezekiel 18:4.**

The term “everlasting fire” is sometimes used in the Bible to describe the punishment of the wicked. It is important to remember that this fire will completely destroy the wicked. It is an eternal punishment, not punishing. The difference is important! They will not burn unendingly. The Bible says that Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with eternal fire, but no one can say that that fire is still burning today. **Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6.** (It is interesting to note that radiation was found in the soil at the site of the ancient cities by Russian scientists.)

Likewise the palaces and temple of Jerusalem were devoured by unquenchable fire in B.C. 606. See **Jeremiah 17:27.** Jerusalem burned until there was nothing left, but it finally did cease to burn.

Every person on earth goes into the grave (also referred to as “hell”) at death, whether one is good or bad; but no punishment or reward is given at that point. All the dead sleep in the dust at least until Christ's second coming. Then only the righteous dead will be called forth to eternal life. But the wicked dead will remain in the grave during the 1,000 years. At the end of the millennium, they will be resurrected to receive their punishment—eternal destruction. They will burn until there is nothing left; they will be completely annihilated.

Never think for one moment that a loving, merciful God will make a man burn forever for the sins he committed in one short lifetime! The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He will do the work that must be done. “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” **Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11.** A wonderful consolation to all who love the Lord is given in **Nahum 1:9.** Sin will never rise again!

The new earth—eternal life for the redeemed

The earth, purified by the fire that destroys the wicked at the end of the millennium, will be recreated by God. Then mankind—the redeemed, having fully overcome all sin—will again enjoy the beauty and perfection of Paradise. Picture the lovely scene, as portrayed in **Revelation 21** and **22**—the Holy City with its walls of jasper and streets of gold, its twelve foundations of precious stones, with the glory of God and of the Lamb as its light, and the absence of pain, sorrow, sickness, crying, and death. **Revelation 21:1-4; Isaiah 33:24.** Add to this the description found in **Isaiah 35.**

There will be country life and planting on the new earth. **Isaiah 65:17, 21. Isaiah 11:6-9** tells how peaceful the animals will be. Imagine the leopard lying down with the kid or the bear feeding with the cow! And, most amazing of all, “a little child shall lead them”!

The glorious things that God has prepared for those who love Him and keep His commandments are too wonderful for the human mind to fathom. But by faith we can picture and prepare for that wonderful new heaven and earth where the redeemed will spend eternity with our Lord and Saviour! “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” **1 Corinthians 2:9.**

The soul who sins
will die the second
death.



9–History in a Nutshell/the Antichrist

Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar, proud, majestic ruler of ancient Babylon, was one of the greatest kings who ever lived. During his illustrious reign, the first world empire expanded to include the areas we now know as the Middle East and Egypt. In the course of his conquests, he took many prisoners of war to Babylon to be trained for important positions in the empire. Four of these were Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, princes from Palestine, the land of the Hebrews.

It was approximately B.C. 600 when King Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream of a great image and its destruction by a mammoth stone. This dream was not just for the king, however; God intended for its important message to be given to all men who would listen. Let's turn to Daniel 2 for the details of the dream and its interpretation by Daniel, who was given wisdom and understanding by God.

The dream

Daniel 2:1-11 relates that King Nebuchadnezzar, impressed by a strange dream, nevertheless forgot it and sought advice and revelation from his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldean scientific diviners. These counselors, however, were unable to tell the king the dream; they were forced to admit that the gods who could reveal the dream did not dwell with men. **Verses 12 and 13** reveal that the king was so furious at these wise men, who claimed to be specialists in dreams and their interpretation, that he pronounced the death sentence on every wise man in the realm. This included Daniel and his friends, who were true, faithful servants of the living God.

After Daniel pleaded with the king for time, he and his friends earnestly prayed to God for help. God rewarded their petitions by revealing the dream to Daniel. They were quick to acknowledge God's mercy and goodness to them. **Verses 17-23.**

God alone knows the secrets of the future, and He reveals them for the benefit of His faithful people. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." **Isaiah 46:9, 10.**



God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, through Daniel, a prophetic view of world history from Nebuchadnezzar's time (B.C. 600) to the second coming of Christ. Read **Daniel 2:31-35** carefully, and become familiar with the details of the dream.

The interpretation

1. **The head of gold (Daniel 2:37, 38)** represented the first world empire, **Babylon**, which ruled from B.C. 606 to 538. One hundred years before this dream of Nebuchadnezzar, God had spoken of Babylon as a golden city. **Isaiah 14:4.** Jeremiah, a contemporary prophet of Daniel, spoke of the nation as a golden cup. **Jeremiah 51:7.** Historians refer to Babylon as "the golden city of a golden age."
2. **The breast and arms of silver (verse 39)** represented the second world empire, **Medo-Persia**, which conquered Babylon and ruled from B.C. 538 to 331. Because silver was used as a medium of exchange by the Persians, as well as in decorations even more noticeably than gold

Behind the scenes, according to God's word, the patient, unseen purposes of the Almighty are being worked out according to His plan.

was used by the Babylonians, silver was a fitting prophetic symbol for Medo-Persia.

3. *The belly and thighs of brass (verse 39)* symbolized the third world empire, *Greece* (B.C. 331-168). The brass thighs of the image reflected the brass armor and breastplates worn by the Greek soldiers. Thus Greece was very appropriately symbolized by brass.
4. *The legs of iron (verse 40)* represented the fourth world empire, *Rome*, which ruled the longest of the four empires—from B.C. 168 to A.D. 476. Iron is known chiefly for its strength. Historians called Rome the Iron Monarchy, a fitting title for the empire that broke in pieces, bruised, and subdued kingdoms for nearly 600 years. During Rome's supremacy, Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was crucified under its authority.
5. *The feet and toes of mixed iron and clay (verses 41, 42)* denote the nations of *Western Europe*. It is generally agreed among historians that Rome was divided into ten parts by the invasion of barbarian tribes between A.D. 351 and 476. According to the prophecy, some parts would be weak and some strong, as signified by the mixture of iron and clay.

These ten divisions of Western Rome (originally the Lombards, Franks, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Burgundians, Suevi, Heruli, Vandals, Allemanni, and Saxons) became the Western European powers of Italy, France, England, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Switzerland. As the prophecy predicted (*verse 43*), over the years these kingdoms tried to unite through intermarriage of their royal lines, but all such attempts failed. Similarly, powerful men, such as Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Adolf Hitler, all sought to achieve the same goal and failed. God's word never fails! "... They shall not cleave one to another...!"

No fifth world empire would ever rise. **Verse 44** says, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

"... And the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." **Verse 45**.

God rules all human affairs

In the records of human history, we read of the rise and fall of nations and generally conclude that man has determined his own success or failure.

But behind the scenes, according to God's word, the patient, unseen purposes of the Almighty are being worked out according to His plan. Heaven imparts the power exercised by every ruler on earth. The success or failure of the ruler and also of the nation he rules depends on how closely he adheres to God's plan. **Daniel 2:20, 21**. To each world leader the Lord has declared, "... I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." **Isaiah 45:5**. To Nebuchadnezzar at a later time the Lord declared through Daniel that God does all things so "that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will,..." **Daniel 4:17**.

What is the dream's significance for us today? The four great world empires, symbolized by the various metallic parts of the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, have passed from the scene of action. Today we live in the time period symbolized by the feet and toes of the image. The next event will be the coming of the Lord and the setting up of His eternal kingdom (**Daniel 2:44**), symbolized by the stone cut out without hands that strikes the image at its feet, causing it to crumble. Consideration of this prophecy brings us face to face with the serious time in which we live. Friend, are you prepared to meet Jesus?



"Down in the feet of iron and of clay,
Weak and divided, soon to pass away;
What will the next great glorious drama be?
Christ and His coming, and eternity."

Daniel 7

Daniel 7 relates the vision Daniel was given when he was past the age of 80. The prophet lived to see part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream fulfilled; namely, the conquering of Babylon by the Medo-Persians. Now, in Daniel 7, God showed His aged servant the same four kingdoms depicted in Daniel 2. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants, the prophets." **Amos 3:7**. To Daniel, however, the kingdoms were shown not in their outward appearance, as was done to King Nebuchadnezzar, but in their characteristics like wild beasts.

Prophetic symbols

Let us first determine the meanings of the symbols in this vision.

1. **Winds**. In symbolic language, winds denote nations at war. **Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:31-33**.
2. **Waters**, or seas, are a symbol of people, multitudes, and nations. **Daniel 7:2, 3; Revelation 17:15**. In this vision, the prophet saw the sea stirred by the winds. Out of this stormy sea rose up, in succession, four beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a monstrous beast. **Isaiah 17:12**. Just as in nature large bodies of water are disturbed by the wind, so people are shaken by war.
3. **Beasts**. Daniel saw four beasts rise from the stormy sea of nations and people. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." **Daniel 7:17**. There is no doubt as to what we should understand these four beasts to be—four kings, or kingdoms. We can match the descriptions with the kingdoms represented in the image of Daniel 2.

Four beasts—four world empires

1. The **lion** symbolized **Babylon** (B.C. 606-538). "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." **Daniel 7:4**. That which gold represents among the metals (in Daniel 2), the lion represents among the beasts; it is the king of beasts. The lion was a favorite symbol of the Babylonians. See **Jeremiah 4:7; 50:17, 43, 44**. The wings being plucked and a man's heart given to it indicate the weakness which overcame Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar's successors,

leading to its defeat at the hands of the Medo-Persians.

2. The **bear** symbolized **Medo-Persia** (B.C. 538-331). "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." **Daniel 7:5**. Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, becoming the second world empire. "And it raised up itself on one side" shows that it was a kingdom composed of two nationalities, one stronger than the other. The Persians were more prominent than were the Medes. The three ribs in his mouth represented the three countries that were overthrown by this kingdom—Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.
3. The **leopard** represented **Greece** (B.C. 331-168). "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it." **Daniel 7:6**. This beast was symbolic of the kingdom of Alexander the Great, who subdued Persia. The four heads represented the four generals who divided and ruled Greece after Alexander's death. These four generals were Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Seleucus. The four wings showed the swiftness characterizing this power, for Alexander conquered the known world in twelve years, and his troops covered 5,000 miles in 8 years' time.
4. The **monstrous beast** symbolized **Rome** (B.C. 168-A.D. 476). "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." "... The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth,..." **Daniel 7:7-9, 23**. The iron teeth and other powerful characteristics of this beast corresponded with the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Rome was the most powerful and long lasting of the four empires.

The little horn

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great





things.” **Daniel 7:8.** This little horn, which rose among the ten horns of the fourth beast, played an important role in the history of that kingdom.

Verse 25 describes this power in greater detail: “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” **Daniel 7:8, 24.** This power came up among the European divisions of Rome. It subdued three horns or kings (the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Vandals). The list of characteristics shows that it was very different from the other horns—a religio-political power, a mixture of Christianity and paganism. **Daniel 7:20** indicates that it was the leading power over the other horns. **Verses 8** and **20** reveal its shrewd intelligence, as depicted by the “eyes of man.”

This power would speak great words against God. The pope of Rome claims that all the titles which the Scriptures attribute to Christ are lawfully his to use: “God on earth,” “the Supreme Judge,” “Vicerent of Christ,” “King of kings and Lord of lords.” All of the 265 popes who have reigned thus far were called “Holy Father.” Jesus used this name only once to address His heavenly Father (**John 17:11**) and furthermore admonished, “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” **Matthew 23:9.**

Verses 21 and **25** declare that the little horn power would make war on God’s people. Over 50,000,000 Christians were put to death by this power during the Dark Ages. The delineation of its years of dominance pinpoint this little horn as the Roman Catholic Church. The time period of its tyranny over the saints is given in seven places in the Bible, the first being **Daniel 7:25.** “A time and times and the dividing of time,” “a time, times, and an half,” “forty and two months,” and “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” all refer to the same time period. See **Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5.** And the period always refers to the papal power. Since in proph-

ecy one prophetic day equals one literal year (see **Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6**) in fulfillment, all of these phrases figure out to 1,260 prophetic days, 42 months, or 3½ years, using 30 days per month. The literal timespan is 1,260 years. This period corresponds exactly with the time during which the papal power reigned supreme—A.D. 538-1798—beginning with the establishment of the bishop of Rome as the head over the church and ending with the capture of the reigning pope exactly 1,260 years later under Napoleon.

Still another characteristic of this power was that it would “think to change times and laws.” In the Catholic catechism, the second commandment of God’s law is eliminated, and the tenth is divided into two commandments. The fourth commandment (the seventh-day Sabbath) is changed from the seventh day (Saturday) to the first day (Sunday).

A church historian, Dr. Doellinger, wrote: “The church has created her own weekly feast day. It cannot be maintained that the Sabbath was exchanged for Sunday by the Apostles and that the commandment to keep the seventh day has been transferred to the first day. Not a trace of such a transfer can be found; and, therefore, the Sunday of the Christian church has always been quite different from the Sabbath of the law.”

In A.D. 325, Pope Sylvester decreed that the first day of the week should be called “the Lord’s day.” At the council of Laodicea in A.D. 364, it was decreed that Christians should not rest on Saturday but on Sunday.

The following quotation is found in *A Doctrinal Catechism*, by Stephen Keenan, p. 174:

“Question: *Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?*

“Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”

From this and other statements, it is evident that the papacy, through means of the church, has tried to change the holy day commanded by God. But God’s law is as unchangeable as God Himself, so such attempts are only means that lead men away from God.

All of the characteristics which the Bible attributes to the little horn, or the antichristian power, can be traced clearly in the history of the papacy. The evidence is therefore indisputable. “The papacy is of a truth the kingdom of Babylon, yea, of the very antichrist.” – *Works of Martin Luther*, vol. 2, p. 236.

The list of characteristics shows that it was very different from the other horns—a religio-political power, a mixture of Christianity and paganism.

10—Inspired Mathematics

Christ warned His hearers that they would have to give account in the day of judgment of every idle word they spoke. **Matthew 12:36.** Paul also preached that there was a coming judgment. Similarly, Daniel was instructed about the judgment. In fact, he was shown the scene of the judgment in vision in **Daniel 7:9-14.** This topic deserves our closest scrutiny, for, as we shall see in this lesson, we are living today in the time of the judgment.

The vision of Daniel 8

Please read **Daniel 8** and **9** carefully. Notice that once again God revealed a portion of world history to Daniel, using fitting symbols of beasts. A ram with two horns represented Medo-Persia, and a he goat with a great horn represented Greece. After the battle between these two beasts, the great horn was broken and four others came up. We have already studied in **Daniel 2** and **7** about these kingdoms and the four divisions arising out of the third kingdom, Greece. **Daniel 7:6.**

Now **Daniel 8:9-12** goes one step further to show how, out of one of the four winds of heaven, another little horn arose, which “waxed exceeding great.” We studied about this little horn as the antichristian power in Lesson 9. Here the same power is shown again—papal Rome or the Roman Catholic Church.

In **Daniel 8:13, 14,** the angel referred to the great apostasy which would be caused by the little horn, or the antichrist, by which the truth would be cast to the ground. Read **Daniel 8:12-14.**

In **Daniel 8:16-26,** the angel Gabriel, the angel of prophecy (Gabriel means “the man who stands before God”), explained to Daniel the meaning of the ram and the he goat as well as the work of the little horn, but he did not give any explanation of the 2,300 days of **Verses 13, 14, 26.** “And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” **Daniel 8:27.**

Explanation of the 2,300 days (evenings and mornings)

From **Daniel 9:1,** it is apparent that several years passed before Daniel received another vision. The prophet was praying and interceding earnestly for his people when the angel Gabriel came flying to

him. **Daniel 9:20, 21.** Immediately the angel began to speak about the time reckoning concerning that part in the vision of Daniel 8 about which the prophet had not received any explanation. Here is the vision and interpretation of the longest, most important time prophecy in the Bible. It presents highlights of how God removes sin from the world and the universe. Remember that in **Daniel 8:17** the angel declared that the vision would be for the time of the end.

In Lesson 9, the key to understanding prophetic time was given—one day in prophecy is equal to one literal year. This key is applicable to all prophetic time periods.

According to **Daniel 9:24,** part of the 2,300 days was to be cut off; this period would reach to the first coming of the Messiah and the end of Israel’s role as God’s chosen nation. Seventy prophetic weeks is a period of 490 literal years (70 weeks times 7 days per week). These 490 years were to be fulfilled within the history of the Jewish nation. Because it is said that this period of 490 years was to be determined, or cut off, we can calculate when these 490 years began and also establish the beginning point of the entire 2,300 years, which were to reach to the time of the end.

Beginning date of the 70 weeks

The angel of prophecy, Gabriel, was entrusted with the responsibility of explaining the beginning point of the 490 years to Daniel. Thus we have no human calculation but the words of Heaven itself.

Read **Daniel 9:25, 26.** Seven weeks plus 62 weeks total 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 literal years. The angel related (1) the important events to occur during these 483 years, (2) the rejection of the Messiah in the 70th week, and (3) the end of Israel’s special place as God’s chosen people. All this was literally fulfilled.

The 70 weeks began at the date when the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given. Jerusalem at that particular time lay in ruins. History records three such decrees. The first one was given by the Persian king Cyrus in B.C. 539. Only a few Jews heeded this command, and a second decree was given by Darius in B.C. 519. But the last one, which was the one that was effective, was given by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, B.C. 457. **Ezra 6:14.** That is the beginning date of the 70 weeks, and also of the 2,300 days.



The time of the Messiah and the time of the end

In **Daniel 9:24, 25**, the 70 weeks are subdivided into three periods—7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week. The first 7 weeks reached to B.C. 408, when Jerusalem was rebuilt, fulfilling the prophecy. The next subdivision—62 weeks—reached to the appearance of the Messiah in A.D. 27. “Messiah” means “anointed one.” The anointing of Christ took place at His baptism in the Jordan. **Matthew 3:16, 17**. This was the first appearance of the Lamb of God, who carried the sin of the world.

Jesus was 30 years old at His baptism, although it was the year A.D. 27. It is a proven fact that the compiling of the Christian calendar began three years late, so in the year 1 of our time reckoning,

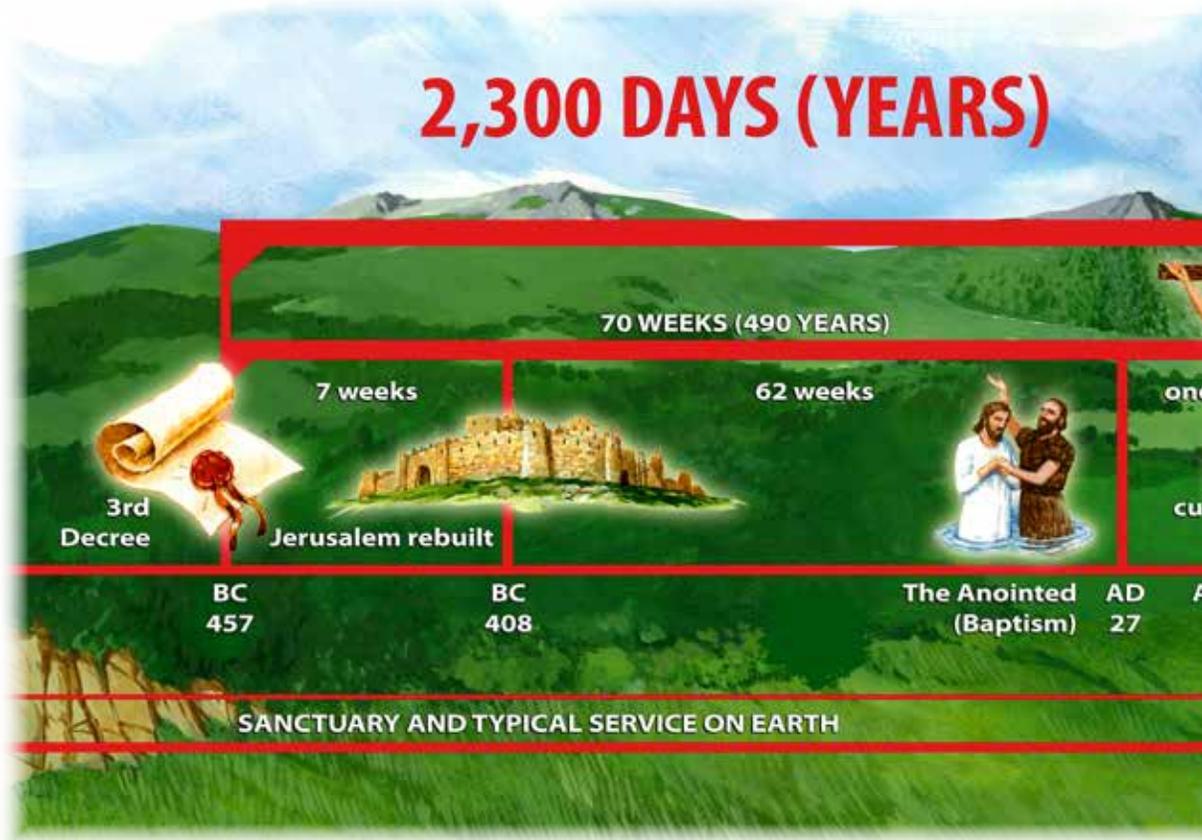
Christ was already 4 years old. The 69 weeks, or 483 years, thus ended in A.D. 27.

The last week

Only one week remained to complete the 70 weeks. When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, an end was made of all Old Testament laws concerning sacrifices and offerings, which were only a shadow of reality. The Reality, Christ, had come; and therefore the shadow ceased.

“And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” **Mark 15:38**. This was Heaven’s sign that all ceremonial sacrifices were now fulfilled through the one sacrifice of Christ. This happened, as prophecy had foretold, halfway through the last week. A week in prophetic time

When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, an end was made of all Old Testament laws concerning sacrifices and offerings, which were only a shadow of reality.



The heavy line represents the full 2,300 day/year period, the longest prophetic time period in the Bible. Beginning in B.C. 457, when the decree was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (**Ezra 7:11-26; Daniel 9:25**), seven weeks (49 years) are measured off to indicate the time occupied in this work of restoration. These, however, are a part of the sixty-nine weeks (483 years) that were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. Christ was anointed in A.D. 27, at His baptism. **Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 10:38**. In the middle of the seventieth week (A.D. 31), Christ was crucified, or “cut off” which marked the time when the sacrifices and oblations of the earthly sanctuary were to cease. **Daniel 9:26, 27**. The remaining three and one-half years of this week reached to A.D. 34, or to the stoning of Stephen and the great persecution of the church in Jerusalem that followed. **Acts 7:59; 8:1**. This marked the end of the seventy weeks, or 490 years, allotted to the Jewish people.

But the seventy weeks are a part of the 2,300 days; and as they (the seventy weeks) reach to A.D. 34, the remaining 1,810 years of the 2,300—day period must reach to 1844, when the work of judgment, or cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, was to begin. **Revelation 14:6, 7**. Then special light began to shine upon the whole sanctuary subject and Christ’s mediatorial or high priestly work in it.

Four great events, therefore, are located by this great prophetic period—the first advent, the crucifixion, the rejection of the Jewish people as a nation, and the beginning of the work of final judgment.

is seven literal years, so half of that is 3½ literal years, after which He was crucified. This was the halfway mark of the 70th week. The crucifixion thus took place in A.D. 31, leaving 3½ years to complete the 70 weeks. If we add 3½ years to 31, we come to A.D. 34.

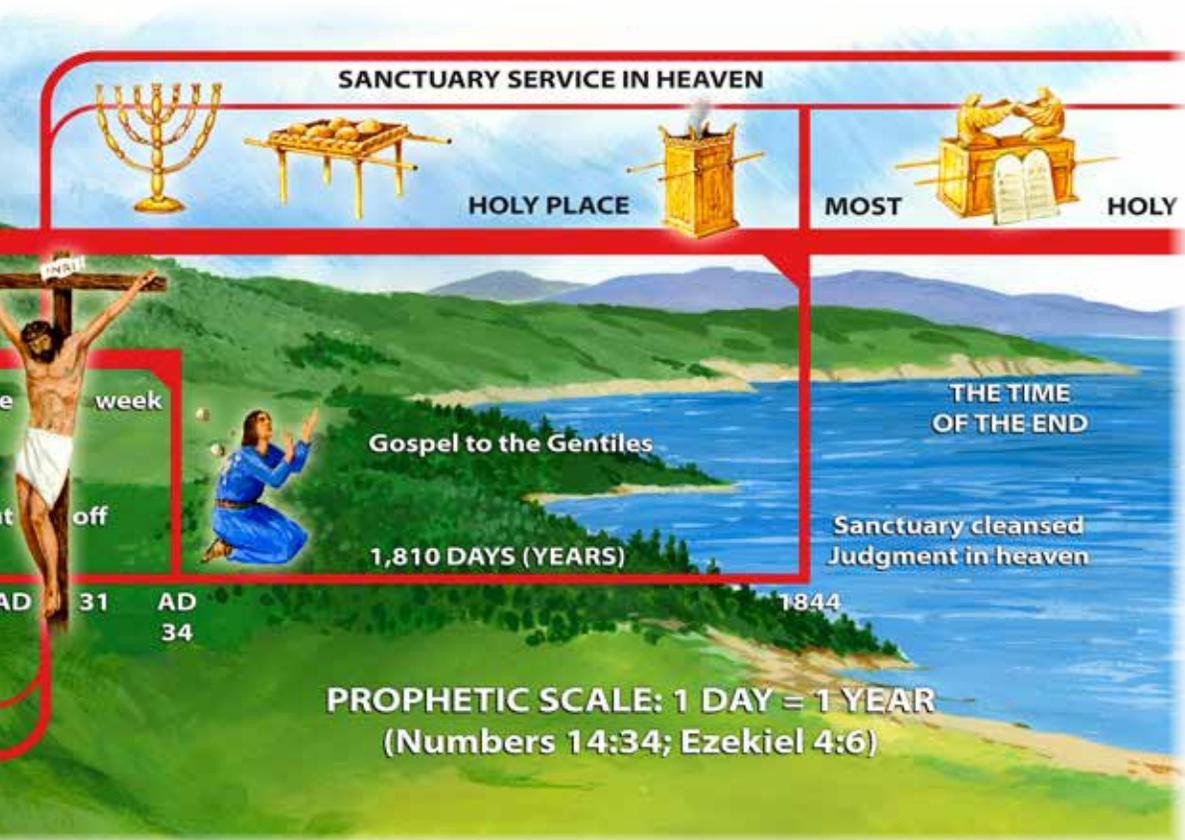
What happened in A.D. 34?

That year the 70 weeks (490 years) set apart for Israel ended, and the Jewish nation ceased to be the chosen people of God, because they had continually rejected the gospel. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was killed by the Jews. **Acts 6:7**. Paul, who became the apostle to the Gentiles, was converted. **Acts 9**. From A.D. 34 on, the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. **Acts**

went to the Gentiles. Christ in His church is no respecter of persons or nationalities. See **Galatians 3:27, 28; Colossians 3:10, 11**. The special probation and status of the Jewish nation had ended, and 36 years later (A.D. 70), Jerusalem was destroyed.

The 1,810 years remaining

The remainder of the long period of 2,300 years, of which 490 years were determined, or cut off, was 1,810 years. Adding this to A.D. 34, we come to 1844. Thus the 2,300 years reach from B.C. 457 to A.D. 1844. The angel had declared that this vision would reach to the time of the end; thus this longest prophetic time period is a proof that in 1844 the time of the end had already begun.



8:4. Through the scattering of the Christians as a result of persecution by the Jews, the gospel message was spread all over the earth. The first Gentiles received the Holy Spirit and were baptized. **Acts 10**. Furthermore, the apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, made the decision to use every means to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. **Acts 13:46**.

The Jews, by rejecting Christ as their Messiah, sealed their own doom. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," was the judgment Christ had pronounced. **Luke 13:34, 35**. The message

What happened at this time in history will be studied in Lessons 11 and 12.

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." **Daniel 8:14**. After 1844, a work was to be done in the heavenly sanctuary. The earthly sanctuary, that had been built at God's command, was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Since that time, there has not been a sanctuary upon the earth. In the following lesson we will study the sanctuary and learn about its cleansing.

11—The Sanctuary and Its Significance

It presented how
God deals with sin
and the sinner.

In ancient Israel, when the nation was still a theocracy, daily life centered around the sanctuary. It was their holy place—their church. In this sanctuary every day, animals were sacrificed in the morning and in the evening for the people collectively. In addition, all during the day, individuals brought certain sacrifices for specific sins which they had committed, as well as special offerings for special occasions.

The sanctuary was composed of basically three sections. The *outer court* measured approximately 75 feet by 150 feet and was enclosed with pillars upon which was hung a screen resembling a curtain. The height of these “walls” was about 8½ feet. The court had a gate on the east side for entrance. Within this court stood the sanctuary itself. This structure was composed of walls made of boards of wood overlaid with gold; hangings served as the roof. This building was approximately 45 feet long and 15 feet wide and high. It was divided into two compartments, designated the *Holy Place* and the *Most Holy Place*.

The entire structure housed six main objects.

In the **COURT** (see **Exodus 40:29, 30**):

1. **Altar of burnt offerings**
2. **Brass laver**—a basin in which the priests washed

In the **HOLY PLACE** (see **Exodus 40:22-27**):

3. **Candlestick**
4. **Table of showbread**
5. **Altar of incense**

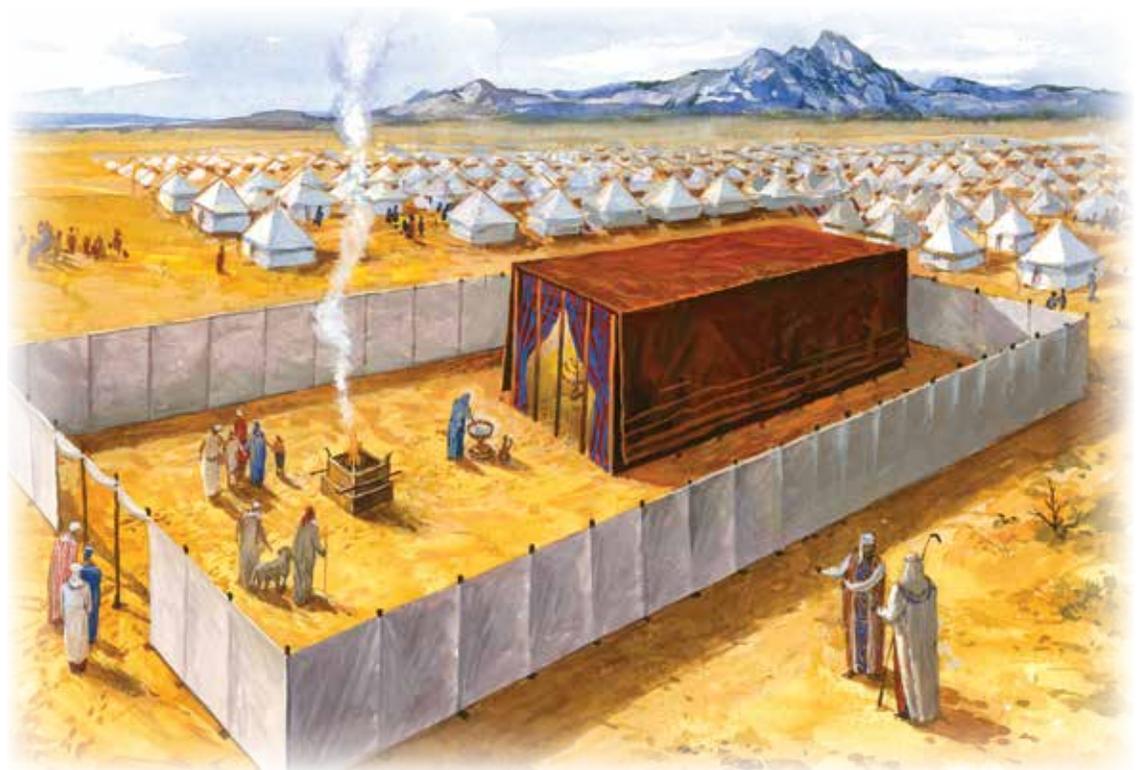
In the **MOST HOLY PLACE** (see **Exodus 40:20, 21**):

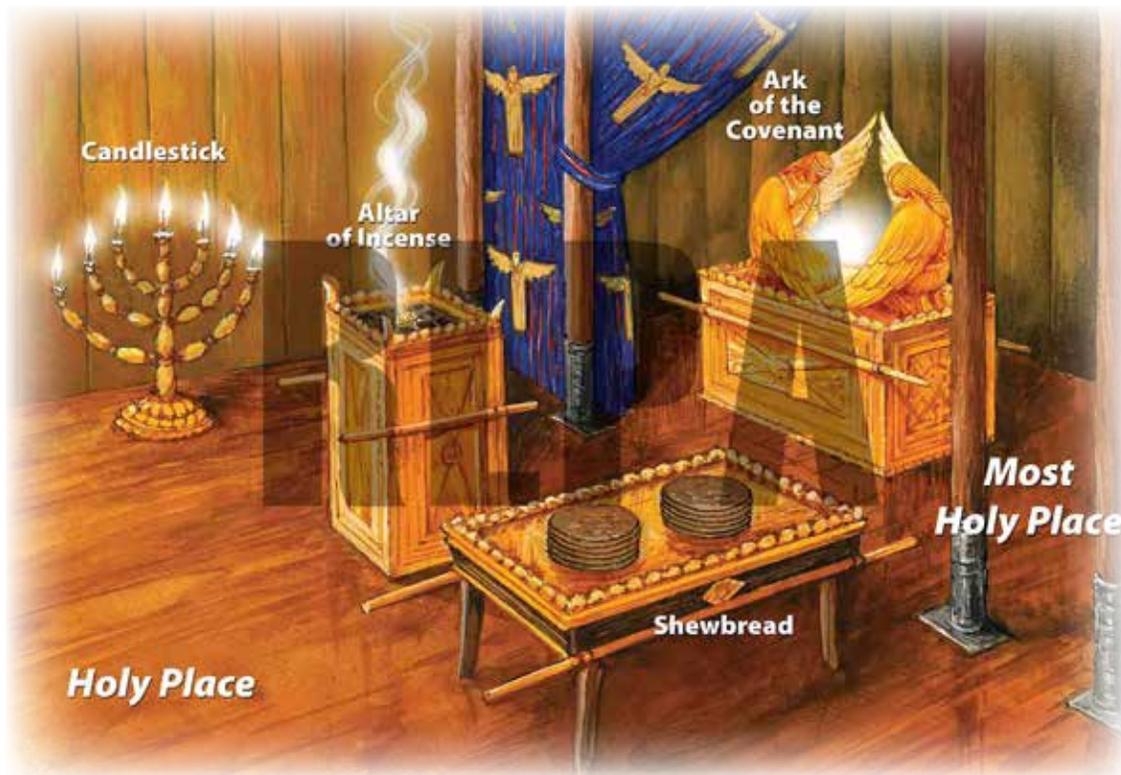
6. **Ark of the covenant**, which contained the law of God, Aaron’s rod, and the pot of manna. The mercy seat, a lid of solid gold on which were two golden cherubims, covered the ark of the covenant. The holy shekinah, God’s presence, appeared between the two cherubims. Thus the mercy seat showed that God’s mercy is between Him and His law.

Each object, as well as the entrance to the court, represented a specific part of God’s plan of salvation, not only for the Jews, but for all who will come to Him for help. (See the diagram.)

The Lord Himself commanded Moses to build the sanctuary. **Exodus 25:1-8**. It presented how God deals with sin and the sinner. When Moses was commanded to build the ark of the covenant, he was instructed to follow the special design that the Lord showed him. **Exodus 25:8, 9**.

The entire service of the tabernacle might seem strange and foreign to us if it were not clearly ex-





plained in the New Testament book of Hebrews. Read **Hebrews 8** and **9** carefully. The earthly sanctuary illustrated what Christ is doing for fallen man in the real sanctuary in heaven, of which the earthly structure was a model. “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” **Hebrews 8:5**.

Two of the same objects found in the earthly sanctuary—the seven lamps and the altar of incense—were seen by John the Revelator in the temple in heaven. **Revelation 4:5; 8:2-4**. In **Revelation 11:19**, the ark of His testament was seen. In the earthly sanctuary, the priests brought sacrifices each day. Once each year, however, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place alone for a special service. “But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.” **Hebrews 9:7**. This was the Day of Atonement, or reconciliation; it pointed forward to the time of the investigative judgment when the final reconciliation work would be finished by Christ. The word “atonement” originally meant “to reconcile, to purge away,” or the state of being in agreement. The English word, when broken into parts, is “at-one-ment,” showing how God brings sinful man back into harmony with Himself.

In the heavenly sanctuary, the High Priest is Jesus Christ. “Now of the things which we have spo-

ken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” **Hebrews 8:1, 2**.

Each day in the earthly sanctuary, as the people brought their sin offerings, their sins were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary, which then had to be cleansed on the Day of Atonement. See **Leviticus 16:15-19, 30; 23:27, 29**. This annual Day of Atonement (judgment day) was God’s last call to repentance.

The types and symbols of the earthly sanctuary pointed to Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. At Christ’s baptism the words of inspiration spoken by the prophet John the Baptist explained Jesus’ mission on earth: “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” **John 1:29**. When the true Lamb of God was slain, the earthly ritual ended, for the real Sacrifice for man had been offered. “Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.” **Matthew 27:50, 51**. The supernatural rending of the veil was Heaven’s declaration that the earthly sanctuary was no longer of significance. From that point onward, the work for man’s salvation centered in the heavenly sanctuary. “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more per-

The supernatural rending of the veil was Heaven’s declaration that the earthly sanctuary was no longer of significance.



When every person's case has been decided for eternal life or eternal death, Christ will step out of the sanctuary in heaven and pronounce mercy ended.

fect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building." **Hebrews 9:11.**

At His ascension, Christ began His work as man's great High Priest in the first compartment of the sanctuary in heaven. See **Hebrews 9:24.**

According to the prophecy given to Daniel, there was to be a cleansing, or Day of Atonement, in the heavenly sanctuary. "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." **Daniel 8:14.** The 2,300 days (years) ended in 1844. At that time the judgment began for all the people of this earth. See **Revelation 22:11-20.**

The work of investigating every individual's case, from Adam to the end of the world, and blotting out all sins from the heavenly sanctuary, must be accomplished before the second advent of Christ. When Christ ascended to heaven after His crucifixion, He entered the Holy Place. There He worked for over eighteen centuries, mediating for sinners who asked His forgiveness.

But in 1844, He entered the Most Holy Place for the special work of atonement. Any person who has unrepented sins in the books of heavenly record (**Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:12**) will be accounted with the wicked. **Exodus 32:33.** The record in heaven is unerring; sin that has been concealed, denied, or covered up will there be brought to light. Every provision for man's confession and forgiveness has been made by Heaven, so

there is no excuse for any who refuse God's mercy. **Ezekiel 18:24; Isaiah 43:25; Revelation 3:5.**

In the typical Day of Atonement, every person who did not afflict his soul, confess all sin, and make solemn preparation was cut off from God's people. **Leviticus 23:39.** So in the actual Day of Atonement going on now, each individual who is to be saved must confess and forsake all sin and carelessness that separate him from God.

When every person's case has been decided for eternal life or eternal death, Christ will step out of the sanctuary in heaven and pronounce mercy ended: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." **Revelation 22:11, 12.**

In the next lesson we will look at another prophecy that gives God's last call to mercy as well as His tests of obedience for people today.



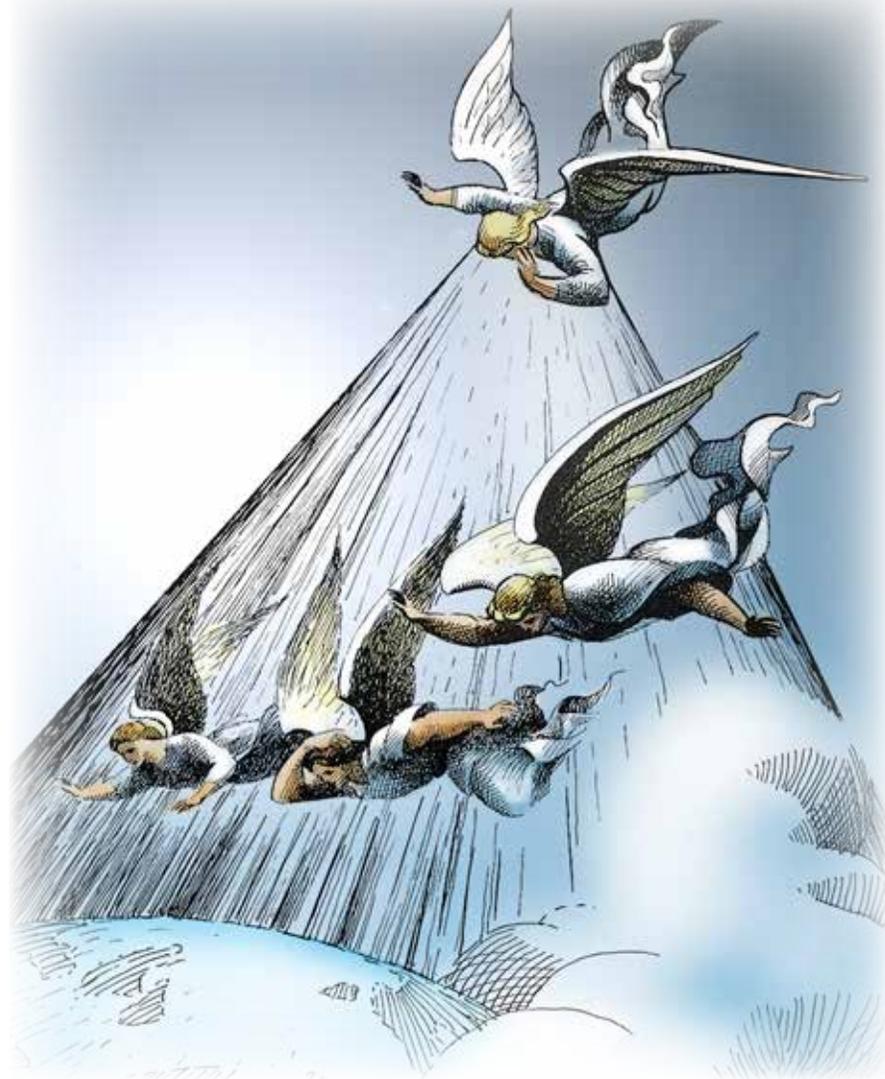
12—Four Heavenly Messengers

In the opening verses of **Revelation 14**, the glorious state of the people of God after their redemption is portrayed. They have endured the ravages of the great test brought to bear upon them by the setting up of the image of the beast, which will be explored more fully in Lesson 15. Actually the prophecy portrayed in Revelation 13 ends in Chapter 14:1-5.

Revelation 14:6 begins a new line of prophecy that gives the last warning ever to be given to this world. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” **Revelation 14:6, 7**. This message is both old and new. It is a universal message, for “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” is addressed. This message warns of and is to prepare the earth for God’s final judgment. It must be preached before the end of the world. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” **Matthew 24:14**.

The first angel’s message is not entirely new, for it is called the everlasting gospel, or good news. This good news was first given to man in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:15**): By the sacrifice of the Son of God, man was brought back into harmony with his Creator. How sad it is that this blessed truth has so many times been lost sight of! Man has replaced it with every possible false doctrine, including trying to gain righteousness through his own good works or trying to overthrow God’s law of Ten Commandments. Besides this everlasting gospel, the first angel brings to view a new subject. “... The hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” As covered in Lesson 11, the judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844 when Christ entered the Most Holy Place. This message that “the hour of His judgment is come” could not be preached until that time.

Every event in the plan of God occurs according to His timetable. And before He allows any portion of that plan to take place, He sends men a warning. God often has a special truth for a special time. “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants



the prophets.” **Amos 3:7**. Think of Noah; he was given a special message to prepare and warn his contemporaries of the coming flood. **2 Peter 2:5**. Jonah received a special message to give to the people of Nineveh to bring them to repentance. **Jonah 1:1-3**. And a special messenger, John the Baptist, was sent to prepare the people for Christ’s first advent. **Matthew 3:1-4**. Each of these messengers had a specific message for a specific time, which was “present truth” for the people living at that time.

Likewise, before the great judgment began in heaven, the message went forth, “The hour of His judgment is come.” In 1818, after two years of diligent study, an American by the name of William Miller became convinced as he studied the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 that the end of all things was at hand, yet for nine years he kept

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The Babylon referred to here can be none other than that great pagan-Christian power of the papacy. See **Revelation 17:2-6**. Verse 5 calls her the “mother of harlots,” indicating that she has children. These are those churches which, even though they call themselves Protestants, nevertheless follow in Rome’s footsteps by teaching false doctrines, uniting with worldly governments to enforce their dogmas, and persecuting God’s true people. The Protestant churches, though at one time the people of God, have become fallen churches by refusing to accept the Heaven-sent light of the first angel’s message. In the summer of 1844, approximately 50,000 people in the United States became a part of this movement of the second angel by withdrawing from the apostate churches, making up what became known as the Advent Movement.

It was generally taught by the religious leaders of that day that the earth was the sanctuary. William Miller, therefore, also taught that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in **Daniel 8:14** must refer to the second coming of Christ to this earth and its purification by fire. Accordingly, it was preached that in 1844 Christ would come. With the passing of the time, the Advent believers suffered grievous disappointment. The great majority gave up their faith entirely. But a handful of people, seeing the Lord’s guidance in their experience, studied more deeply and in so doing discovered the important doctrine of Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. They came to realize that the work of cleansing the sanctuary was to take place in heaven, not on this earth. In addition, they saw that one more message still had to be preached to the world—the third angel’s message.

The message of the third angel is an incredibly startling denunciation of false worship. It is also the most severe threat of divine punishment found in the Bible. “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” **Revelation 14:9-11**.

This message calls all mankind to take a stand in the conflict between God’s law and that of the antichrist, Rome. (This will be studied more extensively in Lesson 15.) It will forever separate the righteous and the wicked—the saints to receive

these thoughts to himself. In 1831, he gave his first public lecture, declaring his reasons for believing that Christ’s coming was imminent. Two years later, his teachings were reinforced by one of the signs Jesus foretold would take place before His coming—the great meteoric shower of November 18, 1833.

Shortly after William Miller began preaching this message in America, Joseph Wolff began preaching it actively in Africa, the Middle East, India, and also in the United States. The message was soon taken up by others throughout the world, and from everywhere the cry went up: “The hour of His judgment is come!” This message called men to the realization that God, before whom all must stand in judgment, is not just a power in nature, such as the theory of pantheism claimed, or non-existent, as the theory of evolution implied. See **2 Peter 3:3, 4**.

When this message was preached, most of the nominal Christian churches rejected the concept that “the hour of His judgment is come” and began to ridicule and persecute those who believed it. When this took place, God brought a new movement, preaching an additional message, into being. “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” **Revelation 14:8**.

This message called men to the realization that God, before whom all must stand in judgment, is not just a power in nature ... or non-existent....

the glory described in **Revelation 15:2, 3**, and the wicked to receive the wrath of God without mercy, as described in Revelation 16.

The third angel's message warns:

1. **Against worshipping the beast of Revelation 13.** In Lesson 15 this beast will be more closely identified; but, as we already studied regarding the little horn of Daniel 7, this antichristian power is the papacy.
2. **Against worshipping the image of the beast.** This image consists of apostate Protestantism, which adopts the false doctrines of the papacy and its use of civil law to enforce its views. Most Protestants would not think of worshipping the pope of Rome, yet at the same time they adhere to an institution that the Catholic hierarchy originated, that of observing the first day of the week as the holy day instead of the seventh day Sabbath, which God blessed and sanctified at creation.
3. **Against receiving the mark of the beast**—the observance of Sunday, which will be enforced by the apostate churches working in union with the state through civil law.
4. **Of the wrath of God** to be poured out on those who accept the mark of the beast.

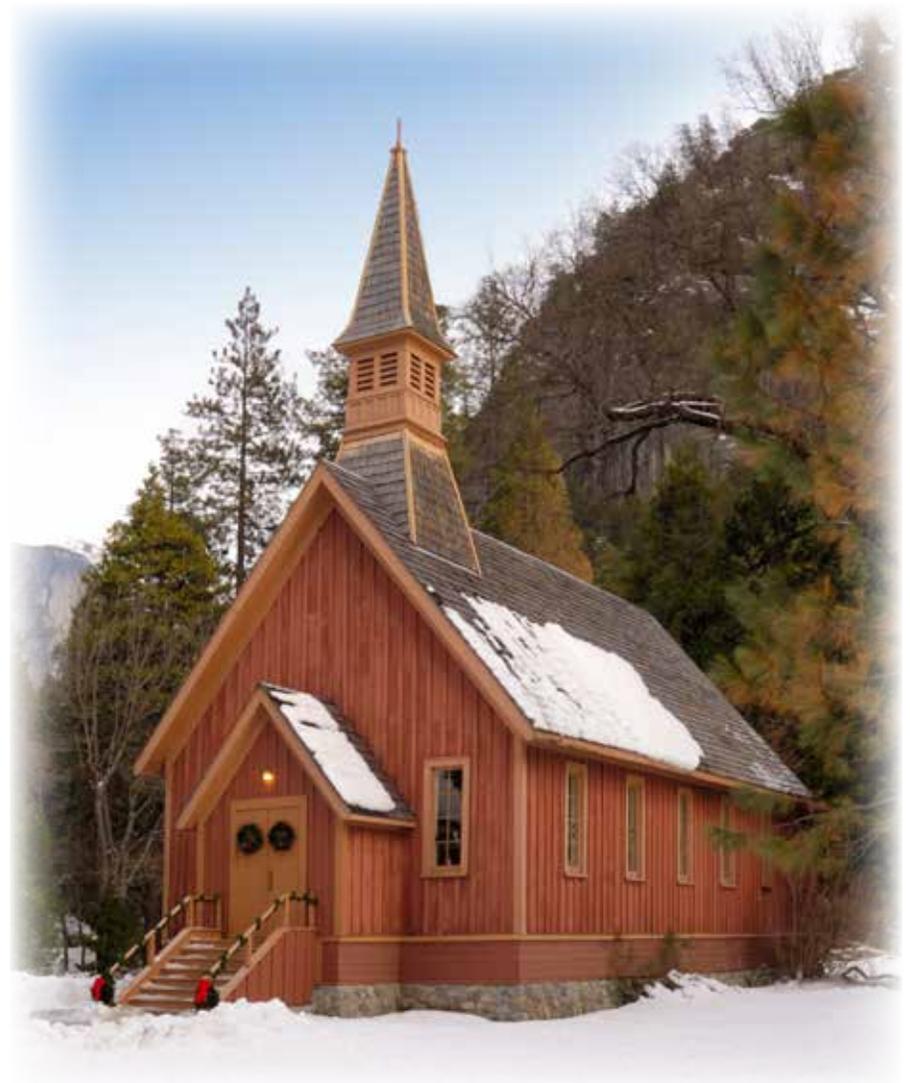
God in His great mercy will not allow this to take place until everyone on earth has had the opportunity to decide for himself whom he wishes to serve. For this reason, the message of the fall of Babylon is strongly repeated in **Revelation 18:1-5**: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication and the kings and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

This angel cries "mightily with a strong voice," and an additional voice joins in: "Come out of her, My people." God requires His people to separate themselves from all apostate organizations and practices. When this takes place, the prophecy of **Joel 2:23** will be fulfilled. "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." These great calls will prepare a people to

stand true to God in the final days of this earth's history. Will you be among them?

What are the characteristics of God's true church of the last days?

1. It proclaims the message of the judgment worldwide, urging the worship of the Creator. **Revelation 14:6, 7.**
2. It delivers the message of Babylon's fall. **Revelation 14:8.**
3. It warns against worshipping the beast and his image and receiving his mark. **Revelation 14:9-11.**
4. It keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **Revelation 14:12.**
5. It believes and upholds the Spirit of prophecy. **Revelation 12:17; 19:10.**
6. It will remain faithful in the face of persecution. **Revelation 12:17.**
7. By the power of the Holy Spirit, it boldly calls God's people out of Babylon. **Revelation 18:1-4.**



13—God’s Church



A gigantic struggle between the opposing forces of evil and righteousness is presented in the entire chapter of **Revelation 12**. It is portrayed in prophetic symbols, as is the case throughout the whole book of Revelation. We must understand the meaning of each symbol in order to comprehend this narrative. Please read the chapter now, and then we will examine each of the following symbols: The woman, the dragon, the sun, the stars of heaven, the ten horns, the flood, the earth and the remnant of the woman’s seed—as well as the meaning of the prophecy itself.

First of all, a woman in prophecy denotes a church. See **2 Corinthians 11:2; Hosea 2:19; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 6:2**. The woman in **Revelation 12:1** is a

pure woman, so she represents a pure church. She is “clothed with the sun,” depicting the full light of the gospel dispensation. Under her feet—something in the past—is the moon, which represents the Mosaic dispensation with all its types and shadows pointing forward to their fulfillment in Christ. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the dispensation of types and shadows was only a reflection of that which is real, the gospel dispensation. The crown of twelve stars symbolizes the twelve apostles who were commissioned by Jesus to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

According to **Revelation 12:2, 5**, the woman brought forth a man child. This can refer to only one Person in history. “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and we perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” **Psalm 2:7-9, 12**. Only the Son of God matches this description. Note also that “her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.” **Hebrews 8:1**.

Who is the *great red dragon* referred to in various places in this chapter? It is the fallen angel, Satan, who rebelled against God. In his attempts to destroy God’s church, he has always used human agents; thus the dragon in **verses 3 and 4** further depicts that power through which he worked—Rome. It is described as having *seven heads*, representing Rome’s seven forms of government: (1) kingly, (2) consular, (3) decemvirate, (4) dictatorial, (5) triumvirate, (6) imperial, (7) papal. The agent of Rome, Herod, was the one who attempted to kill Jesus as soon as He was born. **Matthew 2:7, 8, 12-18**. The *ten horns* are the same horns, or the divisions of the Roman Empire, already studied in Lesson 9.

Verse 4’s statement that the dragon’s tail cast a third of the *stars* to the earth refers to two things: (1) the number of heavenly angels who sided with Satan in rebellion, and (2) the fact that Rome abolished one of the three classes of Jewish rulers—the kings. Only the priests and the Sanhedrin were allowed to rule in Israel when the Romans took over.

Satan’s battle against God—and especially Christ’s coming to this earth, which Satan had stolen from Adam—is portrayed throughout Revelation 12 as the adversary works through various agents. But two places refer directly to Satan and show his defeat. The first tells of the battle in heaven when Christ and His angels defeated Satan and the angels who took his side. **Verses 7-9**. This battle occurred before Adam’s fall into sin. In spite of this, Satan was not yet totally defeated.

Verse 10 refers to Christ’s victory over the devil when He died on the cross. Before Christ’s death at the hands of Satan (who carried out his work through the Jewish and Roman rulers), the un-fallen universe still had a measure of sympathy for this former co-worker. But when the un-fallen angels and inhabitants of other worlds saw Satan’s unbelievable cruelty toward a totally innocent Being—God’s own Son, from birth to His crucifixion—all doubt about Satan’s completely evil nature was removed. “... The accuser of our brethren is cast down,...” His eternal destruction was fixed.

Aware of his defeat and coming annihilation, Satan turned his fury against the church of God. The only way he could now fight against God was by making war on Christ’s followers. “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the

Aware of his defeat and coming annihilation, Satan turned his fury against the church of God.

sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." **Verses 12, 13.** Therefore, after Christ returned to heaven in A.D. 31, the true people of God felt the full force of Satan's wrath. Stephen was stoned by a Jewish mob. Then Rome took up the persecution. The apostle Andrew was crucified by order of Governor Egeas. James was killed by the sword at the order of Herod. **Acts 12:1, 2.** Peter was crucified, while the apostle Paul was beheaded. Cast into a cauldron of boiling oil from which he was miraculously delivered, John was later banished to the Isle of Patmos.

Then we recall the atrocities of the despot Nero, who relentlessly destroyed the Christians. One of the great sports in that dreadful day was viewing the Christians being devoured by wild beasts. Yet the more Christians were killed, the more their numbers increased. Said an early Christian to the persecutors, "... Kill us, torture us, condemn us.... Your injustice is the proof that we are innocent.... Nor does your cruelty ... avail you. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed." —Tertullian, *Apology*, paragraph 50 (quoted in Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 41, 42).

When pagan persecution did not effectively destroy God's people, the dragon resorted to a different tactic—bringing a false religious belief and organization into the church. This was accomplished through what we know today as the papacy, the little horn of **Daniel 7:8, 21, 24, 25; 8:23-25.** This was even more dangerous to the church; and then papal Rome persecuted the Christians worse than did the pagans.

However, the woman—the true church—was not left alone in her struggle against the power of the dragon. **Revelation 12:14-16.** "Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than before, and the world became a vast battlefield." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 54, 55. God's people fled from the cities into the hidden parts of this earth. Think, for example, of the faithful Waldenses. "Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains—in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed—the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 65, 66. The faithful Albigenses, who were again and again attacked and persecuted, were thankful when they could flee from the relentless persecution of the large population centers to the remote hiding places of the mountains.

So it was fulfilled that the woman fled into the wilderness during the time of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798. (For verification of these dates, see Lesson 9, regarding this same time period in Daniel 7.) Often during this time, the papacy raised up great armies to destroy the faithful Christians, even in their mountain fastnesses. This flood of water is the Biblical symbol for great numbers of people. "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." **Revelation 17:15.**

Humanly speaking, the true people of God were destined to be wiped from the face of the earth, but God was mindful of the needs of His children. "The earth"—those areas with sparse populations—"helped the woman,... and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." **Revelation 12:16.**

With the possibility of escape to the New World, God's people could flee the persecution of the Old World. Here many found freedom of worship hitherto unknown. Yet even today the dragon is not satisfied to allow God's people to dwell in peace. Even though his persecuting power was greatly diminished by the 16th century Protestant Reformation and by the religious liberty given to people in some parts of the world, Satan is still out to destroy God's people. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." **Revelation 12:17.**

The woman, as we have already seen, depicts God's faithful people—or in simple terms, the Reformed churches—who stood up against the power of Rome.

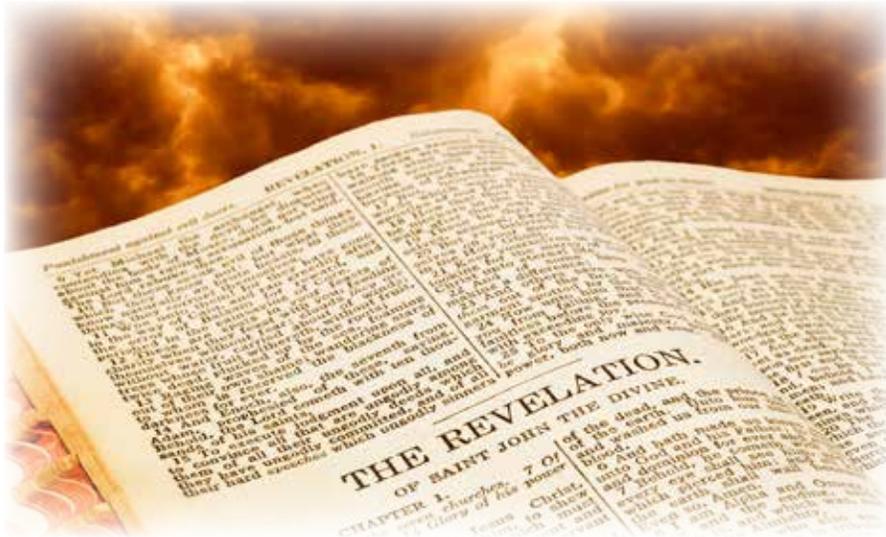
The special message of the first angel of Revelation 14, studied in Lesson 12, brought into being a new organization, the Advent Movement, later called the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yet it is not the woman that is the target of Satan's wrath, nor even the woman's seed, the Adventists. It is the remnant of this movement. Why? Because they (1) "keep the commandments of God"—not just teach, but keep; and (2) "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." What is this testimony? "... For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10. We will study about the latter characteristic in the next lesson.

God has a remnant people today. It is a great privilege to be part of them, but one must be willing to endure persecution. As will be seen in Lesson 15, it also means a decision to separate from the things of this world. But it's worth it all, for all who are faithful will share in the rewards of the redeemed!

Satan is still out to destroy God's people.



14—The Spirit of Prophecy



One of the identifying marks of God's people, as described in **Revelation 12:17**, is that they have "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which, according to **Revelation 19:10**, is "the Spirit of prophecy." In this lesson, we will examine the way in which God has used prophecy through the years to bless and help His people and what the characteristics of a true prophet are. Ellen G. White, as a prophetess for today, will be examined in the light of God's word. You will find this a fascinating study!

Channel for God's truth

First of all, let's examine how prophecy works and what it is. In previous lessons, we considered various Bible prophecies, their symbolic and literal meanings, and their fulfillment.

Prophecy is history told in advance; it is a preview of future events in God's dealing with this world. Throughout all the ages since sin entered, God has been very merciful in doing nothing before first revealing it to His prophets. **Amos 3:7**. He spoke to the fathers through the prophets. **Hebrews 1:1**. The chain of prophetic revelation goes like this: From God to Jesus to His angel to the prophet to God's people. **Revelation 1:1, 2**. Gabriel is Christ's own angel of prophecy who stands in God's presence.

Some outstanding prophets of the Old Testament were Moses, a shepherd; David, a king; and Daniel, prime minister of both Babylon and Persia. Similarly, Miriam, the sister of Moses, Deborah, and Huldah were women who prophesied in the Old Testament times.

Prophets in the Christian church

God has placed prophets in His church as one of the gifts to unify and perfect the believers in the knowledge of Christ. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." **Ephesians 4:13**. See **1 Corinthians 12:28**.

Some outstanding prophets in the New Testament were Jesus Himself, John the Baptist, and John the Revelator. There were also prophetesses in those days, such as Anna (**Luke 2:36**) and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist. **Acts 21:9**.

The prophets served a valuable role among God's people. They presented a true picture of the spiritual condition of the church as a whole. However, when the people fell so deeply into apostasy that there was no more hope for them, then the prophets ceased to prophesy. **Lamentations 2:9**. And **Proverbs 29:18** affirms, "Where there is no vision, the people perish:..."

Characteristics of a true prophet

1. The first and broadest test we may apply to any professing prophet is to see if he confesses faith in Jesus Christ and preaches that He came in the flesh. In other words, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who came down to this earth to give His life as a ransom for sinners; the true prophet will proclaim this truth. "Hereby, know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God:..." **1 John 4:2, 3**.
2. Next, we can apply a second, equally important test to those prophets who profess Christianity. This test is found in **Isaiah 8:20**: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The words of the true prophet will harmonize with the law of God (the Ten Commandments) and the testimony of previous prophets of God. One who claims to be a prophet may pass every other test; but if his instruction is contrary to the Bible and the testimonies of other true prophets, he is false.
3. Once he has passed these two tests, we can apply the third: Do the prophet's predictions un-faillingly come to pass? **Deuteronomy 18:21**,

Prophecy is history
told in advance.

22. If the words which he has spoken in the name of the Lord do not come true, you can be confident that he was not sent by God; and we need not heed his warnings or advice! He is a false prophet. However, suppose a prophet predicts certain things that indeed do happen but at the same time teaches his followers to turn from God's way in one manner or another? Then he is also a false prophet. **Deuteronomy 13:1-3**. Therefore, the outcome of a prediction is not, in itself, a reliable sign that a person is sent by God. It is important to remember this, since most people are fascinated by a fulfillment, regardless of the character or teaching of the supposed prophet.

4. Another test deals with the personal life of the prophet. He will be known by his fruits. See **Matthew 7:15-20**. Frequently a person has arisen claiming to be a prophet sent by God, while his private life revealed greed, immorality, deceit, and great pride. This is an indication that he could not possibly be God's mouthpiece. A man who is used by a holy God to convey messages to other people will lead a holy life. This is not to say that he is perfect or infallible, but he should produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his life for all to see.
5. The last characteristic of a true prophet, which may appear to be a foregone conclusion, is that he communicates with God. This can be through God's speaking with the prophet directly or through His sending an angel with a message to him. God also communicates with His prophet through visions. A vision in the Biblical sense is a supernatural waking condition in which God reveals some truth or information to His servant. Besides visions, a prophet may also have dreams of divine origin. There are three types of dreams, one caused by daily activity being processed in one's subconscious mind during sleep; another is a nightmare, a dream which may be a direct result of evil forces; the last kind is one inspired by God's Spirit, conveying a very important message that must be related to God's people or the whole world.

Thus, a true prophet does not think up his messages by himself; they are completely independent of his thinking processes, his intellect, his learning, or his past experience. He is at the moment solely an instrument in God's hand.

Physical test of a true prophet

Certain physical phenomena occur when a prophet is in vision. A careful analysis of these facts will reveal the basic difference between the true

prophet of God and the spiritualistic medium or clairvoyant who claims to be able to predict the future.

Daniel was a great prophet in the Old Testament times. He described what happened to him when he was in vision.

1. He lost all of his own strength, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." **Daniel 10:8**. Daniel was in a sort of coma, lying prostrate on his face; yet he was able to hear a voice from far away speaking to him.
2. Then he sensed a hand touching him, which strengthened him and made him assume a position on his hands and knees. **Daniel 10:10**. Following this, he heard the command to stand up; and he stood, trembling.
3. As the heavenly messenger spoke, Daniel became speechless. **Daniel 10:15**. His lips were then touched by the angel, and he opened his mouth. The first words he spoke gave expression to the powerful way the vision affected him, and he stated again that he had neither strength nor breath. **Daniel 10:17**.
4. This speaking was supernatural, for he was not breathing; and who can live for more than a few minutes without breathing? The prophet was supernaturally sustained.
5. Furthermore, he was speaking without breath, which is humanly impossible, for it is air passing over the vocal cords that produces speech. The prophet Jeremiah explained this phenomenon in the following way: "Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." **Jeremiah 1:9**.

And David, another prophet of great standing in the Scriptures, said basically the same thing: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." **2 Samuel 23:2**. When a prophet thus speaks under the inspiration of God, he can never reverse his words. This was the experience even of Balaam, the apostatized prophet who tried to curse Israel, as recorded in **Numbers 23:20**.

6. When in vision, the prophet's eyes remain open and unblinking. **Numbers 24:16**.
7. The prophet is totally unconscious of his surroundings. **2 Corinthians 12:2-4**. We shall study this characteristic further in the section concerning Ellen G. White as the prophetess for today.

We should not regard the prophets as supermen or perfect human beings. They came from diverse

circumstances of life; some were married; some were faithful prophets at one time who later became unfaithful and left God, such as Samuel's sons. The work of these prophets varied, but they all had close contact with the people for whom they labored. They were very much like us, except that God saw fit to use them specifically as His spokespersons; He knew they would be humble and obedient to Him. Regarding the human instrument, we have the lesson of the Jewish people, who saw in Jesus only the "carpenter's son" and therefore rejected Him. Likewise today, many fail to see divinity in the message from God and reject it because it is delivered by unimpressive human beings. But we are to apply all the tests and thus be led into paths of truth by God's true prophets.

Ellen G. White as the prophetess for today

It is often supposed that there were no prophets after the death of John the Revelator. It is true that the canon of the Scriptures closes with the book of Revelation, but it was promised that the special gift of prophecy would remain with God's church until the end of time. See **1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:8, 11, 12**. The purpose of these gifts is to perfect the saints, the work of the ministry, and the body of Christ. Clearly, this gift of prophecy will remain in force until the church has reached perfection, an enviable condition that we have not yet reached. Therefore, we expect this gift to be in the church today.

A few years before the close of the 2,300 day/year prophecy in 1844, God desired to communicate directly to the world and His people important details concerning the closing events. The Holy Spirit had guided men, as they searched God's word, to understand the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9. And they preached the first and second angels' messages with a power that shook the world. But as the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven, the investigative judgment, began, a special work had to be done to prepare a people for Christ's advent. Review Lesson 12 for the history of the three angels' messages.

Born in 1827 in Gorham, Maine, Ellen Gould Harmon was to play a vital role as a spiritual counselor in the movement through which God would accomplish this work. Being of delicate health because of a nearly fatal accident that put an end to her formal schooling at the age of nine, Ellen was raised as a devout Methodist. Suffering much from the experiences of her accident and people's attitude toward her facial disfigurement, she early turned to Jesus for comfort. She was converted

when 11 years old and was baptized at the age of 12. She believed with all her heart the prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ in 1844 and, with others, bore the bitter disappointment when He did not come. Ellen's faith, however, remained strong.

She was not the first one through whom God wished to work. The initial vision was given to two others, but they both refused to obey Heaven's command to relate the vision to others. Therefore, God's Spirit left them, and God chose the weakest of all possible individuals to become His instrument. Beginning when she was 17 years old, Ellen received some 2,000 visions, the messages of which she was instructed to write down. Though at first unable even to hold a pen long enough to write a page, strength was miraculously given her; and until the age of 87 she wrote extensively—some 45,000 pages for books and periodicals, all in harmony with the Bible. She also passed the test of living a dedicated Christian life.

Through divine illumination, she penned a wealth of information on prophecy, religion, medical knowledge, ecological necessities, hygiene, diet, psychology, future events, and the fate of some large cities. Her amazing observations and predictions regarding the use of hygiene and sunlight in the care of the sick, the dangers of hypnosis, juvenile delinquency, the electrical currents in the brain, and the communication of diseases such as cancer and tuberculosis through flesh eating have been confirmed by science many years later. Her various counsels regarding these subjects were unknown and virtually unaccepted in her day. None of this was her own knowledge; it came from God, the Creator of earth and the human body.

Ellen Gould White (she was married in 1846 to James White and was the mother of four sons) had visions which were genuine and fully in harmony with the physical tests of a true prophet, as outlined in the preceding sections on characteristics and physical tests of a true prophet.

One of the early pioneers of the Great Second Advent Movement, J.N. Loughborough, who wrote a book by this title, stated on p. 204: "The first time I saw Mrs. E.G. White (formerly Miss Harmon) was in October 1852. On that day I saw her in a vision that lasted over one hour. Since that time I have had the privilege of seeing her in vision about fifty times. I have been present when physicians have examined her while in this state, and I esteem it a pleasure to bear testimony to what I have seen and know. I trust a narration of the facts in the case may not be carelessly cast aside for the random suppositions of those who have never seen her in this condition.



A few years before the close of the 2,300 day/year prophecy in 1844, God desired to communicate directly to the world and His people important details concerning the closing events.

“In passing into vision she gives three enrapturing shouts of ‘Glory!’ which echo and re-echo, the second, and especially the third, fainter, but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing. For about four or five seconds she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon, or one having lost his strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with superhuman strength, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns. All these movements are made in a most graceful manner. In whatever position the hand and or arm may be placed, it is impossible for anyone to move it. Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression, only differing from the normal in that she appears to be looking intently at some distant object. She does not breathe, yet her pulse beats regularly. Her countenance is pleasant, and the color of her face as florid as in her natural state.”

It is no wonder that these strange supernatural phenomena caused a great stir among the Christians of Ellen White’s day. We would not be any less astonished today. But note how the characteristics of the Bible prophets when in vision were all found in her experience. (1) She lost her strength, then (2) she received supernatural strength; (3) her eyes were always open; (4) she did not breathe; yet (5) her pulse was regular; and (6) she spoke without breath. The fact that she did not breathe was undoubtedly the most spectacular phenomenon of all, and it was tested many times by skeptical physicians. For example, a spirit medium, a certain Dr. Brown, had declared that her visions were of spiritualistic origin. When he watched her once and found out that she didn’t breathe, he turned very pale, gasped, “She does not breathe!” and ran out of the house as fast as he could go. —*The Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 211.

As stated previously, the true prophet conveys God’s messages independently of his own preferences and thinking. Often he does not even understand fully what he is saying. This was also true of Ellen G. White. She was not a scientist. To the contrary, she barely started normal schooling. She simply wrote as the Lord instructed her to declare important truths essential for the spiritual, mental, and physical health of mankind. She said in *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 344: “The whys and wherefores of this I know not, but I give you instruction as it is given me.”

We are thankful for this valuable source of information and for the humble woman who was used by God in her meekness and devotion to truth.



Where Jesus Reigns

Where Jesus reigns there is no fear,
 No restless doubt, no hopeless tear,
 No base deceit nor faithless prayer,
 No angry strife nor weak despair,
 No greed for gain nor selfish pride,
 No bitterness for aught denied,
 No evil tongue, no cruel arm,
 No envy, hate, nor wish to harm,
 No wicked lust, nor trace of stains,
 But all is pure where Jesus reigns.

Where Jesus reigns there is no night,
 For He is wisdom, love, and light;
 No raging sea nor tempest dread,
 But quietness and calm instead;
 No anxious care, no blind unrest,
 No heavy heart by guilt oppressed,
 No discontent, no gloomy days,
 But highest hope and sweetest praise;
 No stumbling oft nor galling chains,
 No shame nor sin where Jesus reigns.

Where Jesus reigns there’s joy untold,
 There’s wealth that’s richer far than gold,
 There’s service glad and courage true,
 There’s power to be and strength to do,
 There’s sacrifice and sweet content,
 There’s grace divine in mercy sent,
 There’s triumph over self and sin,
 And blessed peace abides within;
 There’s truest faith that never wanes—
 There’s love supreme where Jesus reigns.

—*Author unknown*

15—Crisis!

The thirteenth chapter of Revelation brings us face to face with a great religious crisis. In studying the symbols of Bible prophecy, whenever a world power works against the people of God, that power is depicted as a beast. So, in this chapter, two beasts are described as making war on God's people. The first is a leopard-like beast; the second is a beast having two horns like a lamb. As we look at each of these beasts, we will see that they work together in the last days.



The first beast

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him power, and his seat, and great authority." **Revelation 13:1, 2.**

This leopard-like beast had many of the characteristics of the great red dragon of Revelation 12. It also had seven heads and ten horns. Furthermore, it had characteristics from each of the beasts of Daniel 7. Let's examine the characteristics and see what they mean.

1. Rises out of the sea

Meaning: "And he saith unto me, the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." **Revelation 17:15.** It comes out of an area with a large population.

2. Seven heads

Meaning: The same as Rome in Revelation 12.

3. Ten horns

Meaning: The same as Rome in Revelation 12 and as the dreadful beast in Daniel 7, which is also Rome.

4. Like a leopard, feet as a bear, mouth as of a lion

Meaning: It is a composite of all the beasts of Daniel 7; it continues the spirit and practices of all these powers.

5. Given power by the dragon

Meaning: Satan is the dragon, as is the organization through which he worked against God's people—Rome in its seven different governmental forms.

6. It has a number—666 (Revelation 13:18)

Meaning: A note in the *Douay Bible* states: "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number."

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." **Revelation 13:3-8.**

We noted in Lesson 13 how the seven heads depicted the seven phases of Roman government. The last phase was the papal power. A deadly wound was inflicted upon this head in 1798, when the French General Berthier took the ruling pope, Pius IV, prisoner; the pope died in exile 1½ years later. All the world thought this would end the papacy, but God's word said, "No"—"His deadly wound was healed." Consider these facts:

1. Full papal sovereignty was restored by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in 1929. The Lateran Treaty was the official document.
2. There has been a tremendous growth of Catholic influence in many countries, including the United States.
3. The second Vatican Council was held in 1962-1965.

4. The movement among so-called Protestant churches to be united with Rome has grown rapidly. The Scriptures say that “all the world wondered after the beast.”

Most of the additional characteristics mentioned are the same as we studied regarding the little horn of Daniel 7, except the one mentioned in **Revelation 13:6**—“to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” The Catholic Church empowers its priests to forgive sins, but the Scriptures say, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” **1 Timothy 2:5**. Jesus was accused by the Jews of blasphemy. Why? Because He forgave sins. “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?” **Mark 2:7**. Jesus, being God, could forgive sin. For man—any man—to claim the right to forgive sin is blasphemy.

In place of the ministration of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary—see **Hebrews 7-9**—the Catholic Church has instituted the idolatrous ordinance of the mass. In this way it has blasphemed God’s sanctuary. For all of the above reasons, this first beast of Revelation 13 can be no other power than the Roman Catholic Church, just as was the little horn of Daniel 7.

This power is further identified in that it would “make war with the saints, and ... overcome them.” This was done with relentless fury all during its reign. At least 50 million of God’s true children were put to death at the direction of this power during the Middle Ages. Furthermore, all people will worship this power except a small number—those who have their names written in Heaven’s book of life.

The last link in the chain of evidence is its number—666. The leading title of the pope is “Vicar of the Son of God”—in Latin, *Vicarius Filii Dei*.

V	=	5						
I	=	1						
C	=	100						
A	=	0	F	= 0				
R	=	0	I	= 1				
I	=	1	L	= 50	D	= 500		
U	=	5	I	= 1	E	= 0		
S	=	<u>0</u>	I	=	<u>1</u>	I	=	<u>1</u>
		112		+ 53		+ 501	=	666



Revelation 13:9, 10 prophesies the final destruction of this power. See also **Revelation 18:5-24**. God will judge this apostate power and destroy it in the end.

The second beast

Now we will turn our attention to another beast. This one is in many respects entirely different from the leopard beast (Roman Catholic Church), and yet in the end it allies itself with and becomes like that first beast. “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” **Revelation 13:11**. See also **verses 12-17**. What a strange mixture this represents—looking and acting at first similar to a lamb and then taking on the attributes of a dragon! What are its characteristics?



1. Comes out of the earth

Meaning: As waters denote multitudes, nations, tongues, and people, the earth must depict an area sparse in population.

2. Has two horns like a lamb

Meaning: It arises peacefully. The two horns are not crowned, so it does not have royalty. These small horns refer to the two basic freedoms which have been this power’s strength.

3. Speaks like a dragon

Meaning: The dragon was a persecuting power, so this power will change from its lamblike character to that of persecutor.

4. Causes the whole earth to worship the first beast

Meaning: Its transformation will make it draw attention, not to itself, but to the Roman Catholic papacy.

5. Performs great miracles, even bringing fire down from heaven

Meaning: Fire came down on Mount Carmel to show who was the true God, and tongues of fire fell on the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. These miracles must depict a false religious revival, with false miracles. The purpose is deception.

6. Makes an image to the first beast

Meaning: Something people can worship that gives homage to the first beast, even if they are not directly worshipping the pope.

7. **Arises at approximately the time the papacy receives its deadly wound, 1798**

Meaning: Only one power can fit this description—the United States of America

8. **Decreases that all people who do not worship the image of the beast should be killed**

The leopard-like beast received a deadly wound, as already mentioned, in 1798. Just 22 years before, the United States had won its independence and was slowly and peacefully emerging as a world power. Its two great strengths (two horns) were religious and civil liberty, guaranteed in the Constitution.

But this nation, according to the prophecy, will become a persecuting power, a combination of church and state to enforce the dogmas of Roman Catholicism—the “mark of the beast.” To accomplish this, the Constitution will somehow have to be circumvented or altered. All people will be coerced on pain of economic deprivation and finally death to accept this mark. No other world power meets the characteristics of this second beast of Revelation 13 except the U.S.A.

To properly understand what this mark is, we need to look for that teaching which the Catholic Church uses to prove its authority.

“Question: *Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?”*

“Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”
—Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, p. 174.

This point will determine the eternal destiny of each person on earth. Only one of two choices will be possible: Either (1) accepting Sunday, the institution of the Catholic Church, or (2) obeying the fourth commandment of God, which declares that the seventh day is the holy Sabbath.

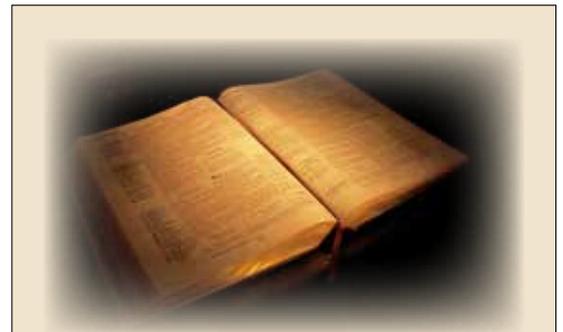
According to **Revelation 13:16**, this mark will be received by individuals in one of two ways—in their right hand or in their forehead. The hand is what people work with, and so some will obey Sunday legislation for economic reasons and as a convenient “day of pause,” as some have called it. Others will accept it in their foreheads—the seat of their convictions, thus for religious reasons. Unless one receives this mark one way or another, his privilege of doing business will be withdrawn. But contrary to the mark of the beast is the seal of God, which will be studied in the next lesson.

What a crisis this will be! Think for a moment how you would live if your right to buy and sell was taken from you and you could not use the

common means of exchange, including money, bank cards, and credit cards! But on the other hand, God warns what will happen to everyone who obeys the Sunday law: “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” **Revelation 14:9, 10**. This Course is one means God is using to spread this warning.

What will you stand in the day of decision? Only as we obey God’s commandments today will we be able to endure that last great test. To stand firm in spite of human threats and persecution is to reap rich rewards—to be accounted worthy to live with God for eternity! **Revelation 14:1-5** describes this class which is obedient to God. Let us make certain that we are among the group, not which accepts the mark of the beast, but which has the Father’s name written in their foreheads—a sign of their faithfulness to the principles of heaven.

All people will be coerced on pain of economic deprivation and finally death to accept this mark.



The Anvil of God’s Word

Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith’s door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

“How many anvils have you had,” said I,
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”
“Just one,” said he, and then with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.”

And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unchanged, the hammers gone.

—John Clifford

16—The Remnant

Revelation 14:1 depicts a special group of people standing with Jesus on Mount Zion. “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads.” In this study, with God’s help, we shall identify this group more clearly.

God’s will for mankind is that all be saved. “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” **1 Timothy 2:3, 4.** “And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” **Luke 3:6.** Despite the fact that it is God’s will that all be saved, He will never force salvation on anyone.

“Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” **Luke 13:23, 24.** “For many are called, but few are chosen.” **Matthew 22:14.** It is not that God arbitrarily chooses only a few, but because man is not willing to be saved in God’s appointed way, that many will be lost. Often, on a spur of the moment or under emotional experiences, people profess to accept Christ; but they just as often turn right back into a life of sin.

1 Kings 18:39 relates the Israelite people’s reaction to the fire of God in the days of Elijah: “And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, He is the God; The Lord, He is the God.” Yet just a few days later they had slipped back so far into their old ways that the prophet of God, Elijah, felt he was entirely alone. “And he came thither into a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.” **1 Kings 19:9, 10.** This was in B.C. 906.

In B.C. 599, there was a similar situation. Israel was scattered by false pastors, and a remnant was to be gathered. “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! Saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed My people; Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will

bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.” **Jeremiah 23:1-3.**

Again in B.C. 594, God’s professed people Israel turned away and were to be destroyed by God, with only a remnant left. See **Ezekiel 6:1-4, 8, 9.** A remnant of God’s people was re-established in B.C. 457. See **Ezra 9:8.**

When Christ Himself came down from heaven to Israel, His chosen people, very few accepted Him. Several years later, the apostle Paul spoke of the few who accepted Christ as their Saviour. “I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” **Romans 11:1-5.** So it has been throughout the ages. And so it will be in the last days of earth’s history! God will have a small, faithful remnant left over.

This last-day remnant is pictured in several Scripture texts in the book of Revelation. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,

So it has been throughout the ages. And so it will be in the last days of earth’s history! God will have a small, faithful remnant left over.



Right now the angels of God are restraining the nations from using their mammoth arsenals of deadly weapons and are preventing nuclear holocaust for a special reason.



which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” **Revelation 14:12; 12:17; 19:10.**

This special class of people has three characteristics: (1) They patiently wait for the Lord’s return, despite oppression; (2) they keep God’s Ten Commandments; and (3) they have the Spirit of prophecy as a special gift.

The last of God’s remnant people are a special class, because they live in a special time—a time of great deception and persecution. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” **2 Timothy 3:13.** “For there shall arise signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” **Matthew 24:24.** See also **Luke 18:1, 7, 8.**

It is under these forbidding circumstances that God’s people must live in the days just prior to Christ’s coming. Today, in a time of increased wickedness, God is doing an important work. “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.” **Revelation 7:1.** We have already learned the prophetic meaning of wind—strife and bloodshed. Right now the angels of God are restraining the nations from using their mammoth arsenals of deadly weapons and are preventing nuclear holocaust for a special reason. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” **Revelation 7:2, 3.**

The seal of God

What is this seal of God? An official seal contains three elements: (1) Name of the office holder, (2) his title, and (3) his territory. All three of these elements regarding God are found in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue—**Exodus 20:11**: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

1. His name is Lord.
2. His title is Creator (He “made”).
3. His territory is “heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.”

So, the lines are drawn. The ones who receive the seal of God are those who worship the Creator by honoring the day He set aside as a memorial of His created works. Those who worship the counterfeit sabbath of Rome, that symbol of idolatrous sun worship, Sunday, will receive the mark of the beast. This is why the remnant is described as those who keep the commandments of God.

God even knows how many will receive His seal. “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” **Revelation 7:4.** When it speaks of Israel here, it does not mean only literal Israelites, for as we examine who composes Israel, it is clear that it includes all who have the character of Israel—all who have overcome their sins. See **Romans 11:17; 10:12.**

“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” **Romans 9:6-8.** These overcomers are the ones who are shown standing on Mount Zion.

The message of God’s true rest day, the Sabbath, although almost lost during the Middle Ages, has been proclaimed loudly since about the year 1848 by the Advent people. Through this message, God is sealing His people. A special blessing is even pronounced on those who have died in Christ, being obedient to His law, during this time. “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” **Revelation 14:13.** These individuals have the special privilege of being called forth from their graves in a special early resurrection. See **Daniel 12:2.** They are called forth, along with those who nailed Christ to the cross, to witness Christ’s coming. **Revelation 1:7.**

The Scriptures give additional information about this special group, the 144,000, who are God’s remnant of the last day. “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which are not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault

before the throne of God.” **Revelation 14:3-5**. What do their characteristics mean?

1. **They are not defiled with women:** They have no connection with the whore (Roman Catholic Church) of **Revelation 17:5** or her daughters, the harlots (apostate Protestant churches); they are not defiled by false doctrines.
2. **They are virgins:** They carry the pure doctrine.
3. **They follow the Lamb** (Christ) wherever He goes: It is thought that the 144,000 will occupy a special place in eternity, serving Christ in the temple and accompanying Him from world to world.
4. **They are redeemed from among men** and are first fruits unto God: Being the saints who are alive when Jesus comes, they will be the first to see Him.

Why do they sing a new song that no other person can learn? Because the 144,000 endure the severest tests: (1) They will face the wrath of the wicked under the mark of the beast (not being permitted to buy or sell, and having the death sentence pronounced against them). **Revelation 13:12, 15-17**. (2) They will endure the seven last plagues as the wrath of God (**Revelation 15:1**) is poured out on the world for accepting the mark of the beast (Sunday). **Revelation 14:9, 10**. They will be protected and sustained during the plagues. **Isaiah 33:16**. (3) They will go through the time of Jacob’s trouble, when probation has closed and Jesus is no longer interceding for man. **Jeremiah 30:5-7**.

“Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (**Genesis 32:24-30**), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble....

“Though God’s people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth’s sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise: I’ will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.’ Revelation 3:10.” —Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 616, 619.

Who will be part of this number? Will you? You can be—by accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour today. He will endow you with strength to keep His commandments; He will give you the courage to endure persecution; and He will welcome you into His mansions above. “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” **Matthew 25:34**.



The Sabbath Day

We won’t give up the Sabbath,
God’s holy, happy day;
We will not yield its sacred hours
For all that men may say.
The link that binds our earth to heaven,
And draws our souls on high—
The precious harbinger of rest
In homes beyond the sky.

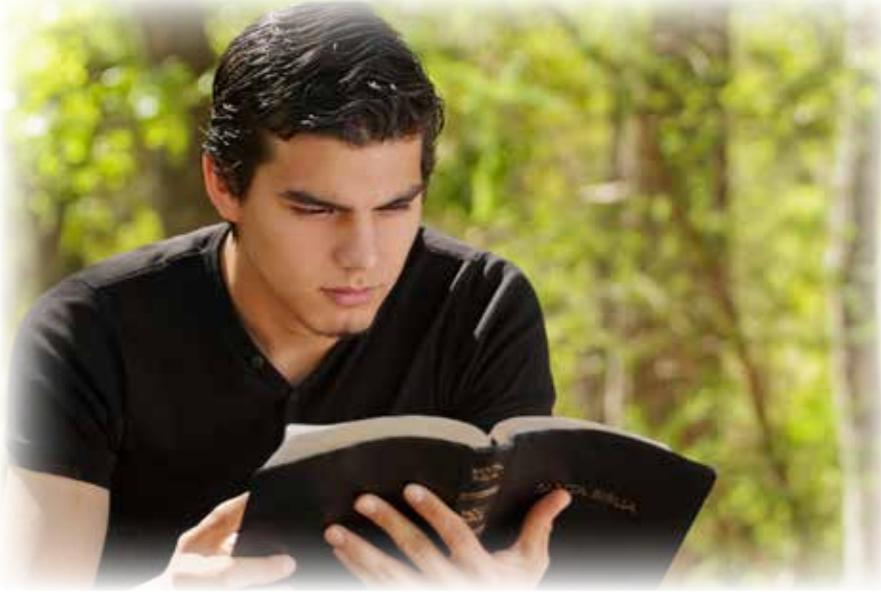
We won’t give up the Sabbath,
Our heritage from heaven,
The gift of God to rich and poor,
The day of all the seven.
The hours of rest for weary minds,
And tired and toiling hands;
The day when open wide to all
The gate of heaven stands.

We won’t give up the Sabbath,
Though pleasures tempt and try;
We will not sell our day of rest
At Mammon’s tyrant cry.
The ancient and divine command
Our guide and strength shall be;
We’ll holy keep the Sabbath day
From sin and labor free.

We won’t give up the Sabbath;
Its hours are all the Lord’s;
And precious peace and purest joy
The holy day affords.
Lord, help us all to value more
Thy boon to mortals given;
Enjoy the Sabbath rest below,
And then the rest of heaven.

—Author unknown

17—Christ Our Righteousness



In this third section, we will examine practical applications of man's personal relationship to his Creator and Saviour. As we do so, it must be kept constantly in mind that salvation is not a result of man's efforts to please and obey God but is a free gift. However, good deeds are the natural fruit of a complete surrender to Jesus. We are saved by grace, through faith in the Son of God. And since "faith without works is dead" (see **James 2:17, 18**), all these facets tie together to make a perfect Christian, who is a blessing to his fellowmen and a delight to God.

In this lesson, the most beautiful subject found in the Scriptures, we will learn what we can expect from Jesus and what He expects of us for our eternal salvation.

We are sinners

This realization is the first step toward our salvation, and even this realization is a gift from God! Without the divine work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, man would never make this important first step. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." **Romans 3:10-12, 23**. Furthermore, we are helpless to do anything to change our condition. It is just as impossible for us to overcome evil in our own strength at it is for a leopard to change

his spots or the Ethiopian to change his skin. **Isaiah 64:6**. Feel with Paul the inner conflict and helplessness sin brings upon us. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" **Romans 7:24**. Yet, the Christian's goal is perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect." **Matthew 5:48**. How is this possible?

What must we do to be saved?

No more poignant entreaty is found in all of the sacred Scriptures than the loving call of God to sinners in **Isaiah 1:18**: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." God promises complete cleansing and renewal! First we must listen to His loving voice and repent of our sins; then we must confess and receive the forgiveness and cleansing that He promises.

What will God do for us?

He has promised to give us a new heart and a new spirit! "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." **Ezekiel 36:26**. We can receive the righteousness of Christ by faith. Christ justifies, or forgives, all the past sins of those who believe in Him and repent. We can never justify ourselves. Only the Sinless One, who has borne the full penalty of sin—death—for every man can satisfy the claims of the unchangeable law of God. **Romans 3:22-26**.

Christian growth

Once we realize our sins are forgiven, we are free from that heavy load of guilt, which weighs the sinner down. Guilt causes inner conflict and frustration, which is frequently manifested in both physical and mental illnesses. Many a crime is committed because an individual feels guilty. And, once done, these deeds bring an ever-heavier load of guilt. Is it any wonder that the hospitals and prisons are so full? But when we come to Jesus, He gives us complete freedom from guilt—complete cleansing! We can be as "white as snow"! Those who walk after the Spirit are not condemned. **Romans 8:1**.

It is just as impossible for us to overcome evil in our own strength at it is for a leopard to change his spots or the Ethiopian to change his skin.

Once forgiven, then, we must press on by faith toward perfection, forgetting the mistakes of the past but still remembering the lessons we learned so the sins will not be repeated. **Philippians 3:13-15**. Daily, as we look to Christ, we will become like Him and be changed into His image from glory to glory. **2 Corinthians 3:18**.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.” —Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 456.

Justification, or forgiveness of past sins, is the work of a moment. But *sanctification*—being made holy day by day—is the work of a lifetime! **1 John 1:6, 7** illustrates how we must walk in the light as Christ daily cleanses us from sin. “If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Every man belongs either to the saved, or holy, class or to the unsaved, or unholy, class. Until the words of **Revelation 22:11** are sounded by Christ, it is possible for a person to change from one class to the other. See **1 Corinthians 10:12; Acts 3:19**.

By faith, as we give all to Christ—our hearts, our wills, our service—we also receive all that He has to offer—the fullness of Himself, His daily blessing, and His strength, purity, and righteousness. He will be our all in all!

Salvation's three sides

Past tense: Justification. Grace and salvation were given before the world began. **2 Timothy 1:9**. Christ was slain from the foundation of the world. **Revelation 13:8**. We have been justified by faith. **Romans 5:1**. This is justification—we *are saved*.

Present tense: Sanctification. After being reconciled (justified), we are saved by Christ's life—by patterning our lives after His. **Romans 5:10**. This is accomplished by the experiences and trials He permits to come to us to cleanse us from all imperfection. **1 Peter 1:6, 7**. We are to be conformed to His image. **Romans 8:29**. We are changed into Christ's image by beholding Him. **2 Corinthians 3:18**. This is sanctification—we *are being saved*.

Future tense: Glorification. When Christ appears, we shall be like Him. **1 John 3:2**. When He comes the second time, we will receive salvation. **Hebrews 9:28**.

Salvation will be revealed in the last time. **1 Peter 1:3-5**. This is glorification—we *will be saved*.

Thus, without Christ we as sinners can do nothing; but through the righteousness of Christ, freely given and living within us, we can reach the goal of perfection. Amazing love!

*The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell.*

—F.M. Lehman

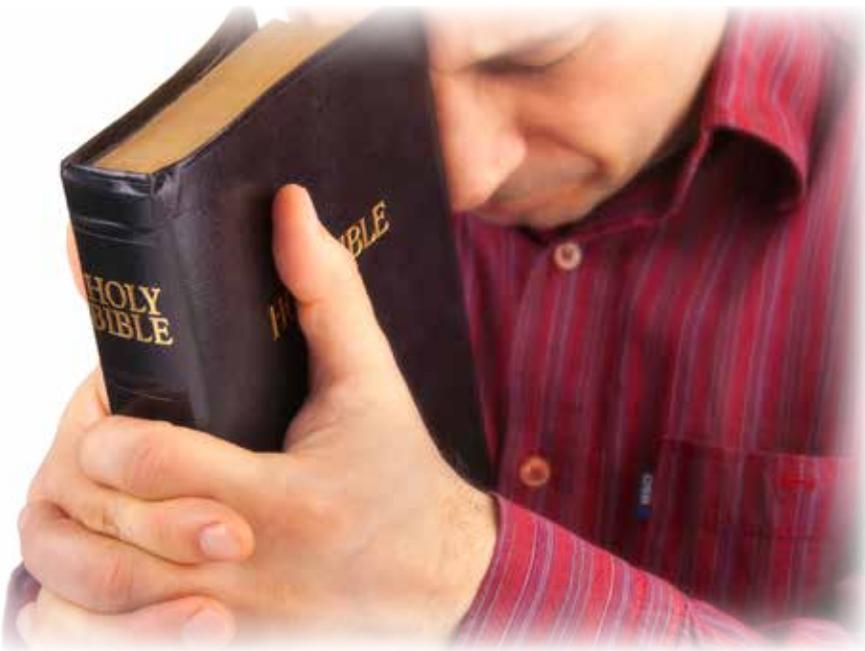


Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no tongues but our tongues
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side.

—Annie Johnson Flint



18—Grace, Faith, Love, and the Law



“**B**elieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!”

“Keep the commandments, and you will surely have eternal life!”

“The commandments were abolished at the cross. We are saved by grace, not the law!”

Do such expressions sound familiar? Conflicting statements of this type are frequently heard. No wonder many say, “What’s the use? Either way, I’ll be lost!”

But, in this lesson, we want to see how four facets of our Christian walk to salvation all harmonize in a beautiful whole.

What is grace?

In the days of the American Revolutionary War, there lived in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, a plain Baptist pastor, Peter Miller, who enjoyed the friendship of General George Washington. There also lived in that town one Michael Wittman, an evil-minded man who did everything in his power to abuse and oppose that pastor.

But Michael Wittman was involved in treason and was arrested and sentenced to death. The old preacher started out on foot and walked the seventy miles to Philadelphia in order to plead for the guilty man’s life. He was admitted into General Washington’s presence and begged for the life of the traitor.

“No, Peter,” said Washington, “I cannot grant you the life of your friend.”

“My friend!” exclaimed the preacher. “He is the bitterest enemy I have!”

“What?” cried Washington. “You have walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I will grant the pardon.”

And he did. And Peter Miller took Michael Wittman from the very shadow of death, back to his own home in Ephrata. But he went no longer as an enemy but as a friend.

Another story will further illustrate the meaning of grace, or unmerited favor. On the eve of Waterloo, June 18, 1815, the rain was coming down steadily and relentlessly. Around the farmhouses of Hougemont and La Haye Saint, the sheaves of harvested corn looked sodden and spoiled. Napoleon had ordered Marshall Ney to place selected sentries on patrol around these strategic farms to prevent Marshall Bluecher and the German army from joining their British allies.

In the large cornfield outside the wall of La Haye Saint, a tall Corporal of the Old Guard had been called for sentry duty. He did his beat, up and down, in the driving rain. On one side, in the far distance he could see the sullen glow of British campfires. On the other, there was no sign of the Prussians. Up and down—up and down! He was getting weary, and he felt stiff and chilled. The corn shocks looked inviting; under them it was dry; one big sheaf turned over would make a good mattress. Certainly the enemy would not be out on such a night as this; there wasn’t a sound anywhere but the swish and splash of the rain. O, for twenty minutes’ rest and warmth; no officers would likely come around. No one would know! He looked all around, but nothing stirred but that monotonous swish of the steady rain. Good! He rolled up his greatcoat for a pillow and laid down the dry sheaf. Taking off his tall military hat and putting his long musket with its fixed bayonet by his side, the Corporal was soon comfortably covered and clear of the rain. A few minutes more, and he was fast asleep.

But that night Napoleon was taking no chances, in spite of his orders to Ney. Commanding his orderly to bring out his favorite horse, Marengo, and bundled up in his well-known long cloak, Napoleon and the orderly set out on a tour of the sentries around the farmhouses. All of them, alert, challenged these riders until the big cornfield was reached.

Four facets of our
Christian walk
to salvation all
harmonize in a
beautiful whole.

The rain had finally stopped, and the clouds were breaking up. Napoleon strained his eyes to find a sentry there but failed. So, leaving Marengo with his orderly, he quietly began walking in the field. No sentry anywhere! A ray of light from the moon suddenly shone on something bright in the middle of the field. Stealthily Napoleon walked toward it and found a musket and bayonet on the damp ground, as well as a sentry asleep under a corn shock! Quietly the Emperor picked up the musket and stood like a statue, keeping guard, yet watching his man. Presently the brightness of the moon wakened the sleeping sentry. He rubbed his eyes, looked around, noticed his musket gone, and rolled out on hands and knees. There, looking up, he met the bent head and stern eyes of the Emperor.

“Mon Dieu! C’est l’Empereur!” Springing to attention, he stood shaking before Napoleon. Falling on his knees, he pleaded, “Sire, take my bayonet and kill me yourself!”

It is said that Napoleon replied, “Corporal! You know your fate tomorrow morning. But listen—I have kept your watch and guard—your life is spared. Resume guard!” From that time on, what would not that soldier do for his Emperor?!

This was grace! But grace does not permit continued transgression. **Romans 6:1, 2, 15, 16.** Grace brings salvation as a gift, through faith. And grace is what Christ offers us as a result of His death in our place. **Ephesians 2:8-10.**

Faith and love

Faith, on the other hand, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” **Hebrews 11:1.** Faith is taking God at His word. It is simply and literally believing that God says what He means and means what He says. In other words, His promises are sure. We can place our utmost confidence in Him and never be disappointed. Faith is the power which enables the born-again Christian to accept the grace of Christ and appropriate His righteousness for himself. Faith overcomes the world. **1 John 5:4.**

Contrary to much common preaching, faith does not make void God’s law but establishes it! **Romans 3:31.** When by faith we accept the grace of Christ, we will want and will also be enabled to keep the law of God, which can be summed up under one heading—LOVE. And love has two divisions—love to God and love to our fellowmen. In fact, love is the fulfilling of the law. **Romans 13:9, 10.** True love keeps the commandments, because the law is a transcript of God’s character, which is love. When our children truly love us, they seek to please us by cheerful obedience. Thus, if we love

God, we will do His bidding. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” **John 14:15.**

Two laws

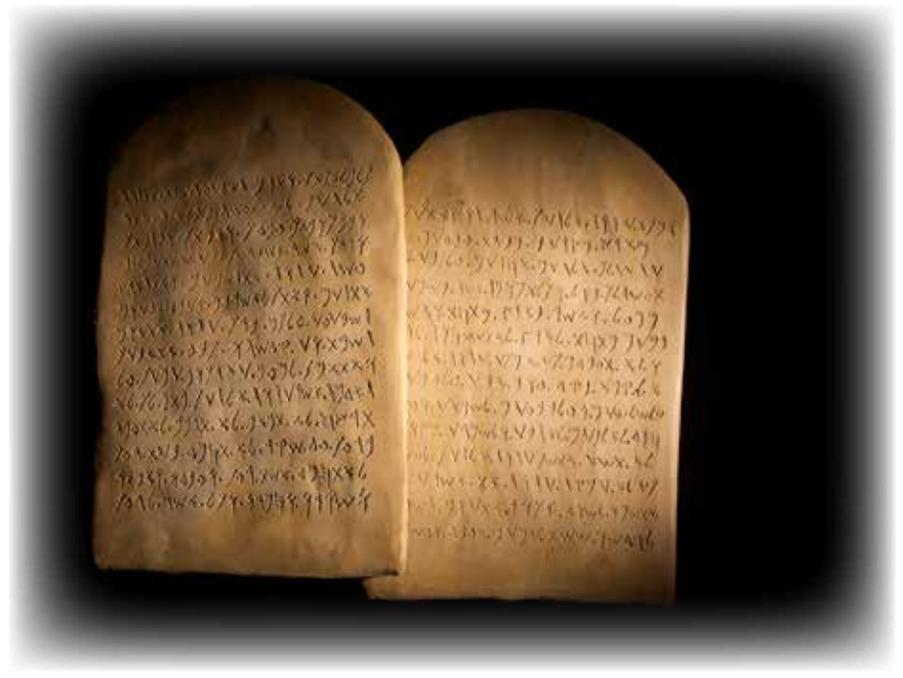
It is necessary to distinguish between the moral law (the Ten Commandments), which is eternal, and the ceremonial laws, which were nailed to the cross. The ceremonial law was a temporary one of types and shadows pointing to the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. It was written by Moses on parchment at God’s command. **Deuteronomy 31:24-26.** After Christ’s death on the cross, the ceremonial or sacrificial laws had no further significance. See **Colossians 2:14, 17.**

By contrast, the Ten Commandments, the transcript of God’s character, are eternal. “... All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever,...” **Psalm 111:7, 8.** The Ten Commandments were not only spoken directly by God but were also inscribed on enduring stone by God Himself. **Exodus 20:1,19; 31:18; 25:16.**

What the moral law can and cannot do

God’s law can do several things for the sinner. It can give him a knowledge of sin and condemn him. **Romans 3:23, 19.** In other words, it acts as a spiritual mirror to show where we have done wrong. **James 1:23-25.** It judges man. See **James 2:10-12.** And it acts as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, who alone can forgive one’s transgression of the law. **Galatians 3:24.**

The Ten Commandments, the transcript of God’s character, are eternal.

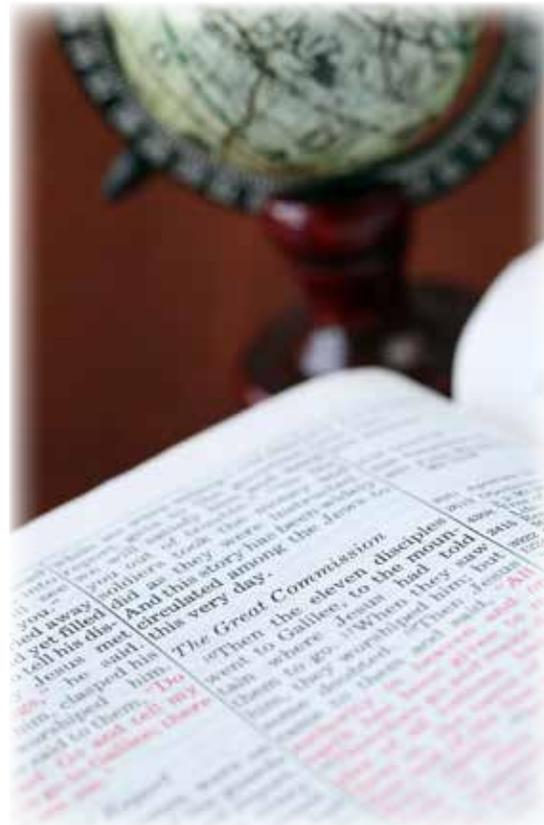


However, the law cannot forgive the sinner. **Romans 3:20**. Nor can it make him want to obey God or be subject to His law. **Romans 8:7**. The law points us to Christ. Christ does not condemn us, for the law has already done that; instead, He pardons the repentant sinner freely and completely. **Acts 13:38, 39**. Jesus becomes one's righteousness and sanctification, his Redeemer. Thus when a sinner is forgiven, the Lord writes the law within his heart and gives him power to overcome sin. **Hebrews 8:10**.

Characteristics of the law

Whether he acknowledges it or not, every human being is a sinner. Not one is good. All have come short of the expectations our Creator has for us. **Romans 3:23**. Likewise we need to remember that God's moral law, the Ten Commandments (found in **Exodus 20:1-17**), is the perfect law. It is holy, just, and spiritual. **Romans 7:12, 14**. It is referred to further in the Scriptures as the royal law. When we keep its precepts, we become sons and daughters of the King of the universe! What a privilege! **James 2:8**. The psalmist David called it the perfect law in **Psalms 19:7**. James called it the perfect law of liberty. Remember, also, that God's law is eternal. It will stand forever and ever. **Psalm 111:7, 8**.

How wonderfully grace, faith, love, and the law complement one another to make it possible for



God's law is eternal.
It will stand forever
and ever.

the sinner to be saved! Marvelous love of our wonderful heavenly Father! Let's appreciate and accept His loving plan for our salvation!

Lesson 19 will help us understand how a converted man changes. It will show how prayer is the breath of a Christian.



The Pilot

Am I upon life's sea alone
With no sure hand upon the helm,
My bark so frail, unseen, unknown,
Upon a vast, uncharted deep,
E'er at the mercy of the winds
And billows high that o'er me sweep?

Nay, nay! I sail a charted sea,
And I have One who knows the way
To yonder shore, to pilot me.
The winds may blow, the billows roar,
But He who at the helm doth stand
Hath sailed the sea of life before.

He knows the way, my Pilot brave—
And when temptation's winds arise,
He from their power my bark doth save,
For He hath braved that storm before.
And when the waves of suffering roll,
With awful might my frail bark o'er—

He steers a course so true, so sure,
That I with Him the billows ride,
Made strong through suffering endure.
When in the dark I cannot see,
I feel His presence ever near
And rest—for Jesus pilots me.

—*Author unknown*

19—The New Life/Prayer

Since we learned in Lesson 17 that all men are sinners, we can also understand that a definite change is needed before one can be brought back into harmony with God. At creation man was made perfect, innocent; he was the image of God physically, intellectually, and spiritually. But because man sinned by breaking God's law and is still doing so today (**Romans 8:7**), he needs a conversion, or a new birth. **Jeremiah 17:9** portrays the deceitfully wicked nature of man's heart. It is impossible for him to do good when he is so accustomed to doing evil. **Jeremiah 13:23**. The things of God appear foolish to the natural, unconverted man. **1 Corinthians 2:14**. Thus man, born into sin, must be reborn of the Spirit of God.

Jesus spoke of this new birth experience to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came to see Jesus one night. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." **John 3:3-8**.

How, then, is conversion, this spiritual rebirth, attained? Man without God is hopeless. He is an alien from God, an outcast, a prodigal son. He is on death row—utterly destitute. But God does not leave him in this hopeless condition. He saves him by hope in Christ. **Romans 8:24**. Our hope is centered in Jesus as:

- The Son of God. **John 3:16**.
- The Lamb of God slain for man's sin. **John 1:29**.
- The Saviour. **Matthew 1:21**.
- The only Mediator. **1 Timothy 2:5**.

Jesus is the only way to salvation. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." **John 14:6**. When the sinner comes to Jesus for help and repents, his life can be changed. **Acts 2:38; 3:19**. His longing for a clean heart and a right spirit will be fulfilled by the Saviour.



The prayer of David is a model for those who realize they are sinners and who are seeking for forgiveness and cleansing of heart. Listen to the earnest pleading of David after he had committed a great sin against God and his fellowmen: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." **Psalms 51:1-3, 7, 9, 10, 17**.

The Lord promises to give the contrite, repentant sinner a new heart. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." **Ezekiel 36:26**.

A converted man will die to self and to the world and will live a new life in Christ. He will give definite evidence of the thorough reformation that has come about in his life. He will bear sweet, precious fruit. In the Scriptures, these good works are called the "fruit of the Spirit," because they do not come from man himself but from the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-

In the Scriptures, these good works are called the "fruit of the Spirit," because they do not come from man himself but from the Holy Spirit.

suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.” **Galatians 5:22, 23**. Man becomes a new creature in Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:17**. He begins to keep God’s law as Jesus did. **John 15:10**. Furthermore, he will grow in grace and knowledge as he climbs the ladder to perfection. **2 Peter 3:18**. By beholding Christ, he is changed into His image from glory to glory. **2 Corinthians 3:18**.

“Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ’s, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.” —Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 58.

For this new creature to live and grow, he must breathe. For a Christian, prayer is the breath of life. A Christian writer has called prayer “the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 94.

What is prayer? It is a cry for help and mercy from someone in distress. **Psalm 31:9, 10**. It is a call for strength and refuge during trouble. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” **Psalm 46:1**. A praying man opens his heart to God as to a trusted friend. **Luke 11:2**. When a sinner approaches the throne of grace through prayer, by faith he presents his needs to Jesus, his Saviour and High Priest, who understands him as no one else can. **Hebrews 4:15, 16**. He communes with Jesus, his unfailing Friend. **John 15:15**.

What does prayer accomplish? First of all, it helps us feel our need for God and our utter dependence on Him. It helps us focus our eyes upward instead of inward. It helps us “clear the air” and

unburden our souls to One who understands and sympathizes. There are definite results when we pray. God rewards all who come to Him in faith. “... He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” **Hebrews 11:6**.

Sincere prayer is always answered—not necessarily as one might wish but according to His plan and as He sees is best. Some prayers are answered immediately, as in **Daniel 9:21-23**. Other prayers are answered after a delay, but we are encouraged not to faint or give up. **Luke 18:1-8**. Remember that “all things work together for good to them that love God,...” **Romans 8:28**. The experiences of our lives appear like jumbled puzzle pieces to us, but in God’s master plan He sees the end result and knows where every piece fits. Accordingly, we can trust that a lovely scene will be brought to view when the picture of one’s life is complete!

How should we pray? As in any other endeavor in life, we are to pray in a manner most likely to achieve success. All Heaven will open to us if we pray *in Jesus’ name*. **John 14:13; 15:16**. We must pray *in faith*, not wavering. **James 1:5-8**. We are not just to ask God for things but *thank Him* for His blessings. **Philippians 4:6**. And it is vital that we *listen* as well as talk to God. “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.” **Habakkuk 2:1**. While there are times and places for public prayer (**Matthew 18:19, 20**), the most effective and soul-reviving prayers are offered when one is alone with God. **Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23**.

What attitude is necessary for prayer to be answered? We must not turn our hearts away from God’s holy law if we expect to receive an answer from the God who made the law! “He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” **Proverbs 28:9**. In fact, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” **Psalm 66:18**. Thus, we must confess and forsake our sins if we want answers to prayer. **Proverbs 28:13**. Furthermore, we are to forgive and pray for others, even our enemies and persecutors. **Matthew 6:14, 15; 5:44**. As an example, Job’s captivity was turned when he prayed for his inadequate friends. **Job 42:10**. It is of special importance to pray in these last days of deception and peril just before the Lord’s coming. “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” **1 Peter 4:7**. See also **Luke 21:34-36**. “Pray without ceasing.” **1 Thesalonians 5:17**.

The next two lessons will outline the results of conversion and highlight the meaning of each of God’s commandments along with the blessings that come when one obeys them.

For a Christian,
prayer is the breath
of life.



20—Promises in God's Law, Part 1

God has given many beautiful, abundant promises. With all of these promises, He treats us as we often treat our children; we make an agreement with them, such as, "If you help me, you will receive a special treat!" Similarly, God's promises are given to man on the condition of his obedience. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." **1 John 2:3, 4.** If the Jewish people had remained faithful to God, they would have remained His chosen nation. They had promised at Mount Sinai, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." **Exodus 24:7.** When they did not keep their part of the agreement, God could not fulfill His promises to them.

Many consider God's commandments "yokes of bondage," but the apostle James describes them as the law of liberty. **James 1:25.** The apostle John stated that God's "commandments are not grievous." **1 John 5:3.** There are great blessings promised to man when he is obedient to God's law, which gives liberty from the dread curse of sin with all its accompanying sorrow, disease, and woe.

When Christ was on earth, He was asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." **Matthew 22:36-40.**

The entire law of God can be summarized in one word—LOVE. The first four commandments show how love to God is expressed, and the remaining six reveal love for one's fellowmen. In this lesson, we will discuss the first four, which show how love to God is expressed.

On Mount Sinai, God spoke the moral law with His own voice. The first part of it is as follows:

1. "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, vis-

iting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.
4. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." **Exodus 20:1-11.**

First commandment

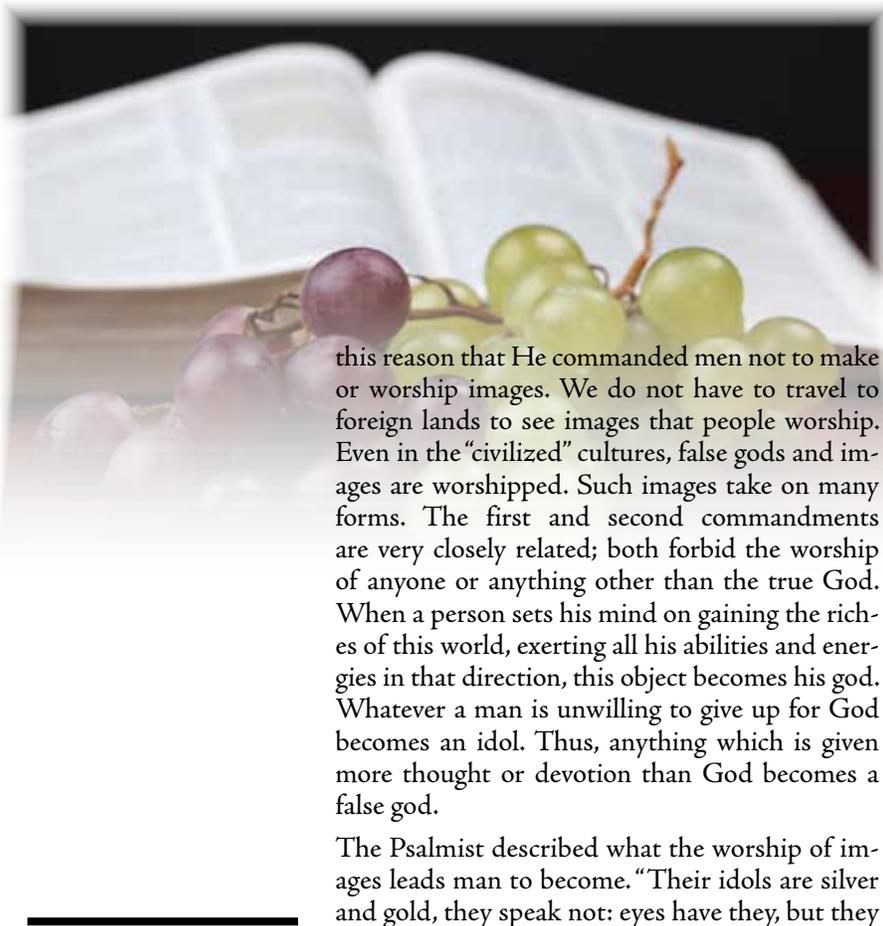
The first commandment strikes at all false gods. By putting the Creator first and foremost in our emotions, all else fades into insignificance by comparison. Who could think of worshipping any god made of wood or stone, when he has the privilege of worshipping the One who loves man so much, not only because He created him but also because He redeemed him!

Just as a husband or wife promises to devote all of his affections to his life partner, so the Christian promises to love God supremely. In turn, God promises to be a loving Father to him; even more, He promises him the privilege of being a joint heir with Christ. He is adopted into God's family. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." **Romans 8:14-17.**

Second commandment

God knew that man would be tempted to lose sight of the living God, whom he could not visibly see, and be attracted to tangible objects. It is for





this reason that He commanded men not to make or worship images. We do not have to travel to foreign lands to see images that people worship. Even in the “civilized” cultures, false gods and images are worshipped. Such images take on many forms. The first and second commandments are very closely related; both forbid the worship of anyone or anything other than the true God. When a person sets his mind on gaining the riches of this world, exerting all his abilities and energies in that direction, this object becomes his god. Whatever a man is unwilling to give up for God becomes an idol. Thus, anything which is given more thought or devotion than God becomes a false god.

The Psalmist described what the worship of images leads man to become. “Their idols are silver and gold, they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” **Psalm 115:4-8**. A person will never rise higher than his ideal; if his ideal is only a statue or other object, he will never be changed into the likeness of God. God can adopt us as His children only when we accept Him as our Father.

Third commandment

When God says we are not to take His name in vain, this prohibition encompasses a great deal. In addition to forbidding the use of God’s name in cursing and swearing, this commandment is a safeguard to the integrity of God’s family of believers. How would you feel if a renowned criminal carried the same name as yours, and even claimed to be a member of your family, when he really was not? Would you not do everything possible to dissociate yourself from such an individual? So it is that God wants us either to be like Him or not to bear His name at all. Nothing has caused greater disrepute to be heaped upon the cause of Christianity than for those who carry the name of Christ to commit vicious deeds and live immoral lives—all under the guise of Christianity.

Fourth commandment

The fourth commandment gives everyone a unique way to show the world that he honors God and accepts Him as Creator and Lord. Every seventh day, man is called to remember his Creator, who set apart this special day for man to communicate with Him, for necessary physical rest, and for spiritual refreshing.

The origin of this commandment is found in the earliest verses of Scripture. The very day after man was created was the first Sabbath. “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” **Genesis 2:2, 3**.

God Himself gave man an example in Sabbath observance. He rested, and He calls upon man to do the same. Since that first seventh day, these 24 hours of time each week were not to be considered on the same level as those of the other days of the week, because the Lord sanctified this day. To sanctify means to “set apart for a holy purpose.” By observing that day, we acknowledge the authority of God as well as His creatorship.

Jesus taught the true purpose of the Sabbath. “And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” **Mark 2:27**. The holy day was made to be a blessing to mankind. In the command to keep the seventh day as holy time is embodied a promise: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” **Isaiah 58:13, 14**.

And the prophet Isaiah declared that in the new earth, which God will create for His redeemed ones, the Sabbath will also be observed. “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord.” **Isaiah 66:22, 23**.

Observing the first four of the Ten Commandments, we not only honor the great Creator but also enrich our own lives through communion with Him.

God can adopt us
as His children only
when we accept
Him as our Father.

21—Promises in God’s Law, Part 2

In the previous lesson, we studied how God’s commandments, spoken by Him on Mount Sinai, are not restrictions of our freedom but rather promises of God—promises of freedom from the bondage of sin. We examined the first four commandments, which show man’s responsibilities in his relationship with God. All of these duties are given to prevent a person from being separated and alienated from Him. The promise in the second commandment is that the Lord will show mercy to all who love Him and keep His commandments.

Now we will examine the last six commandments to find more of God’s promises.

Fifth commandment

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” **Exodus 20:12.**

This commandment, even more clearly than all the rest, has a promise directly connected with it. It was amplified by the apostle Paul: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” **Ephesians 6:1-4.** This commandment assures and promises a happy, harmonious relationship between parents and their children.

From the promises delineated in this commandment, it can be clearly seen that God’s commands are of a positive nature, not just a series of “Thou shalt not’s,” which they appear to be at first glance. Each one is a positive promise of “obey and live”—live life at its fullest!

For this reason, it is incomprehensible that God would ever do away with His law or its promises. Christ Himself clearly stated that His mission was not to destroy the law but to show mankind how it is to be kept. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall

be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:17-19.** The consistent teaching and life of Jesus were a direct fulfillment of His prophesied mission, which was to make the law clear and easily understood. “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.” **Isaiah 42:21.**

God was not pleased with the exacting obedience to the letter of the law exhibited by the Pharisees, for He stated, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:20.**

Sixth commandment

Magnification of the law by Christ is also seen in the sixth commandment. It states simply, “Thou shalt not kill.” **Exodus 20:13.** But Jesus showed that its meaning extends much further than the overt act of taking another person’s life. He showed that murder begins in the heart, and that is where the sin occurs. Anger toward his brother was what caused Cain to take Abel’s life. **Genesis 4:3-8.** Jesus emphasized the spirit of the sixth commandment when He said that being angry with another person is the first step toward committing murder. **Matthew 5:21-24.** God will not be able to hear our prayers and petitions if we harbor animosity toward our fellowmen. How easily we can become guilty of the crime of murder by just hating someone!

God will not be able to hear our prayers and petitions if we harbor animosity toward our fellowmen.





Jesus taught that it is not our prerogative to take up arms even in defense of a good cause.

Let us consider this commandment further. Few of us would want to be guilty of actually taking the life of another human being, but for many people the issue becomes confused in time of war. Nationalism, pride, and old animosities build up over many years; every nation on earth has a certain amount of national pride. Each sees its own deeds in a good light and considers those who are opposed to it to be evil. How is the Christian to act in such situations? “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” **Matthew 5:43, 44.**

God’s people will have no part in national disputes. They are good citizens of their respective countries, but they realize that their true citizenship is not on this earth but in heaven. Their heavenly citizenship transcends all earthly boundaries. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” **Galatians 3:27, 28.** Because of this fact, God’s people will not participate in warfare.

Jesus taught that it is not our prerogative to take up arms even in defense of a good cause. When He was being taken captive by His enemies, one of His disciples tried to defend Him. “And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” **Matthew 26:51, 52.**

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.” **John 18:36.**

A Christian is to be a perfect example of good citizenship. See **1 Peter 2:13-17.** He is to promptly and honestly pay his taxes and fully obey the laws of his country up to the point where those laws conflict with God’s universal, eternal law. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” **Mark 12:17.**

When confronted with the choice of obeying God’s law not to kill or the law of a country to take up arms, the Christian’s answer must always be similar to that of the early apostles: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” **Acts 5:29.** This commandment, the sixth, promises that our lives as well as those of our dear ones will be protected.

Seventh commandment

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” **Exodus 20:14.**

The seventh commandment is the safeguard of marital and family happiness. God gave it to protect the home life from the ravages of the great enemy of God. The marriage institution is one of the two institutions given to man at his creation, the other one being the Sabbath. Adam was given one wife; and Eve, one husband. It was never God’s will for anyone to have several wives or husbands. In the creation of Eve was demonstrated the closeness that is to exist between husband and wife. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” **Genesis 2:18, 21-24.**

God made the woman from a bone taken from Adam’s side, showing that she was to be an equal with her husband, to stand at his side. She was not to be trodden under his foot, nor was she to be his head.

The world is full of unhappy marriages and broken homes. This is the result of disobeying God’s commandment—“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Such great heartaches as are found in homes today would never occur if man would only abide by God’s will. Jesus taught that adultery begins in the imagination. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” **Matthew 5:27, 28.** If we allow our emotions and thoughts to run rampant, we permit Satan to feed thoughts into our minds and open the door to sin. Only in undeviating obedience to the seventh commandment is there assurance of true joy and happiness for ourselves and our children.

Eighth commandment

The eighth commandment is also one which is very short but full of deep meaning. It says simply, “Thou shalt not steal.” **Exodus 20:15.** What a blessing this commandment has been to the human race! But its violation has brought much suffering and misery, as well as expense, to man. Theft is one of the greatest evils in our world. How sad it is that so much money and time must

be needlessly expended to protect one's property from theft. In the cities especially, it can be seen how far men have had to go to protect themselves; theft insurance, multiple locks, bars, burglar alarms, and sophisticated warning systems, in addition to fear, are the high costs being paid for breaking this commandment.

But is breaking into someone's home and taking his goods the only way one can be a thief? How about that day when you were given too much change at the store? Or the day you "borrowed" something from your neighbor and did not return it? Or those evil words of criticism that you spoke, thus stealing the good name of your fellow employee? Any time a person is cheated, or a product is misrepresented to make a sale possible, this commandment is violated. Obedience to this commandment would assure a fair deal for all, for it contains the method for proper handling of all transactions between individuals. Remember that violating one commandment generally means that one or more of the others are also transgressed.

Ninth commandment

The ninth commandment affects the words we speak and those spoken by others. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." **Exodus 20:16**. The Lord demands strict honesty and in so doing promises to be honest with us. It is not necessary to make a completely false statement for it to be a lie. Truth told in a way that is designed to deceive is a lie. It is the purpose behind one's words that determines their truthfulness. Even claiming to be a Christian while being a hypocrite is bearing false witness to the world. Our only safety is in always being completely truthful. We should be as transparent as sunlight. One falsehood leads to another, and still another, until a person does not even know the difference between truth and falsehood. Obeying this commandment gives promise of a clear conscience, an openness which has nothing to hide—in short, freedom.

Tenth commandment

The last of the Ten Commandments strikes at the root of virtually every other violation. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." **Exodus 20:17**. Covetousness lays the foundation for theft, adultery, and murder and is like a cancer that must be removed before it grows so large that it destroys the person.

Eve sinned by coveting the forbidden fruit. **Genesis 3:6**. This same sin made the rich young man turn away from Jesus. **Matthew 19:16-22**. He held on to his possessions, wanting the things of others also. Coveting extends further than only wanting the things of another. It also includes covetously holding fast to the wealth we have, not realizing that it really belongs to God and He has entrusted it to us for the purpose of blessing others.

The parable of the rich farmer shows the end of such covetousness. **Luke 12:16-21**. By contrast, when we keep God's ten precepts, we lay up treasure in the heavenly bank, which pays back a contented life in this world as well as a final everlasting home in the new earth.

"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**. See also **Revelation 12:17; 14:12**.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." **Ecclesiastes 12:13**.



O Master of Sculptors

O Master of sculptors, take this humble clay
And make me according to Thy gracious way!

Take out all the dross, remodel, refine,
And give me a character wholly like Thine.

O Master of sculptors, make over this life!
Remove cursed sin, and take out the strife
That cast a dark shadow, that took away light
That had come to brighten, and drive away night.

O Master of sculptors, take chisel and knife,
If need be, to purge and strengthen this life!
Work with Thy Spirit, gentle and kind,
Till Thou'st conquered this mortal, and altered the mind.

O Master of sculptors, keep modeling still
After Thy likeness, more like Thy will;
Create a new heart, renew Thy great love,
Prepare me for heaven, Thy kingdom above.

—Eugene Jewell

22—Investment Opportunities

Nothing which man
has can truly be
called his own.

Most people would consider it a great honor and privilege to be asked to invest and become a partner in a growing, active business venture. And God is calling for Christians today to do just that—to invest in a partnership with Himself in the greatest business enterprise of all, that of helping to prepare His future kingdom of glory.

God has given man many ways to invest in His kingdom. In the first place, He has given everyone time, abilities, and material blessings. The purpose is not for these things to be a blessing only to the individual but to others as well. Ask yourself, “How am I using the gifts lent to me?” Nothing which man has can truly be called his own. Everything, including his life and health, is the outworking of God’s providence. “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being;... for we are also His offspring.” **Acts 17:28**. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” **Psalm 24:1**. “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.” **Psalm 50:10, 11**. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” **Haggai 2:8**. We ourselves belong to God. **Psalm 79:13**.

By what authority does God claim such ownership? “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” **Genesis 1:1**. “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.” **Psalm 100:3**.

In addition to being created by God, man was redeemed from the kingdom of darkness by Jesus Christ. Thus we are His twice over! “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” **1 Peter 1:18, 19**.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” **1 Corinthians 6:19, 20**. Before we act in any affair of life, we are to keep the principle always in view that “whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” **1 Corinthians 10:31**.

Jesus used a parable to illustrate man’s relationship to the goods of this world. “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.” **Matthew 25:14**. Upon his return, the master called his servants to account for their use of his goods. **Matthew 25:19-30**.

Missionaries for God

Just as the servants in the parable were entrusted with resources and received a commission, so all Christians have been entrusted with resources and given a commission to be co-workers in the great plan of salvation. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” **Matthew 28:18-20**.

God wants us to be co-workers with Him. This requires our willingness to use every ability we possess to further His enterprise—His kingdom. Often in Biblical history God called men and women from other seemingly important work to do a greater work for Him. Moses and David were tending sheep. Gideon was threshing wheat to keep his people from starvation. Elisha was plowing his father’s field. Paul was Saul, the great enemy of God’s people, until Jesus turned him around from his goal of persecuting the Chris-



tians. The disciples had other occupations—fisherman, tax collector, etc. Each gladly took up the mission assigned him by God. Not everyone is called to enter full-time missionary service, but each is given certain abilities to dedicate to the Master’s use—to be invested wisely for the advancement of His kingdom.

Time—the Sabbath

One talent, which is entrusted to every person, is time. Each one is given 24 hours, 7 days a week, to be used not selfishly but wisely. At creation, God set limits to how much of his time man was to use solely for himself. “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” **Genesis 2:2, 3.**

God placed a blessing upon the seventh day of the week. In sanctifying this day, He set it apart for holy time—not to be used as any other day but to be special time. Therefore, we should find out from the Bible how this time is to be spent. First, we must remember that to God the day begins not at midnight but at sundown. See **Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.** “... From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” **Leviticus 23:32.** The Lord asks man to set apart one seventh of his time to be used for God; namely, from, according to present-day reckoning, Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. This is the Sabbath of the Lord, as given in the fourth commandment. **Exodus 20:8-11.**

God promises a rich blessing to those who faithfully invest this time for God. “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thing own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” **Isaiah 58:13, 14.**

God realized that man is in danger of forgetting His holy day. That is why He began the fourth commandment with the word “Remember.” Throughout the week, we are to remember and make all our plans so we may keep the seventh day holy. Especially on Friday, the day before the Sabbath, we are to take care of all secular affairs so these things will not rob time from God. For this reason, the day preceding the Sabbath



is called in the Scriptures the “preparation day.” “And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.” **Mark 15:42.**

The Sabbath is a great blessing when properly observed—when the clothing is prepared, the house cleaned, the cooking done, and the baths taken beforehand. Whatever can be done before the Sabbath should be done. “When the Sabbath commences, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord’s. We should not do ourselves, nor suffer our children to do, any manner of our own work for a livelihood or anything which could have been done on the six working days. Friday is the day of preparation. Time can then be devoted to making the necessary preparation for the Sabbath and to thinking and conversing about it.” —Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 529.

If, for some reason, some work remains uncompleted, lay it aside until after the Sabbath. Note the example given by the Christian women after Jesus’ crucifixion. “And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.” **Luke 23:56.**

The Sabbath is a time to worship God in His house. “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogues on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” **Luke 4:16.** “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” **Hebrews 10:25.**



It is also good to spend a part of the Sabbath in nature. "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." **Acts 16:13**. Deeds of mercy are in full harmony with the keeping of the Sabbath. **Luke 13:14-16**.

Great blessings are in store for those who faithfully set aside the sacred time of the seventh day of the week to honor the God of creation.

Everything we possess actually belongs to God, including ourselves.

Means—Tithe and offerings

The Lord also asks man to return to Him a portion of the wealth entrusted to him. Remember that everything we possess actually belongs to God, including ourselves. We can ask ourselves the question, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" **Psalm 116:12**. God's word answers our inquiry and promises a blessing as well: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." **Proverbs 3:9, 10**.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the de-

vourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." **Malachi 3:8-11**.

Tithe means simply one tenth of our increase paid to the Lord; and besides the tithe, the Lord also asks for freewill offerings. Those who have faithfully given the Lord His own with a thankful heart can tell you from experience that God gives the blessings He has promised. Their 90 percent goes further than the 100 percent of others. Why not put God to the test? He promises a measureless blessing.

The first record of tithe paying was in the time of Abraham. **Genesis 14:18-20**. Jacob also promised to pay the tithe to the Lord. **Genesis 28:20-22**.

For what purpose is the tithe to be used? "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi [those who ministered in the sanctuary] all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." **Numbers 18:21**. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." **1 Corinthians 9:14**. Remember that the tithe does not belong to man but to God; it is holy and so should be used only to support the proclamation of the gospel. See **Leviticus 27:30-33**.

What interest does your investment in the bank of heaven pay? "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." **Luke 6:38**. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." **2 Corinthians 9:6**. "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." **Matthew 25:21**.



23—Telltale Marks of a Christian

“**B**ut ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” **1 Peter 2:9.**

A true Christian is unable to hide the fact that he or she is a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus—nor will he want to hide it! It shows itself in every facet of his life. God designs that His people be special in every way—not snobbish, not Pharisees, thinking themselves better than others, but being as different from their worldly sojourners on planet earth as their Master is different from Satan.

What does it mean to be a “peculiar people”? The present-day connotation makes us think of someone odd, strange, or different. God’s people will be different but not necessarily odd or strange. The word “peculiar” in the above verse is taken from the Greek word *peripoiesis*, which means literally “an acquisition,” or “a people God has acquired for Himself.”

This is a reiteration of the principle laid down in **1 Corinthians 6:19, 20**: “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

A born-again Christian has likes and dislikes that are very different from those of one who does not profess Christianity. His hopes, joys, and ambitions have been changed. Instead of looking for the praise of men, he seeks the approbation of God. His entire behavioral pattern has been made new by Christ. The places he goes will be only those places where he can take Jesus along. In this lesson, we will explore some of these differences. The key is found in **1 Corinthians 10:31**: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Amusements and recreation

A Christian, one who has Christ dwelling in his heart, will avoid all places of amusement that feature the works of sin or the flesh. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the



which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” **Galatians 5:19-21.** See also **1 Peter 4:1-4.** Thus, he will avoid the theater, dances, and the like.

The Christian finds joy in good, pure pleasures. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” **Philippians 4:8.**

The Christian’s attention will not be on the competition of the sports realm, because he himself is battling for the highest prize available to mankind—eternal life. **1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.**

Holidays

A Christian will also guard against any encroachments on his faith by heathen influences. Many popular holidays are of heathen origin. We noted already in previous lessons the attempt to change God’s day of rest from the seventh to the first day of the week, a change that was adopted from heathen sun worship despite having no Scriptural authority. Note also the following: “Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of

A Christian, one who has Christ dwelling in his heart, will avoid all places of amusement that feature the works of sin or the flesh.

The Christian will seek for the simple, pure joys of heaven.

the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with an axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." **Jeremiah 10:2-4**. Much proof can be brought to show that the celebration of Christmas, as well as many other holidays, originated in heathenism. Instead of great feasts and drunkenness, the Christian will seek for the simple, pure joys of heaven.

Apparel

The Christian will also reflect the image of God in dress and behavior. Simplicity, modesty, and good taste will characterize his or her outward appearance. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward



adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." **1 Peter 3:3, 4**. This text urges the Christian to avoid jewelry and loud, showy apparel. The use of make-up is also unnatural and tends to draw attention to the wearer rather than to God.

Nothing is more beautiful than natural beauty, which shows itself in kindness, friendliness, and true Christian love. Highly made-up externals

often indicate an emptiness within. The Bible gives us further instruction as to how God wishes His children to dress: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which cometh women professing godliness) with good works." **1 Timothy 2:9, 10**.

It is one of the signs of the last days that modesty is hardly understood. This is the result of sin. Adam and Eve felt the need to cover their nakedness after they had sinned and lost their covering of light, and they covered themselves with fig leaves. But God was not satisfied with such attire. He made them coats of skins to clothe themselves. **Genesis 3:7, 21**.

God is also displeased with today's "fig leaf" attire. Modesty demands that whether standing or sitting, one be properly covered. Such modesty is possible only when one's clothing is of adequate length and style. Low necklines, low backs, sleeveless blouses and dresses, transparent materials, and tight apparel are not only immodest but often unhealthful as well! Furthermore, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." **Deuteronomy 22:5**.

Even one's hairstyle gives an indication of his relationship with God. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." **1 Corinthians 11:14, 15**.

Health

Another of the Christian's identifying marks is that, keeping in mind that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, he will live his life in a healthful way. Why should a Christian be concerned about living healthfully?

1. We owe it to God. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**.
2. We owe it to everyone around us, especially our family and friends. **Romans 14:7**.





Fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and grains. This diet produced men who lived over 900 years of age!

It was not until vegetation had been destroyed at the time of the flood in Noah's time that man was given permission to eat flesh food, with a resultant drastic drop in his life expectancy. Even when flesh was permitted, it was only with certain restrictions: (1) Clean animals only were to be eaten. These animals were taken aboard the ark by sevens so they could be sacrificed and also be eaten after Noah and his family left the ark and man was given permission to eat flesh food. **Genesis 7:2; Leviticus 11:2, 3.** (2) It was to be eaten without the blood. **Genesis 9:4.** (3) The fat was also not to be eaten. **Leviticus 3:17; 7:23.**

With the great increase of disease in animals and its related increase in man, it is far better to return to God's original plan of the vegetarian diet. In addition, a plain, natural diet is economical and encourages a wise use of farmland and scarce food products. Even modern science has found that it is possible to obtain all the necessary nutrients from a purely vegetarian diet—and, furthermore, that it has significant benefits. It is not necessary to take the lives of God's creatures or to feast on their dead bodies.

In addition, the Christian will desire to refrain from any and all other harmful substances and foods that are injurious to the body, such as fish, poultry, animal fats, sharp spices, chocolate, and refined foods and cheeses that are difficult to di-

It is not necessary to take the lives of God's creatures or to feast on their dead bodies.



gest and hence unhealthful. Some examples of injurious drinks are alcoholic beverages, tea, coffee, and most soft drinks. As a general rule of health, it is best to keep the diet as close as possible to the way nature makes it. More and more nutrition-conscious people are avoiding refined, overly processed foods; natural, whole foods are much to be preferred. Tobacco and harmful drugs cause a high percentage of modern society's health woes.

A Christian will be just what he professes to be—Christlike—loving, lovable, and a fit representative of the King of heaven. Everything he says and does will reflect the likeness of his Saviour. No one will be able to doubt that he has been with Jesus!

3. We owe it to ourselves. **3 John 2.**
4. It is a factor in sparing us from the final destruction. **1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.**
5. It is God's will that man be healthy of body, mind, and spirit. **Romans 12:1.**

There are eight essentials for good health: (1) Fresh air, (2) sunlight, (3) proper food, (4) pure water, (5) exercise, (6) physical rest, (7) peace of mind and joy of spirit, and (8) obedience to physical laws.

When God created man, He intended his mind to control his body, not the reverse. To keep this proper relationship, a person must learn temperance in all the affairs of life. "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." **1 Corinthians 9:25-27.**

Eating habits

Since our state of health directly affects our minds, the food we eat should be nutritious. **1 Corinthians 10:31.** What food did God create in the beginning for man to eat? "And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." And after the entrance of sin, "... Thou shalt eat the herb of the field." **Genesis 1:29; 3:18.** This was man's original diet, a whole-food, vegetarian one—to put it in simple terms:

24—Two Monuments

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” **Matthew 3:1, 2, 5, 6.** Here was a man at the River Jordan who was preaching and telling the people that the Messiah was soon to come and that they were to prepare for this event by confessing their sins, going down into the river, and being immersed under the water as a symbol of having their sins washed away.

Baptism

Baptism is one of the special monuments of the Christian church. The rite was included in the gospel commission. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” **Matthew 28:19, 20.**

This ceremony was not merely recommended to Christians, for Jesus Christ gave us His example. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.” **Matthew 3:13.** Jesus made it clear that baptism was a prerequisite to entrance into His kingdom. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” **John 3:5.**

The Biblical mode of baptism

The word “baptize” means “to immerse or dip under,” from the Greek *baptizein*. If John the Baptist had only sprinkled those who listened to his preaching, he would not have gone to the River Jordan. Any place would have done. The Bible indicates no method of baptism except by immersion.

When Philip baptized the eunuch, it was by immersion. “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip

and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” **Acts 8:36-39.** Note that they both went “down into the water;” and they both came “up out of the water.”

Does it really make any difference how baptism is performed? To answer this question we must grasp the meaning of baptism—what it stands for. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” **Romans 6:3-6.**

In baptism, we give ourselves to the Lord as a vessel to be used. By a profession of faith in Jesus, and in the presence of the heavenly universe, a mutual pledge is made. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the old man of self is completely buried in the watery grave; and a new man is then raised to live a life of loyalty to God in Christ. Baptism also symbolizes a washing away of sins (**Acts 22:16**) as well as a pledge of the coming heavenly kingdom.

Prerequisites for baptism

There are certain prerequisites before an individual is ready for baptism.

- He will be carefully taught the truths of God’s word. **Matthew 28:19, 20.**
- He will accept and believe these truths. **Mark 16:16.**
- He will be sorry for and repent of his sins. **Acts 2:38.**
- He will be willing to die to sin and live fully for Christ. **Romans 6:3, 4.**

An infant cannot take any of these steps, therefore infant baptism is not Biblical. However it is Biblical to dedicate children to the Lord. See **Matthew 19:13-15.**

Baptism is the doorway to God’s church. “For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, wheth-



er we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” **1 Corinthians 12:13**. Christ is the head of His body, His church. **Ephesians 4:15, 16**.

Baptism is to be performed in the name of “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” **Matthew 28:19**. Normally baptism is performed only once in a person’s life, but there are occasions when it is important to be re-baptized. For an example of this, see **Acts 19:1-5**. These people had repented of their sins and been baptized, yet they did not have the full light of truth. When this was brought to them, they were re-baptized in the name of the Lord.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized 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. They have obeyed the command: ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate,... and touch not the unclean thing.’ And to them is fulfilled the promise: ‘I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.’ **2 Corinthians 6:17, 18**.” —Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.

The Lord’s Supper

In addition to baptism, the Lord left His church one other ordinance—the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, which He instituted the last night that He spent with His disciples before the crucifixion. They had gathered to celebrate the Passover, the memorial of the exodus of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It pointed forward to the death of Christ upon the cross as the Lamb without spot or blemish. Before Christ celebrated the last supper with His disciples, He found it necessary to give an accompanying ordinance to help keep His people humble—the ordinance of humility, or feet washing. Its purpose is revealed in **John 13:14-17**: “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

The disciples were often arguing among themselves as to who would be the greatest in Christ’s kingdom. At this observance, no one would humble himself to wash the dusty feet of the others, so it was Jesus, their Master, who showed them true

humility; and He asks us to follow His example. This ordinance is to prepare one’s heart to receive the full blessing of communion.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service....

“There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmising and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord’s supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother.” —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

Only as we esteem others better than ourselves are our hearts truly in tune with God; our spirit becomes the same as His Spirit. Then we are ready to take part in the second and most solemn part of communion, partaking of the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord.

Instruction as to how the communion is to be conducted is found in **1 Corinthians 11:23-30**. Read these verses carefully. Communion should never be participated in lightly with little thought as to its significance. The individual’s heart must be prepared for it, not in judging others but in sincere self-examination. “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” **1 Corinthians 11:28**. Lack of preparation will bring a curse upon a person. **1 Corinthians 11:29**.

The symbolism of the Lord’s Supper has deep meaning for the participants.

- The unleavened bread symbolizes the body of Christ. **1 Corinthians 11:24**.
- The unfermented wine symbolizes the blood of Christ. **1 Corinthians 11:25**.
- The ceremony commemorates His death and looks forward to His return. **1 Corinthians 11:26**.

This ordinance replaced the Jewish Passover, at which nothing fermented was permitted; hence unleavened bread and unfermented wine (pure grape juice) are used to symbolize the body and blood of Christ.

In addition, note that this ordinance is observed within the church of God. Jesus celebrated the Passover exclusively with His disciples, not with the multitude. “The ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.



25—Decision



In this Bible Course, many teachings have been presented from the Scriptures. Possibly many of these lessons brought back to your mind old truths long forgotten as well as truths that are very familiar. In addition, you may have learned other truths that are entirely new to you. The important question now is how to relate to these truths.

We hope that throughout these lessons you have followed the example of the noble Bereans as truths were brought to your attention. The Bereans did not close their minds, nor did they unquestioningly accept the teachings presented to them. They “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” **Acts 17:11.**

But searching the Scriptures and accepting truth because it is truth is still not sufficient. The Lord calls for a decision that translates into action. Some people find decision making very difficult. Many like to maintain the status quo. A true child of God will not have such feelings. He will want to grow and develop spiritually. He or she wants daily to have a closer walk with Christ.

Often throughout history, God has called for a firm decision. One of those occasions occurred when Elijah challenged the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, with all the people of Israel present. “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow Him. And the people answered him not a word.” **1 Kings 18:21.** At that point, it was not popular to worship God—in fact, it almost never is! Each person waited for the other one to acknowledge the true God. Elijah stood alone.

Frequently God’s people have had to stand alone—apparently with the entire world against them. But in their standing alone, the history of the entire world has also been changed! The ungodly virtually owe their existence to God’s faithful few who have made the decision to serve

Him regardless of the earthly consequences. See **Genesis 18:20-32.**

No one can afford to procrastinate when Christ’s voice is speaking to him. The Lord calls for decisive action. “To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,...” **Hebrews 3:15.** Tomorrow may be forever too late!

The story is told of a young lady who attended some public lectures. Afterward she talked to the minister, who encouraged her to give her heart to Christ. “Oh,” she said, “I still want to enjoy life a while! I don’t want to give my heart to Christ now!” The minister entreated her in vain, reminding her, “Today, if ye will hear His voice,...” **Psalm 95:7, 8.**

The girl returned home and went to bed, but she found no rest. The minister’s appeal kept ringing in her ears—Today, today! After some time, she arose, got a piece of paper, and wrote: “In three years, I will give my heart to Christ.” Returning to bed, she thought that surely now she could go to sleep. But sleep refused to come. At last she arose, crossed out the “3,” and wrote “2” above it. Still no rest! Always, “Today, today!” kept ringing in her ears. Again and again she got out of bed, crossed out what she had written before, and wrote a shorter time period—6 months, 1 month, 1 week.

Frequently God’s people have had to stand alone—apparently with the entire world against them.



At last, distraught and exhausted, she scribbled, "Tomorrow I will give my heart to Christ!" Falling into bed, she at last went to sleep.

In the morning the girl was supposed to go to work. As usual, her mother knocked on her door to waken her. Receiving no answer, she knocked again louder. Still no sound. She opened the door, and there in bed she found her daughter—dead. Even tomorrow was too late!

How sad the record is of King Agrippa after he had heard the gospel message from Paul. God's servant urged him to make a decision. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." **Acts 26:27, 28.** Almost is not enough! To be almost a Christian is to be no Christian at all. To refuse to accept all of the truth that God has revealed to

you will bring spiritual disaster. No one is as unhappy as the one who knows what is right but is unwilling to fully yield his heart to Christ.

Indecision is like a dull knife that hacks and tears and leaves behind ragged edges. Decision is a sharp knife that cuts clean and straight. Often we are like the turtle that withdraws into its shell; as long as it remains in the shell, it will never get ahead. So it is in the Christian life.

Step out in faith now, never doubting the Lord's guidance. "... Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." **Hebrews 11:6.**

If you have not done so already, give your heart fully to Jesus today. Follow, obey, and live—for eternity!

Decision is a sharp knife that cuts clean and straight.

The Spirit once came to an innocent child
With pleading and tender tone;
"Dear little one, let Me come into your heart,
And make it forever My own."
"Oh, Spirit," he cried, "please go away;
For childhood is only for fun and play;
Some other day, some other day,
When I am older I'll bid Thee stay."



The Spirit came back to the fair, stalwart youth,
With loving and tender plea:
"The harvest is ready, there's work to be done,
Arise, God is calling for thee."
"Oh, Spirit," he cried, "leave me, I pray,
The pleasures of earth hold me in their sway;
Some other day, some other day,
Then, Holy Spirit, I'll bid Thee stay."



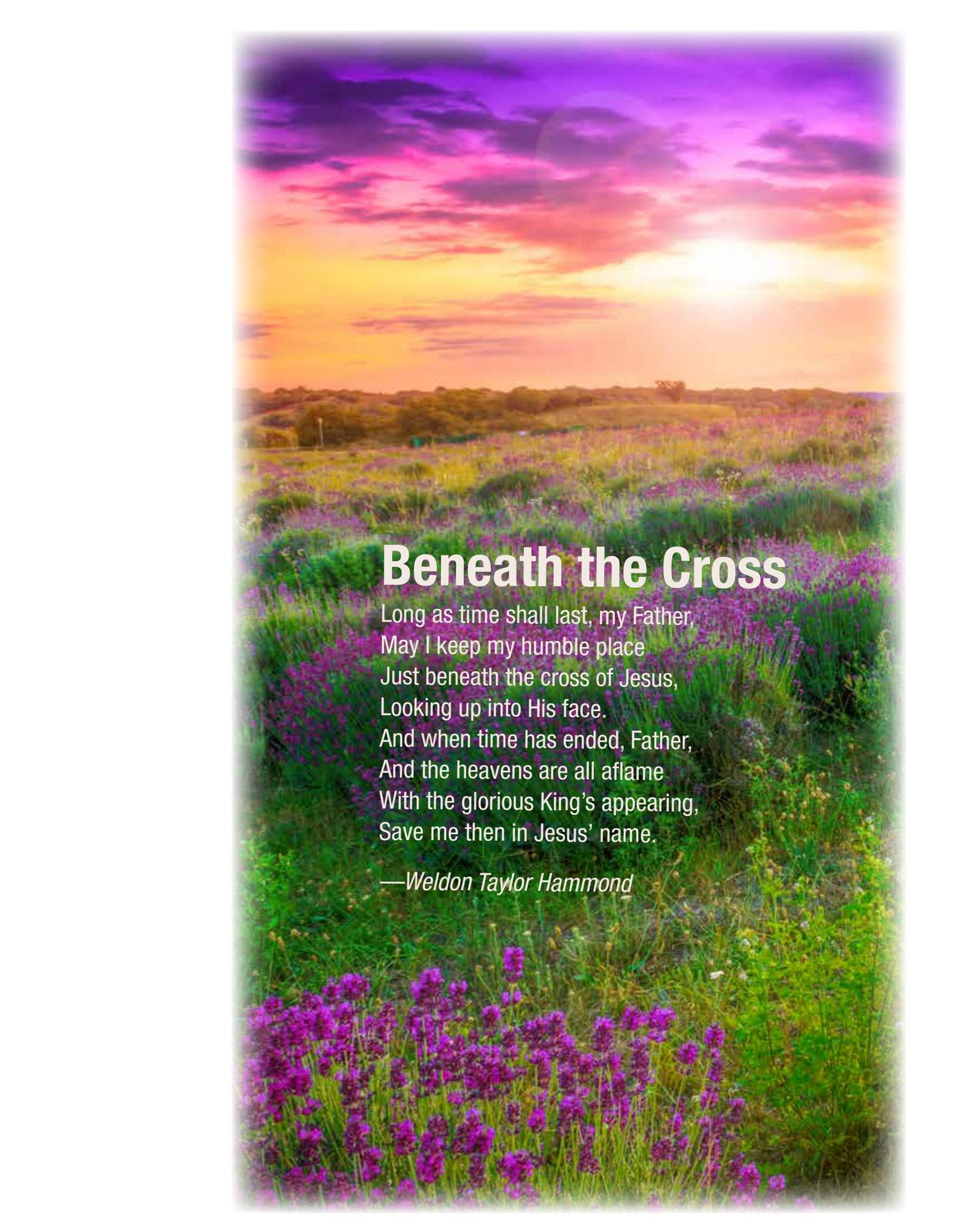
The Spirit pled thus with the toil weary man,
"Make haste while God's grace shall last;
The years are adorning with silver thy brow,
Thy days are now slipping by fast."
"Oh, Spirit," he cried, "I should obey,
But I am too busy and tired to pray;
Some other day, some other day;
When I have time I will bid Thee stay."



The aged man leans on his frail, trembling staff
With quivering, bitter sigh:
"I've wasted a lifetime in sin," he cried,
"And now I am going to die:
The Spirit, long slighted, has flown away;
No hope and no God, now I cannot pray;
No other day, no other day;
The Holy Spirit has gone to stay."



—Gertrude Manly Jones

A vertical photograph of a sunset over a field of purple flowers. The sky is filled with colorful clouds in shades of purple, pink, orange, and yellow. The sun is a bright white orb on the right side of the horizon. The foreground is a dense field of purple flowers, likely lavender, with green foliage. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Beneath the Cross

Long as time shall last, my Father,
May I keep my humble place
Just beneath the cross of Jesus,
Looking up into His face.
And when time has ended, Father,
And the heavens are all aflame
With the glorious King's appearing,
Save me then in Jesus' name.

—*Weldon Taylor Hammond*