

Jesus and His People

3/73 JULY
AUGUST
SEPTEMBER

ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OVERFLOW OFFERING

Australasian Division—September 29, 1973

The future of our work in the Central Pacific is centered on Fulton College, Fiji, the senior educational institution in this part of the field. Since 1949, when the union was first organized, the people of the 700 islands of the Central Pacific have looked to Fulton for their total worker force as they have aggressively pursued the gospel outreach. The two other union missions of the Australasian Division have also received efficiently trained, consecrated workers from Fulton.

Today Fulton College has representative, and nearly adequate, administrative and classroom facilities. This plant resulted in a large measure from the generosity of Sabbath School members around the world, who strongly supported the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in March, 1963.

Unfortunately, at the present time, when indigenous peoples of the Central Pacific are lifting their general standard of living, Fulton's boarding facilities are very substandard, makeshift, and hopelessly inadequate. Therefore, on September 29, 1973, we shall again confidently look to our Sabbath School members to provide generously the necessary means for the erection of much-needed dormitories at Fulton College. Thank you again for your help.

R. R. Frame
President
Australasian Division

Lessons for the Fourth Quarter of 1973

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the *Adult Lessons* for the fourth quarter of 1973 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Managing God's Goods"—a study of individual responsibility in the management of all that God has placed at our disposal.

The title of the first lesson is "God's Ownership." The memory verse is Ps. 24:1. The outline is as follows: (1) God Is Eternal. Ps. 90:2. (2) God Is a Person. Ps. 86:15. (3) God Is Eternal. Gen. 1:1; Ps. 102:25. (4) God Is Redeemer. Isa. 43:1. (5) God-man Relation. Ps. 24:1. (6) Man-God Relation. Luke 12:18-20.

The title of the second lesson is "Man's Stewardship." The memory verse is Matt. 25:21. The outline is as follows: (1) Stewardship of Life. Acts 17:24, 25, 28. (2) Stewardship of the Body. Rom. 12:1. (3) Stewards of Time. Ps. 90:12. (4) Stewards of Abilities. Gen. 2:15. (5) Stewards of Material Possessions. Gen. 2:16, 17. (6) Tested by God. Matt. 25:40.

JESUS AND HIS PEOPLE

General Introduction

Many in the world today profess to follow Jesus. Do they know who Jesus is? Do they recognize what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?

It is the purpose of these lessons to study about Jesus as He relates to His people here on earth. Hopefully in this way we can appreciate more fully what He has done for us, and respond to Him in a more meaningful way.

We see Jesus as Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, worthy of worship and all praise. We see Him challenged by the covering cherub, a creature who is described as being "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." See Ezek. 28:12-14. How Satan came to do this, we cannot understand, but Isaiah tells us that pride entered his heart. See Isa. 14:12-14. He thought he could set his throne above the stars and be like the Most High.

The subject of the controversy is God's character. Is God all-loving? Is He absolutely fair? Can perfect love and perfect justice exist meaningfully side by side?

Jesus took up the challenge. As Michael the Archangel, He fought with Satan and the third of the angels who had been deceived. See Rev. 12:7, 8. As might be expected, there was no room in heaven for deception and falsehood.

The conflict was transferred to this earth. Satan succeeded in deceiving Eve and in causing Adam to follow in the path of disobedience. But God was not caught unawares. He had a plan for man's salvation, a plan that would reveal God's true character.

Down through the ages God has communicated with man in various ways. Satan has had his counterfeit communications, but God's word has not been lost. Finally, God sent His Son, born of a virgin, and the express image of the Father. He went about doing good, and gave His life a ransom for many. Satan did his best to prevent this final revelation of God's love, but he failed.

Satan now tries to destroy God's people, and especially so as he recognizes that his time is short. How are God's people to respond to this situation? It is the purpose of these lessons to indicate some of the strategies of the enemy and to show that, in spite of tremendous odds, God's people will triumph if they will take up the challenge that is theirs and follow in the footsteps of the Master in the strength which He alone can provide.

It is the prayer of those who have compiled these lessons that Paul's petition for the Ephesians (Eph. 1:17-23) may be fulfilled in the experience of every student.

The Blessing of Daily Study

"Every day some portion of time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons, not merely in learning to mechanically repeat the words, while the mind does not comprehend the meaning; but to go to the very foundation, and become familiar with what is brought out in the lesson."—"Counsels on Sabbath School Work," page 53.

My Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

(signed)

The regular adult Sabbath School lessons and regular Sabbath School World Mission Report are available free each month in Braille and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal inkprint. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accidents, old age, and so forth, cannot hold, or focus on, normal inkprint publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506.

LESSON TITLES

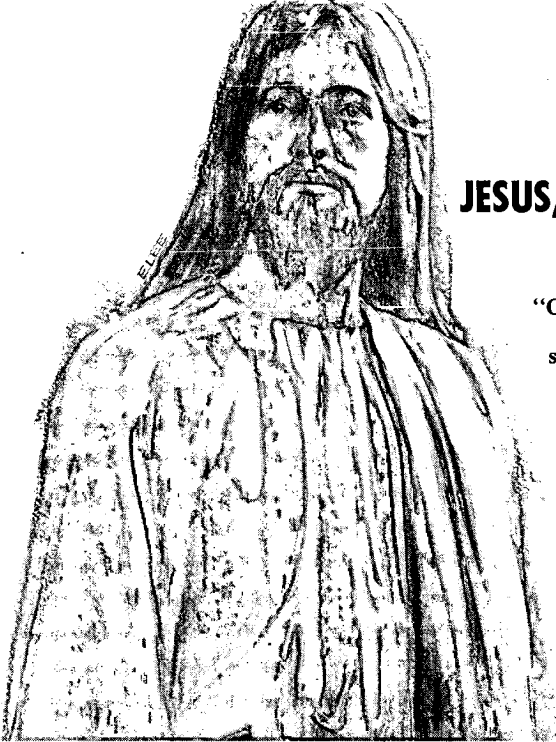
1. Jesus, Sovereign Lord
2. Jesus Challenged by Rebellion
3. Jesus' Word and Satan's Challenge
4. Jesus Calls a People
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13. The Victory of Jesus and His People

Adult Sabbath School Lessons (regular edition), No. 313, July-September, 1973. 35 cents a single copy, \$1.40 a year (four issues); no additional charge to countries requiring extra postage. Published in the U.S.A., by Pacific Press Publishing Association (a corporation of S.D.A.), 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94040. Second-class mail privileges authorized at Mountain View, California. Form 3579 requested. When a change of address is desired, please be sure to send both old and new addresses.

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Illustrations by Elfred Lee

JESUS, SOVEREIGN LORD



“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. . . . In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. . . . ‘Jesus declared, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life.’ The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.”

—*Evangelism*, pages 615, 616.

“God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—in heaven, on earth, and in the depths—and every tongue confess, ‘Jesus Christ is Lord,’ to the glory of God the Father.” Phil. 2:9-11, NEB.

It is important to see Jesus as He is, to recognize His majesty and power. Only in this way can we fully appreciate what He has done for us.

In this lesson we view Jesus as God from eternity. Paul expresses the thought as clearly as human language can express it when he says: “It is in Christ that the complete being of the Godhead dwells embodied.” Col. 2:9, NEB. This is a difficult idea for the finite mind to comprehend, but it is part of God’s revelation.

Jesus is the Creator. “All things were created by him, and for him.” Col. 1:16. The mind staggers at the thought of

instantaneous creation from no pre-existent material source, but the Bible tells us that God “spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” Ps. 33:9. No long, drawn-out process of evolution is indicated here.

The Creator of the universe is also man’s Redeemer. Only a member of the Godhead had the innate life, power, wisdom, and love to accomplish man’s redemption. No created being could take the place of fallen man. This substitution of Creator for created makes redemption the costliest venture ever known, and reveals the depth to which God was prepared to go in order to save man.

Is God really like that? While the main object of this lesson is to show the exalted position of Jesus in the universe, it will also show, by contrast, that the Godhead has made the greatest sacrifice possible in order to save man. We may never fully understand the depths of God’s love, but we can at least accept His full and free salvation.

Part 1
EMMANUEL,
GOD WITH US
Matt. 1:23

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Jesus was no ordinary human baby. Luke, who understood these matters, tells of the announcement to Mary and records the words of the angel: “Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35. The virgin birth confirmed to Mary the divine origin of Jesus. Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, was visited by an angel who told him of the miracle. See Matt. 1:20-25. The Magi who had seen the star in the East came to worship Jesus, obviously recognizing His divinity. See Matt. 2:2. The shepherds, Simeon, and Anna also recognized the significance of the unique birth of Jesus and His special mission.

The ministry of Christ from start to finish is also clear evidence that Jesus was the Son of God.

What was John the Baptist's witness about Jesus? Matt. 3:11.

When Jesus came out of the waters of baptism, a voice from heaven said: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matt. 3:17. Jesus performed so many remarkable miracles that Nicodemus was impelled to admit that Jesus was no ordinary person. See John 3:1, 2. When Peter made the confession, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus answered: “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 16:16, 17.

An outstanding occasion when Jesus claimed to be divine was when He said to a paralytic: “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” Matt. 9:2, NEB. This was obviously blasphemous talk unless Jesus was divine and was in a position to forgive sins. Immediately He performed a miracle of healing to indicate that His claim was not without foundation.

After the resurrection doubting Thomas had his doubts taken away, and he exclaimed: “My Lord and my God!” Then “Jesus said to him ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.’” John 20:28, 29, RSV.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it important for me to believe that Jesus was divine?

“In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. . . . Let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgement of Thomas, ‘My Lord and my God.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 808.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 43-49.

Part 2
CREATOR OF ALL
Col. 1:16

To what extent was the Son of God the Creator?
"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

We human beings belong to this world. We are nourished by products of the earth, and we breathe its atmosphere and drink its water. But the One who became Jesus of Nazareth was previous to and apart from creation. His pre-earth existence did not depend on the elements of the created universe, for He brought them into being. He is the originator of our lives and of the food, air, and water that sustain us. Every world and every living being, except the Godhead, were created by the Son.

It is a staggering thought that the One who was born so humbly in Bethlehem was the Lord of creation. In order to take on human form He who was "in the form of God" and "equal with God" "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" and "humbled himself." Phil. 2:6-8. Are we prepared to humble ourselves for the sake of others?

When we think of what Jesus had to do in order to save man, we are struck with His great condescension, His great love. But we should also remember that it is His power, coupled with His love, that makes His salvation effective.

Why is Jesus able to "save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him"? Heb. 7:24, 25.

Do we believe that Jesus is able? When Christians suffer persecution and hardship and are tempted to give up their principles of truth and righteousness, they can commit their lives unreservedly to Him because, as Peter assures them, "Their Maker will not fail them." 1 Peter 4:19, NEB.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the connection between God's creative power and redemption?

"The Saviour condescended to poverty, that He might teach how closely we in a humble lot may walk with God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. . . . He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 74.

"It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. . . . It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 20.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 247, 248.

Part 3
REDEEMER
OF MEN
Acts 4:12

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Many who are not Christians recognize God as a Supreme Being or as Creator. But worship becomes more personal and meaningful when the Supreme Being and Creator is also the Redeemer. Redemption forms a tie that makes the worshiper forever grateful, willing to devote his whole life in service to God because of what has been done for him. The good news of the gospel is that the Creator of the universe is man's Redeemer.

What did God do in order to redeem man? John 3:16.

Job knew that he had a living Redeemer (Job 19:25), David addressed God as his strength and Redeemer (Ps. 19:14), and Isaiah referred to God as Father and Redeemer (Isa. 63:16).

"The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of 'the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.' Rom. 16:25, R.V. . . . From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. . . .

"Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 22, 23.

THINK IT THROUGH

From what are we redeemed? Titus 2:14. What is the price of our redemption? 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Rev. 5:9.

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 25.

"Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never rise again. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 26.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 226, 227.

Part 4
CAPTAIN OF
SALVATION
Heb. 2:10

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The word translated "captain" in this verse is translated "Prince" in Acts 3:15 and Acts 5:31. It means "leader," and is so translated in the NEB in Heb. 2:10. Jesus is a leader who leads His people to victory.

When Joshua was ready to enter the Promised Land and take Jericho, he saw the "captain of the host of the Lord" (Josh. 5:14). The context makes clear that this was no other than Christ, for Joshua worshiped Him and was told to take off his shoes because the ground he was standing on was holy. "It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 488.

Jesus is always with His people to lead them to victory. In some times of crisis Jesus has revealed himself in power and glory to give His people the confidence they needed. Dan. 10:5, 6; Rev. 1:13-17.

It is remarkable that in Heb. 2:10 the Captain of salvation is said to be made perfect through sufferings. It is because He suffered, and died, and rose again, that He is worthy of being a leader.

In the song of the twenty-four elders why is Jesus declared worthy to open the scroll of human history? Rev. 5:9, 10.

What do you think are the outstanding qualities of leadership in the cause of God?

We need Jesus as our Leader because the fight in which every Christian is engaged is not with flesh and blood; it is a spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:12.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways is Jesus my Captain when I face a crisis or have an important decision to make?

"The Saviour's eye penetrates the future; He beholds the broader fields in which, after His death, the disciples are to be witnesses for Him. His prophetic glance takes in the experience of His servants through all the ages till He shall come the second time. He shows His followers the conflicts they must meet. . . . They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord's host, comes down to direct the battle. . . . The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 352.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 353-358.

Part 5
GOD'S REVELATION
John 14:9, NEB

**How can the Heavenly Father be known by human beings?
" 'Have I been all this time with you, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Then how can you say, "Show us the Father" '?"**

Many Christians have a false conception of the character of God the Father. They think of Him as being harsh and exacting, while they conceive of Jesus as being loving, gentle, and compassionate. But Jesus pointed out very clearly the unity that exists in the Godhead.

Paul recognized this truth, because he said that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. 2 Cor. 5:19. Do we recognize what a father must feel when he sends his son on a dangerous mission? Can we picture how God would feel when His Son was on the cross?

It is the work of Satan to try to misrepresent God. This is the work he has tried to do from the very beginning. Jesus came to vindicate the character of God, to show His unfathomable love.

Unfortunately, love is often misunderstood. It is thought of as being soft and yielding, and not subject to discipline. The opposite is true. Love is consistent with discipline. Mercy and justice are completely harmonized in God.

The cross is the perfect example of this. The law demanded the death of the sinner. Justice required it. But God Himself, from whom all created life came, died for man. This manifests His great love. Thus on the cross we see the law maintained and the sinner forgiven. "He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 756.

There were times when Jesus was angry. Can you see why? Read Mark 3:5. Yet note that although angry, Jesus was also grieved. Can we be angry in the same way? "Be ye angry, and sin not," says Paul. Eph. 4:26. "The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. This is the wrath of the Lamb."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 825.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is my love for others only affection and sentiment? What else is necessary in true love?

"God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. . . . But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. . . .

"By His life and death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 762.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 8, pp. 265-267.

Part 6
THE WAY OF LIFE
John 14:6, NEB

"Jesus replied, 'I am the way; I am the truth and I am life; no one comes to the Father except by me.'"

Some people would say that Christians are arrogant when they point to Jesus as the only way to life. There are many who feel that God will accept anyone, so long as he is sincere. But sincerity is not a safe guide to salvation. God is understanding. But the truths He has revealed are for men to accept; and when a man rejects light that has been given to him, he treads a dangerous path. Man cannot presume upon the goodness of God while pursuing his own selfish course. He must search for truth; and having found it, he must cling to it and share it with others.

How can a man be sure that he has the truth?

What is a result of knowing the truth? John 8:32.

In Romans 7 Paul describes the struggle that goes on in the lives of many people. People want to do what is right, but find themselves doing what is wrong. They are slaves of their sinful nature. "The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

"Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

THINK IT THROUGH

What testimony can I give of what Christ has recently done for me?

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 249-251.

JESUS CHALLENGED BY REBELLION



"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Ps. 103:8-11.

It is not easy to understand how sin could enter a perfect universe, nor can we give a reason for it. One thing is certain, the Bible makes clear that sin entered at a definite point in time, and will be exterminated at a definite time in the future.

In our lesson this week we see how sin entered, and how God related to it. Sin brings conflict, and the conflict that began in heaven and involved the heavenly hosts has extended to this earth and involves every man, woman, and child, whether they recognize it or not.

We shall see that sin is basically a

created being's misconception of God, and an enmity based on that misconception. How can God vindicate His character? How can He make clear to all created beings that He is not what sin has made Him out to be? That is the challenge—if we may speak in human terms—that comes to Jesus, to show the world that God is all-loving, perfectly fair, and the only One to whom worship and honor can rightly be given.

In this lesson we see how sin arose and spread, and how Jesus has faced the challenge and met the issue with perfect love and undoubted victory.

The article by Ellen G. White which follows this lesson was printed in the *Review and Herald*, Oct. 22, 1895. "Satan's Malignity Against Christ and His People" is to be read as supplementary material for this week.

Part 1
THE ENTRANCE
OF SIN
Isa. 14:12, 13

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.”

A philosophy called dualism teaches that two eternal principles dominate the universe, good and evil; that these two principles have coexisted, and will continue to coexist throughout eternity. The Christian who believes in the revelation given in the Bible cannot accept such a philosophy. Difficult as it may be to understand how sin could enter a perfect universe, the fact is that it happened, and it began with a created being called Lucifer.

How many times does the word “I” appear in Isa. 14:13, 14?

What does this tell you regarding the root of all sin? “Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. . . . Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 35.

Of whom was Lucifer particularly jealous? “Coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 35.

How did Jesus deal with the jealousy that arose in the heart of Lucifer? “The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. . . . But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 36.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is sin such a subtle thing?

“Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. . . . The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 37.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 38-43.

Part 2
WAR IN HEAVEN
Rev. 12:7, 8

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”

In the conflict that took place in heaven before the creation of this world, one of the leaders was Michael. The name “Michael” means, “who is like God.” It is therefore a very fitting name for Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus said to His disciples: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9, NEB. Jesus is the express image of the Father (Heb. 1:3), and would be the right person to lead the heavenly hosts against the dragon, to champion truth against error.

What are other names for the dragon? Rev. 12:9.

The prime work of the devil is to deceive and destroy. Therefore, Jesus said of him: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” John 8:44.

What do you think was the nature of the conflict that went on in heaven? Was it spiritual, or physical, or both?

Note that the struggle involved a large number of persons, because the devil had one third of the angels on his side. Rev. 12:4.

Inasmuch as God's side was victorious, why was not Satan immediately destroyed with all his cohorts? “The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 42.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the significance of Lucifer being called a deceiver? Why is Jesus the True Witness? What is a lie? What is truth?

“He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 43.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 35, 36, 41.

Part 3
JESUS COMES
TO SAVE
Luke 2:10, 11

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Jesus came to this earth to save His people from their sins. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve man was caught in the shackles of sin, and he needed a saviour. God had made a plan to free him, a plan which He outlined in Gen. 3:15. An essential part of this plan was that Jesus would come to earth and die for man. Satan knew about this plan of redemption because it was the theme of the Old Testament writings.

Where in the Old Testament do we read about the first advent of Jesus? Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2; Dan. 9:25-27.

Satan strongly opposed the coming of Jesus. He knew that the tidings of great joy to men would be his death knell, making certain his destruction. John the Revelator pictures this situation in vivid terms: "And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Rev. 12:4.

How did Satan seek to destroy Jesus? Matt. 2:16-18.

Why did Jesus come when He did, nearly two thousand years ago? Gal. 4:4, 5.

"The world was ripe for the coming of the Deliverer. The nations were united under one government. One language was widely spoken, and was everywhere recognized as the language of literature. From all lands the Jews of the dispersion gathered to Jerusalem to the annual feasts. As these returned to the places of their sojourn, they could spread throughout the world the tidings of the Messiah's coming."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 32.

THINK IT THROUGH

Think of other instances of God's perfect timing. How does the evidence of God's hand in history affect you personally?

"In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. . . . But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will."—*Education*, page 173.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 31-38.

Part 4
JESUS MEETS
THE TEMPTER
Matt. 4:1

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”

The devil had failed to destroy Jesus at the time of His birth. He failed to cause Jesus to sin when, as a youth, He grew up in Nazareth and was subject to His parents. Therefore after Jesus had fasted forty days in the wilderness, Satan approached Him, hoping now to cause Him to fall in a moment of weakness. This has always been the strategy of Satan with man, and only too often he has succeeded.

“It was in the time of greatest weakness that Christ was assailed by the fiercest temptations. Thus Satan thought to prevail. By this policy he had gained the victory over men.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, page 120.

What were the temptations that Satan presented to Jesus?
Matt. 4:3, 5-7, 8, 9.

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 117.

The second temptation was an invitation to presumption based on a doubt. “If thou be . . . cast thyself down.” Jesus refrained “from the slightest acceptance of doubt.” “Faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. . . . Faith claims God’s promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 126.

The third temptation was the offer of the world in a way that would by-pass suffering. But “Christ’s mission could be fulfilled only through suffering. . . . He must bear the sins of the whole world. . . .

“By the one who had revolted in heaven the kingdoms of this world were offered Christ, to buy His homage to the principles of evil; but He would not be bought; He had come to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and He would not abandon His purpose.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 129, 130.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the great temptations that come to the Christian today?

“Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 121.

“Jesus gained the victory through submission and faith in God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 130.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 114-118.

Part 5
IT IS FINISHED
Heb. 12:2, 3

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Jesus gained a signal victory over Satan in the wilderness, but the archenemy was not to leave Him alone. Throughout His ministry of three and a half years, Jesus was in constant conflict with evil forces. Satan sought to destroy Him in the sea. Matt. 8:24. He roused people to kill Him. John 8:59. But His hour had not yet come, and nothing could prevent God's purposes from being fulfilled.

The supreme effort of Satan to destroy Jesus came at the end of His ministry. The events leading up to Calvary were fraught with struggle and controversy. Alone, deprived of the comfort and companionship of the disciples, Jesus had to make the decision to drink the bitter cup. The whole universe was witness to the scene in Gethsemane. "The worlds unfallen and the heavenly angels had watched with intense interest as the conflict drew to its close. Satan and his confederacy of evil, the legions of apostasy, watched intently this great crisis in the work of redemption. The powers of good and evil waited to see what answer would come to Christ's thrice-repeated prayer. Angels had longed to bring relief to the divine sufferer, but this might not be. No way of escape was found for the Son of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 693.

When Jesus had made His decision, the events leading to the cross followed in quick succession: the betrayal kiss, the mock trials, the cry of the people, "Crucify Him!" and then Calvary. Satan was the prime mover in every trial and temptation. But Christ did not yield in a single thought or word, even though the temptations He met were so fierce that they wrung His heart. Jesus sounded the note of victory when He said: "It is finished."

THINK IT THROUGH

For what purposes did Jesus gain the victory over Satan?

"Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 761.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 758-764.

**Part 6
WEAPONS OF
WARFARE**

Eph. 6:12, 13, NEB

"For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens. Therefore, take up God's armour."

At the cross Jesus gained a signal victory. The tomb could not hold Him who had life in Himself. How ridiculous seem the efforts of puny man to hold the victorious, self-existent Jesus in the grave! "Little did these murderers realize the uselessness of their efforts. But by their action God was glorified. The very efforts made to prevent Christ's resurrection are the most convincing arguments in its proof."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 778.

What are the principles of victory over evil as revealed by our Lord in the Old Testament? Ps. 40:8; 119:11; Isa. 50:7-10.

"As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 336.

"So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 208.

What are the various parts of the armor God has provided for the fight against evil? Eph. 6:13-18.

"Satan's enmity against the human race is kindled because, through Christ, they are the objects of God's love and mercy."—*The Great Controversy*, page 506.

"Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world."—*The Great Controversy*, page 508.

"From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan."—*The Great Controversy*, page 510.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it necessary at this time for the Christian to put on God's armor? What are some areas of greatest conflict?

"He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 297.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 662-672.

Satan's Malignity Against Christ and His People

ELLEN G. WHITE

Speaking of Satan, our Lord says that "he abode not in the truth." He was once the covering cherub, glorious in beauty and holiness. He was next to Christ in exaltation and character. It was with Satan that self-exaltation had its origin. He became jealous of Christ, and falsely accused him, and then laid blame upon the Father. He was envious of the position that was held by Christ and the Father, and he turned from his allegiance to the Commander of heaven and lost his high and holy estate. Though the angels had a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, though they were happy in the glorious service which they did for the King of heaven, yet, through his crooked representations of Christ and the Father, the evil one deceived a great company of angels, drew them into sympathy with himself, and associated them with himself in rebellion. Satan and his sympathizers became the avowed antagonists of God, established their own infernal empire, and set up a standard of rebellion against the God of heaven. All the principalities and powers of evil rallied to the work of overthrowing the government of God.

Satan accomplished the fall of man, and since that time it has been his work to efface in man the image of God, and to stamp upon human hearts his own image. Possessing supremacy in guilt, he claims supremacy for himself, and exercises over his subjects the power of royalty. He cannot expel God from his throne, but through the system of idolatry, he plants his own throne between the heaven and the earth, between God and the human worshiper. He intercepts every ray of light that comes from God to man, and appropriates the worship that is due to God.

Satan has wrought with deceiving power, bringing in a multiplicity of er-

rors that obscure the truth. Error cannot stand alone; and would soon become extinct if it did not fasten itself like a parasite upon the tree of truth. Error draws its life from the truth of God. The traditions of men, like floating germs, attach themselves to the truth of God, and men regard them as a part of the truth. Through false doctrines, Satan gains a foothold, and captivates the minds of men, causing them to hold theories that have no foundation in truth. Men boldly teach for doctrines the commandments of men; and as traditions pass on from age to age, they acquire a power over the human mind. But age does not make error truth, neither does its burdensome weight cause the plant of truth to become a parasite. The tree of truth bears its own genuine fruit, showing its true origin and nature. The parasite of error also bears its own fruit, and makes manifest that its character is diverse from the plant of heavenly origin.

It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the human mind. We can see the extent to which he exercises his power by the disloyalty that is in the world. Even the churches that profess to be Christian have turned from the law of Jehovah, and have erected a false standard. Satan has had his hand in all this; for by directing men to false standards, he misshapes the human character, and causes humanity to acknowledge him as supreme. He works counter to the holy law of God, and denies God's jurisdiction. It is at his throne that every evil work finds its starting-point and obtains its support.

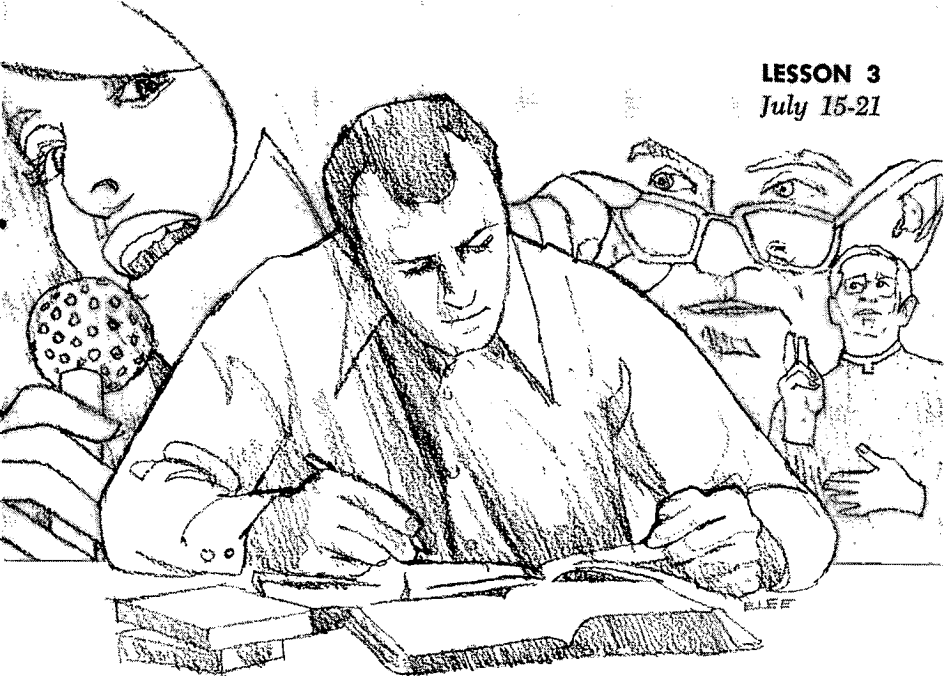
Satan has charged injustice upon God, and at various times has set in motion all his supernatural agencies, in order to cut off from men the knowledge of God, to turn their attention from the

temple of God, and to establish his own kingdom in the earth. At different times he has almost succeeded in spreading idolatry throughout the world. The history of the past shows that he has striven to obtain the mastery upon earth, and that his strife for supremacy has seemed to be almost wholly successful. He has worked in such a manner that the Prince of heaven has seemed to be lost sight of. It has seemed that the confederacy of idolatry has borne supreme sway, and that Satan had indeed become the god of this world. But the only begotten Son of God has looked upon the scene, has beheld human suffering and misery. With pity he has seen how his human agencies have been blinded by the deceptions of the enemy, and have become victims of Satanic cruelty. He has seen how Satan has exalted men simply for the purpose of casting them down, how he has flattered them, in order to draw them into his net and destroy them. He looked upon the schemes by which Satan works to blot from the human soul every trace of likeness to God; how he led them into intemperance so as to destroy the moral powers which God gave to man as a most precious, priceless endowment. He saw how, through indulgence in appetite, brain power was destroyed, and the temple of God was in ruins. He looked with compassion upon men who were becoming corrupted, ruined, murdered, and lost, through choosing a ruler who chained them to his car as captives, and yet these slaves were so bewildered, so beguiled and deceived, that they were actually pleased with their slavery as they moved on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin,—to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning. He saw human beings possessed by devils, saw Satanic agencies incorporated with men, saw the bodies of men become the habitations for the degrading indwelling of demons. Man, made for the dwelling-place of God, became the habitation of dragons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of man, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the grossest, vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men, and human faces reflected the expres-

sion of the legions of evil with which they were possessed. Such was the prospect upon which the world's Redeemer looked. What a horrible spectacle for the eyes of infinite purity to behold! Wherein can he behold his image? And yet God, the infinite One, "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [for such a world!], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Christ came to our world, sent of God to take human nature upon him. The mysterious union was to be formed between human nature and the divine nature. Christ was to become a man, in order that he might unfold to men as fully as possible the mysteries of the science of redemption. But the scheme of redemption far exceeds the comprehension of the human mind. The great condescension on the part of God is a mystery that is beyond our fathoming. The greatness of the plan cannot be fully comprehended, nor could infinite Wisdom devise a plan that would surpass it. It could be successful only by the clothing of divinity with humanity, by Christ becoming man, and suffering the wrath which sin has made because of the transgression of God's law. Through this plan the great, the dreadful God can be just, and yet be the justifier of all who believe in Jesus, and who receive him as their personal Saviour. This is the heavenly science of redemption, of saving men from eternal ruin, and can be carried out through the incarnation of the Son of God, through his triumph over sin and death. In seeking to fathom this plan, all finite intelligences are baffled.

Before the world was created, infinite Wisdom provided for the terrible possibility of man's disloyalty. Though man transgressed God's law, yet the law was not weakened in the slightest particular. It stands fast forever and ever as his eternal throne. No hope could be found for man through the alteration of God's law, but God so loved the world that he gave himself in Christ to the world to bear the penalty of man's transgression. God suffered with his Son, as the divine Being alone could suffer, in order that the world might become reconciled to him.—*Review and Herald*, Oct. 22, 1895.



JESUS' WORD AND SATAN'S CHALLENGE

"Come to me and listen to my words, hear me, and you shall have life: I will make a covenant with you, this time for ever, to love you faithfully as I loved David." Isa. 55:3, NEB.

It may be possible, philosophically, to think of the God of the universe as not communicating with His created beings. This view is held by many Deists. But the Bible reveals an entirely different concept of God; it presents a God who has always communicated with man.

In our lesson this week we see the Creator communicating directly with Adam and Eve. There was no sin to prevent open communion. But as soon as sin entered the world a veil had to be drawn so that the presence of God would not immediately destroy sinful man.

Down through the centuries God has used various means to reach man. The world around us testifies to the greatness and majesty of the Creator. But more directly God has spoken through dreams and visions. Sometimes He has called

prophets for the specific task of communicating His word.

Finally, God sent His Son, Jesus. This was the perfect revelation of the character of God. Men may fail to understand a language, but how can men misunderstand a life? In everything that Jesus did we see God in action.

In the time of Jesus the only written revelation was the Old Testament. But after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit inspired men to write what we call the New Testament. Thus in the Old and New Testaments, we have what is called the Bible, God's written revelation to man.

Satan has always attacked the Bible. He has sought to destroy or distort the text, or to destroy confidence in it. But the Bible has miraculously survived the exigencies of time. No other ancient writing has been more definitely authenticated than the Bible. Archaeology has done much to confirm its historicity. The Word of God remains an infallible revelation of God's will, and a sure guide to modern man in his many perplexities.

Part 1
DIRECT COMMUNION
Gen. 2:16, 17, NEB

"He told the man, 'You may eat from every tree in the garden, but not from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die.'"

It is clear from Scripture that after God created man He communicated with him. He laid down the principles of God's government, the basis upon which man could continue to live.

Did our first parents know about the fall of Satan? "Our first parents were not left without a warning of the danger that threatened them. Heavenly messengers opened to them the history of Satan's fall and his plots for their destruction, unfolding more fully the nature of the divine government, which the prince of evil was trying to overthrow."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 52.

What was Satan's first challenge on earth to the word of the Lord? Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:3-5.

The words of the serpent were a direct challenge to the words of the Lord. The whole future of Eve and her descendants hung on whether she believed the words of the Lord or the words of Satan. "Had Eve refrained from entering into argument with the tempter, she would have been safe; but she ventured to parley with him and fell a victim to his wiles. It is thus that many are still overcome. They doubt and argue concerning the requirements of God; and instead of obeying the divine commands, they accept human theories, which but disguise the devices of Satan."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 531, 532.

"In the beginning, God gave His law to mankind as a means of attaining happiness and eternal life. Satan's only hope of thwarting the purpose of God is to lead men and women to disobey this law, and his constant effort has been to misrepresent its teachings and belittle its importance. His master stroke has been an attempt to change the law itself, so as to lead men to violate its precepts while professing to obey it."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 178.

THINK IT THROUGH

How has the entrance of sin affected man's communion with his Maker? How do we know of God's will for us?

"The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe . . . afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 50, 51.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 44-51.

Part 2
THROUGH THE
PROPHETS
2 Chron. 20:20

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

After sin entered the world God used a number of means to communicate with His people. (1) Angels. Gen. 19:15. (2) Dreams. Gen. 37. (3) Urim and Thummim. Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 351. (4) Special circumstances. Ex. 34:6. (5) Created works. Ps. 19:1, 2. (6) The Holy Spirit. Isa. 30:21. But it was through the prophets that God made His major communications.

How does God communicate with His people today? Some of the prophets were oral prophets, like Elijah and Elisha, but others were told to write out their messages for future generations. Jer. 36:2.

What phrases did the prophets use to indicate that the messages they bore were not their own? Isa. 1:1; 8:1; Jer. 1:4.

What is one way that God's communication through prophets is challenged by Satan? Matt. 24:11, 24; 7:15.

"In these days of delusion, every one who is established in the truth will have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Every variety of error will be brought out in the mysterious working of Satan, which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, and turn them from the truth. . . .

"There will be false dreams and false visions, which have some truth, but lead away from the original faith."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 952.

Not only were there prophets, but there were schools of the prophets. "The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 593.

Unfortunately the children of Israel did not always pay heed to the counsels that came to them through the prophets, and so they were taken into captivity and allowed to suffer terribly.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do you think the life of the church today would be different if the members of the church followed the instructions of the prophets? What can we learn from the schools of the prophets that might apply to our educational system?

"Of special value to God's church on earth today—the keepers of His vineyard—are the messages of counsel and admonition given through the prophets who have made plain His eternal purpose in behalf of mankind. In the teachings of the prophets, His love for the lost race and His plan for their salvation are clearly revealed."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 22.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 592-602.

Part 3
THE WORD
INCARNATE
Heb. 1:1, 2

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

Experience has shown that language can often be misunderstood. But a life that is lived is an unmistakable testimony of love and concern. God's revelation to man found its apex of fulfillment in the person and life of Jesus Christ.

If you wanted to show your love for someone, what would you do? Why do actions speak louder than words? "The King of glory stooped low to take humanity. Rude and forbidding were His earthly surroundings. His glory was veiled, that the majesty of His outward form might not become an object of attraction. He shunned all outward display. Riches, worldly honor, and human greatness can never save a soul from death; Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. Only the beauty of heavenly truth must draw those who would follow Him. The character of the Messiah had long been foretold in prophecy, and He desired men to accept Him upon the testimony of the word of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 43.

In last week's lesson we studied Satan's continuing challenge to Jesus in His earthly life. By threat of death and by temptation Satan sought to prevent the revelation of God in the life of Jesus Christ. But by the same grace that is available to us Jesus met Satan's challenges, and His life is summed up in the words: "Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38. How would you sum up the message of Jesus' life? Are there aspects of the life of Jesus besides these that you would like to emphasize?

The writer to the Hebrews said: "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." Heb. 12:3, 4, RSV.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that more Christians are not reflecting the life of Jesus? Why should we contemplate more on the life of Jesus?

"In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, 'to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. . . . Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 826.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 675-680.

Part 4
THE WRITTEN
WORD

2 Tim. 3:16, 17, RSV

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Those whose writings have been preserved in the Bible were especially equipped for their task. Peter says of them: "For it was not through any human whim that men prophesied of old; men they were, but, impelled by the Holy Spirit, they spoke the words of God." 2 Peter 1:21, NEB.

Some of the writers did special research in order to ensure the truth of everything that was written. All this makes the Bible a special book. "For the word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the place where life and spirit, joints and marrow, divide. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the heart." Heb. 4:12, NEB.

"The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word. When His visible presence should be withdrawn, the word must be their source of power."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 390.

"The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth, and as such should be given the highest place in education."—*Education*, page 17.

Identify one challenge of the Written Word of God. Dan. 7:25.

"Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. . . . Satan is ready to supply the heart's desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth."—*The Great Controversy*, page 523.

What are two of the benefits of the study of the Word of God? Ps. 119:11, 105.

THINK IT THROUGH

How far can the success of the Christian be attributed to his reading of the Bible?

"With the word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose. In its pages he may hold converse with the noblest and best of the human race, and may listen to the voice of the Eternal as He speaks with men. . . . He who through the word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven's companionship."—*Education*, page 127.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 390, 391.

Part 5
AN ATTACK
ON THE WORD
Rev. 11:7, 8, RSV

Who is the beast from the bottomless pit? Rev. 20:1-3.

"And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified."

Since the Bible is God's Good News to man, it was to be expected that Satan would direct his attacks against it. John the Revelator saw in vision two witnesses who prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days in mourning, but were eventually overcome and killed. Rev. 11:3-7. "The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy."—*The Great Controversy*, page 267. This prophecy saw its fulfillment in the event connected with the French Revolution. The Bible was banned and Reason was worshipped. Not long after this the Bible was publicly burned.

But the prophecy indicated a complete reversal of the situation. "After three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet. . . . And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud." Rev. 11:11, 12. Not long after the French Revolution the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804. Twelve years later the American Bible Society was founded. As a result of the work of these Bible societies the Bible has been translated in whole or in part in over a thousand languages. The Bible is the world's best seller, and new translations are coming out frequently. Thus Satan's attempt to suppress the Word of God has resulted in utter failure.

THINK IT THROUGH

Satan has not succeeded in destroying the Word of God, but has he succeeded in destroying confidence in it? Why is it so few people read their Bibles?

"Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested."—*The Great Controversy*, page 593.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 269-288.

Part 6
THE WORD
TRIUMPHANT
Matt. 5:17, 18

"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."

God's Word is powerful and effective. It is weighted with eternal consequences. God never changes, and His Word partakes of His character. It is not surprising, therefore, that God's Word should triumph over the challenges of Satan.

Why do some people suggest that the Bible is not relevant to our times? "The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love."—*The Great Controversy*, page 595.

How did the psalmist regard God's communication? Ps. 119:103.

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 598.

What are the dangers of depending on others for a knowledge of Bible truth? "Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will."—*The Great Controversy*, page 595.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is a good plan for the study of the Bible?

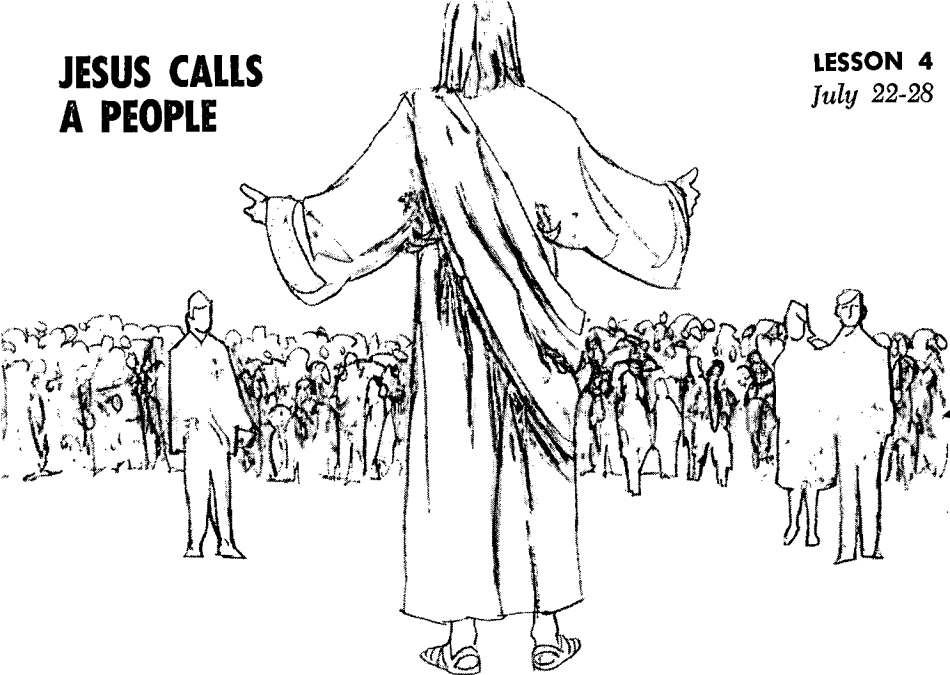
"The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 599, 600.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 593-602.

JESUS CALLS A PEOPLE

LESSON 4
July 22-28



"Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago." 2 Tim. 1:9, RSV.

Jesus came to this earth, not only to provide a full and free salvation, but to call a people into fellowship with Himself. It is the privilege of the Christian to leave behind the ways of darkness, and to walk in light. This does not mean that the Christian must leave the world. In fact, Jesus prayed that the Christian *not* be taken out of the world. But it does mean that he has rejected the evil in the world.

The fellowship with Jesus is an understanding fellowship. Jesus knows when we are tired and need rest. The relationship with Jesus is one of quietness and confidence. We need no longer be plagued with such questions as *What shall we eat? What shall we wear?*

But the Christian has also a duty to do, a task to perform. He has joined an organization likened to a body with Jesus as the Head. Eph. 1:22, 23. As the

members of the body work in harmony with directions from the head, so the Christian is ready to serve in any capacity that Jesus indicates.

One of the outstanding duties of the Christian is to let his light shine. Like a city set on a hill, he cannot and must not be hid. Yet his shining is not to attract attention to himself; it is to bring honor and glory to God.

Perhaps the greatest privilege that comes to the Christian is to witness to the truth that has made him free. He has a commission to go to every part of the world and preach the gospel. He does this with confidence and power because he has the assurance of the presence of Jesus "even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20.

Our lesson this week is a study of the privileges of the Christian as he recognizes his call and responds to the opportunities of his high calling. In this regard he is especially diligent to work out his own salvation "with fear and trembling," for he knows that it is God who works in him "both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Phil 2:12, 13, RSV.

Part 1
THE INVITATION
1 Peter 2:9, RSV

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

One of the first things Jesus did after He entered His ministry was to call men to be His disciples. Those who are called to enjoy the benefits of salvation are also called to share their blessings with others.

What blessings did Jesus seek to distribute through His chosen men? Matt. 10:8.

"The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love."—*Steps to Christ*, page 115.

How far should the Christian leave the world and yet remain in it? John 17:15.

"The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification."—*The Great Controversy*, page 469.

"God called Israel, and blessed and exalted them, not that by obedience to His law they alone might receive His favor and become the exclusive recipients of His blessings, but in order to reveal Himself through them to all the inhabitants of the earth. It was for the accomplishment of this very purpose that He commanded them to keep themselves distinct from the idolatrous nations around them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 369.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian be glad of his high and holy calling and not be pharisaical at the same time?

"The Israelites did not realize that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God. . . . But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are enemies of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 607.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Consecration," pages 43-48.

Part 2
THE FELLOWSHIP
1 Cor. 1:9

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Christian is called out of the world, and separates himself from the evil that is in it. But this is no sacrifice for him; he is actually leaving that which cannot satisfy, that which downgrades and destroys. Read 1 John 2:15-17.

More positively, he is invited to join a new fellowship, a new relationship that will bring joy and blessing and life. It is a vertical fellowship with Jesus Christ, and a horizontal fellowship with Christian friends and neighbors.

What is the implied meaning of fellowship in 2 Cor. 6:14? What is the relationship between fellowship and love?

The fellowship with Jesus means companionship and understanding. He knows our needs and supplies them.

What is one of the needs which Jesus supplies? Matt. 11:28-30.

“In these words Christ is speaking to every human being. Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. . . . He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 328, 329.

“Christ is full of tenderness and compassion for all in His service. He would show His disciples that God does not require sacrifice, but mercy. . . . It was their duty to rest.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 360.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can our relationship with our neighbors and friends indicate that we have been in fellowship with Jesus?

“If we would give heed to His word, we should be stronger and more useful. The disciples sought Jesus, and told Him all things; and He encouraged and instructed them. If today we would take time to go to Jesus and tell Him our needs, we should not be disappointed; He would be at our right hand to help us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 363.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 328-332.

Part 3
THE ORGANIZATION
Col. 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church."

The Christian enjoys more than a beautiful fellowship with Christ and his fellow Christians when he enters the church. He becomes a vital member of a closely knit organization of which Christ is the head. He is now to live and act in accordance with the commands of his Master. He is not his own.

When a person is attached to Christ, does he lose his freedom or does he gain it? John 8:32-36.

"Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 258, 259.

What are the talents placed in the church, and why are they there? Eph. 4:11-13.

The Christian develops his talent by using what he has. The parable of the talents shows us that it does not matter how many talents we have; the faithful man with the two talents was praised as highly as the one with five. The one who had one talent failed because he did not use the one he had. Matt. 25:15-30.

"Of every Christian the Lord requires growth in efficiency and capability in every line. Christ has paid us our wages, even His own blood and suffering, to secure our willing service. He came to our world to give us an example of how we should work, and what spirit we should bring into our labor."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 330, 331.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I doing what God would have me to do with my talents in the church?

"The Lord has a great work to be done, and He will bequeath the most in the future life to those who do the most faithful, willing service in the present life. The Lord chooses his own agents, and each day under different circumstances He gives them a trial in His plan of operation. In each true-hearted endeavor to work out His plan, He chooses His agents not because they are perfect but because, through a connection with Him, they may gain perfection."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 330.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents—Multiplied by Use, One Talent," pages 353-360.

Part 4
THE FUNCTION
Matt. 5:14

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

Jesus described the function of the believer as being to let his light shine. Jesus is the Light of the world, the one who gives light to everyone who comes into the world, and the member is to be a light also in his circle of influence.

By what means are Christians to let their light shine? Matt. 5:16.

It is significant that when the Christian shines, people glorify God rather than the Christian. At least, that is the way it ought to be! That is because the Christian knows that of himself he can do nothing good. It was the goodness of God that led him to repentance. By grace is he saved. He can do all things, but only through Christ who strengthens him. Thus when people praise him, he points to God as the one who has done all things well. Unfortunately it is very human to appropriate to oneself praise that belongs to another. “If the children of God, especially those who stand in positions of responsibility, can be led to take to themselves the glory that is due to God, Satan exults. He has gained a victory.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 421.

What men spoken of in the Bible were distinguished by letting their light shine? Gen. 5:24; 18:19; Dan. 1:8.

“His [Abraham’s] religion was not held as a precious treasure to be jealously guarded and enjoyed solely by the possessor. True religion cannot be thus held, for such a spirit is contrary to the principles of the gospel. While Christ is dwelling in the heart it is impossible to conceal the light of His presence, or for that light to grow dim.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 134.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does it mean to let one’s light shine?

“The Jews thought to confine the benefits of salvation to their own nation; but Christ showed them that salvation is like the sunshine. It belongs to the whole world. The religion of the Bible is not to be confined between the covers of a book, nor within the walls of a church. It is not to be brought out occasionally for our own benefit, and then to be carefully laid aside again. It is to sanctify the daily life, to manifest itself in every business transaction and in all our social relations.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 306, 307.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 11-16.

Part 5
THE COMMISSION
Mark 16:15

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The disciple of Jesus will find many opportunities for service in his own neighborhood, but he must set his eyes on the four corners of the earth and be sure that the gospel is being preached in the out-of-the-way places as well as those nearby. He may be called to serve overseas, or he may not; but with his offerings he can help support those who have been called and are doing the work that needs to be done.

Why is missionary work such an important feature of church activity? Matt. 28:18-20.

"It is in doing Christ's work that the church has the promise of His presence. . . . To take His yoke is one of the first conditions of receiving His power. The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 825.

What is another name for a missionary? 2 Cor. 5:20.

"Since His ascension Christ has carried forward His work on the earth by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men and ministers to their needs. The great Head of the church superintends His work through the instrumentality of men ordained by God to act as His representatives."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 360.

The work of preaching the gospel has been given to the church, not only to help the people to whom the gospel is being preached, but to help the missionaries themselves. The story of Jonah is well worth study in this connection. Jonah was one who had the requisite talent to bring the city of Nineveh to repentance. But Jonah needed the experience of going to Nineveh in order to learn some important lessons himself.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does the church preach the gospel in all the world because men are in need of light, or because Jesus has commissioned it to do this? Is the sending church in any way superior to the receiving church?

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest . . . the final and full display of the love of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 9.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 818-828.

Part 6
THE PRESENCE
AND THE POWER
Rev. 1:13-15, TEV;
Acts 1:8, TEV

What was the meaning of John's vision of Jesus in Rev. 1:13-15? See also verse 20.

"Among them stood a being who looked like a man, wearing a robe that reached to his feet, and a gold band around his chest. His hair was white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes blazed like fire; his feet shone like brass melted in the furnace and then polished, and his voice sounded like a mighty waterfall."

"You will be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The church can set out with utmost confidence to fulfill its gospel commission because it has been promised the presence of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

What must happen before the end can come? Matt. 24:14.

God has no other plan to finish His work than through consecrated men and women. "God could have proclaimed His truth through sinless angels, but this is not His plan. . . . The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 330.

There is given to man the privilege of being a co-worker with God. "Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 12.

What assurance do we have that the work of God will be finished? Rom. 9:28.

Regardless of the problems that men may see, such as population explosions, lack of funds, and closing doors, the work is God's and He will see that it is accomplished. The urgent question is a personal one: Am I doing what I can to hasten the second coming of Jesus?

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there something more the laymen ought to be doing, than is now being done, in order to finish God's work on the earth?

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His 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. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 49.

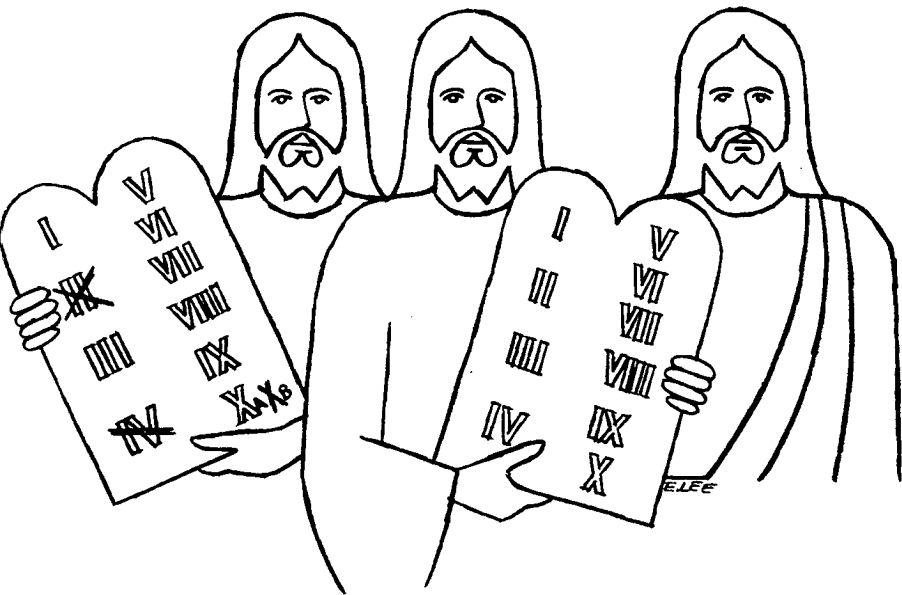
FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 47-56.

A COUNTERFEIT PEOPLE

LESSON 5

July 29 to August 4



"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." Dan. 7:8.

Wherever on earth there is a genuine article of value, there is usually a counterfeit. The counterfeit is practically worthless, but it appears to be so much like the original that it can very easily mislead. It is a tragedy when men and women spend time and money for what they consider is genuine, but is, in fact, a counterfeit.

God has a people that He has called to Himself, a church that is the true church. The Scriptures indicate that there is in the world a counterfeit church, an organization that claims to be the true church, but is not; a people who think they are right, but are wrong.

In our lesson this week we look at the basic characteristics of a church and seek to distinguish between the true and the false. There is the matter of doc-

trines; true doctrine is contained in Scripture.

There is the matter of leadership. What kind of leaders do we expect to find in the church? Are they faithful undershepherds?

There are the attitudes to the law of God. Is the law of God respected as being binding, or is there an attempt to modify the law?

What about those who are not in communion with the church? Is there an attempt to coerce, to compel compliance? Or is there an attitude of love and understanding?

It is of vital importance to everyone to be in the true church. We must be able to distinguish between truth and error. John the Revelator tells us that in the last days there will be a call to leave the false faith, to separate oneself from a mistaken people: "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." Rev. 18:4. The objective of this lesson is to help us recognize the issues.

Part 1
DOCTRINES
2 Thess. 2:13

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

Belief of the truth is a vital part of one's relationship with God. It is not sufficient to be sincere in one's convictions. This is not to deny the value of sincerity, but sincerity and truth must go together. 1 Cor. 5:8.

Where is the source of all truth? John 14:6; 2 Tim. 3:16.

John points out the importance of abiding in the doctrine of Christ; it is the difference between walking with God and not walking with Him.

“The preaching and teaching of His word is one of the means that God has ordained for diffusing light; but we must bring every man's teaching to the test of Scripture. Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive divine enlightenment.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 459.

What are some of the teachings that believers of the first century were warned against? Col. 2:8; 1 John 4:2, 3; Matt. 16:12.

The devil is still active, and he continues to spread lies about God and about the universe. He tempts men to leave the truth for the sake of temporal gain. Thus it was with Balaam. Judas fell into the same trap. “The fate of Balaam was similar to that of Judas, and their characters bear a marked resemblance to each other. Both these men tried to unite the service of God and mammon, and met with signal failure.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 452.

Under what condition will a person have assurance of correct belief? John 7:17.

When a Christian is sincere in wanting to know the truth and is willing to walk in its light, truth will be revealed to him. It is for this purpose that the Holy Spirit has been promised.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that so many people believe error rather than the truth? Can we blame others, or should we blame ourselves when we are deceived?

“Rome withheld the Bible from the people and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. It was the work of the Reformation to restore to men the word of God; but is it not too true that in the churches of our time men are taught to rest their faith upon their creed and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures?”—*The Great Controversy*, page 388.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 521-524.

Part 2
LEADERS
John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Jesus set the pattern of true leadership. Not only were His teachings sound, but His example was faultless. He came to serve, rather than to be served, even to the ultimate sacrifice of giving His life for His people.

What distinction did Jesus make between leadership among His followers and leadership in the world? Mark 10:42-45.

"Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 550.

What do the following examples suggest are some of the duties of the leader in the church? 1 Peter 5:2; Ezek. 33:8.

The spiritual leader is not only to teach sound doctrine and feed his congregation; he has also to rebuke and warn. Through the prophet Ezekiel, God points out the serious consequences to a watchman who is not faithful in his duties.

What do the following passages suggest are the kind of leaders the wicked usually look for? Isa. 30:10; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

Wicked or indifferent people do not want to hear the truth, because the truth hurts. They want to hear compliments and compromises, rationalizations that will enable them to continue in their present ways and enjoy present pleasures.

The tragedy of the world situation is that there are only too many leaders who are willing to be popular. They do not blatantly stand for wrong or error, but they minimize the seriousness of sin. They present an attitude of understanding reasonableness that wins favor and support.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we follow a leader because he pleases us, or because he speaks the truth? Do we attend a church where we are entertained, or where we are led into service? Why?

"To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to bear the responsibilities of leadership in connection with the advancement of the truth, is to reject the means that He has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 164.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 584-588.

Part 3
ATTITUDE TO LAW
Rom. 7:9-12

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

The true people of God recognize that God's law is a transcript of His character. It is therefore perfect and immutable. It points out sin and may be very unpleasant, but it is nevertheless good. To be rid of sin we do not get rid of the law, but we must be rid of the basic cause for sinning.

What does Paul say about the law itself and his relation to it? Rom. 7:9-12.

The law of God has been the subject of attack down through the centuries. Satan in heaven "sought to prove that God was unjust, that His law was faulty, and that the good of the universe required it to be changed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 69. He has always tempted man to disobey, with the suggestion that disobedience would lead to freedom and a godlike status. But Christ came to reveal that God's law cannot be set aside. Man may have sold himself to Satan by sin, but the gospel provides the power whereby he may live free from sin in harmony with God's law. Disobedience can only bring death, while obedience brings happiness and joy.

One of Satan's masterpieces of deception is his persuasion of an organization to claim the power to change God's law. This development was foreseen by Daniel in vision. Dan. 7:25. Many commentators and Bible scholars recognize that the power that thinks it can "change times and laws" is the papacy. Although the change from keeping the seventh-day Sabbath to the keeping of Sunday in memorial of the resurrection came early in the history of the church and became a widespread practice before the papacy was fully developed, yet the papacy sanctioned the change and has claimed the right to make such a change.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that Satan succeeds in deceiving so many people regarding God's law? How would you show that it is a privilege to keep God's law?

"In the closing work of God in the earth, the standard of His law will be again exalted. False religion may prevail, iniquity may abound, the love of many may wax cold, the cross of Calvary may be lost sight of, and darkness, like the pall of death, may spread over the world; the whole force of the popular current may be turned against the truth; plot after plot may be formed to overthrow the people of God; but in the hour of greatest peril the God of Elijah will raise up human instrumentalities to bear a message that will not be silenced."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 186, 187.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 331-342.

Part 4
AUTHORITY
Matt. 21:23

"The chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"

There are two sources of authority—the human and the divine. The human source is legitimate, but limited in scope. The divine source is beyond question. When the Jewish leaders approached Jesus and asked Him about His authority, they knew that He had no human authority. When Jesus asked them about the baptism of John, they were silent, because they did not want to admit the possibility of a divine commission that was not subject to the human. But the truth remains that the highest authority on earth is the authority of God.

When the apostles were asked to desist from preaching Christ, what did they say? Acts 4:19; 5:29.

In our complex society there are many sources of authority. There are our parents whom we are expected to honor in harmony with the fifth commandment. There are our rulers to whom we are to be subject. There are spiritual leaders who should be respected. There is the authority of the church meeting in counsel and deciding matters in harmony with the Spirit of God. But we must recognize that anything human is liable to error, and every decision must be evaluated in terms of God's overall plans and purposes. Jesus put the matter baldly when He said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Matt. 10:37.

It is a human trait of character to want to compel obedience. Some have waged war and gone out to persecute.

What did Jesus say to James and John when they wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans because they had been inhospitable to Jesus? Luke 9:55, 56.

Those who go out to destroy life, however legitimate the cause may appear, are not following in the footsteps of Jesus. Any organization, however religious, that "makes war with the saints" is thereby indicating a spirit that is not of Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

Although the Christian does not persecute, why is he often persecuted? 1 John 3:11, 12; 2 Tim. 3:12.

"Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches, of living a life free from trial. Instead He calls upon them to follow Him in the path of self-denial and reproach. . . .

"So it will be with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 576.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 39-48.

Part 5
SALVATION:
WORKS OR FAITH?
Eph. 2:8, 9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

There is an apparent tension between faith and works. Man has a tendency to want to earn salvation. Yet he is constantly being reminded that salvation is the result of faith. One thing is certain: it is Jesus who saves from sin (Matt. 1:21). And a man shows that he has been saved by the way he lives, that is, by his works (James 2:18).

What does Paul point out as being characteristic of false religion? Rom. 1:21-23.

It is worthy of note that Paul points out in his letter to the Romans that people who follow a false religion do not do so out of ignorance: "They knew God." They deliberately chose not to glorify God and not to be grateful for what He has done for them. Cain doubtless knew God, but he decided not to recognize Him.

"The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development—that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 73.

What feature of the parable of the laborers teaches that salvation does not depend on the amount of good works a person may have performed? Matt. 20:1-16.

"Not the amount of labor performed or its visible results but the spirit in which the work is done makes it of value with God. Those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were thankful for an opportunity to work."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 397.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian avoid a legalistic approach to the keeping of the commandments? Why cannot the Christian be saved without the keeping of the law?

"Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God's word declared he must have before he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man's obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ's righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 532.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 529-538.

Part 6
A WARNING AND
AN ADMONITION

Rev. 18:4

"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."

Just as in the days of Noah people had to make a decision whether they would go into the ark or not, so in the last days people are going to be invited to leave a religious organization called Babylon, because Babylon represents all that is against God's truth. This means that everyone must know the difference between truth and error and must make a decision for truth.

In the prophecy of the symbolic two-horned beast, what issue is foretold as facing mankind in the last days? Rev. 13:15.

At the time of the end there will be two classes of people: those who "worship him that made heaven, and earth" (Rev. 14:7), and those who worship the dragon and the beast and the image to the beast (Rev. 13:4, 15). The conflict will lead to economic sanctions and a death decree. Rev. 13:17. One group has the seal of God, and the other group has the mark of the beast. Rev. 7:3; 13:16. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation, and those who keep it indicate that they worship the Creator of heaven and earth. The mark of the beast must be a feature that indicates the worship of the beast, and the acceptance of the beast's authority. Since it is opposed to the Sabbath, it must mean the keeping of a day distinct from the Sabbath and authorized by the beast. The keeping of Sunday under coercion, in direct opposition to the keeping of the Sabbath, is the mark of the beast.

Why is it true that Sunday keepers do not now have the mark of the beast?

"There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy."—*The Great Controversy*, page 605.

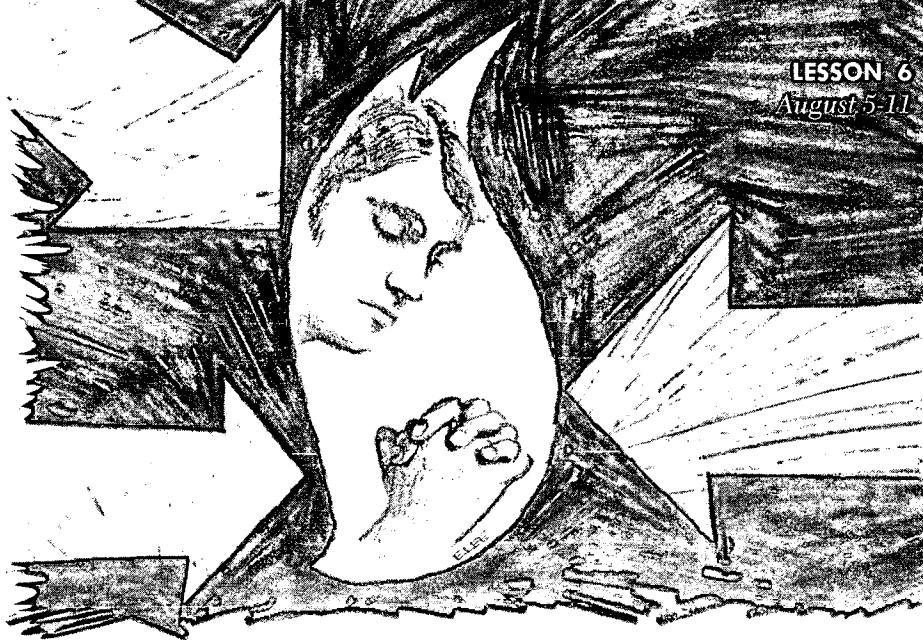
THINK IT THROUGH

How do you think the Christian should get ready for the conflict that is ahead of us? What kind of Sabbath keeping can be identified with the seal of God?

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. . . . God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 188, 189.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 613-616.



A FAITHFUL PEOPLE

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17.

Although the earth has been filled with sin since Adam, and many have not cared about God, there have always been some who were true and faithful to God, such as Abraham, Moses, and Paul.

Faithfulness has two aspects. There is the aspect of trust and loyalty; and there is the phase of trustworthiness and dependability. God's people are faithful in both of these ways. They have full trust and confidence in God; and they can be trusted to do what is right, and be depended on to be loyal. In our lesson this week we see God's people faithful in different ways and circumstances. They trust God even though they experience adversity. They have confidence that God will always provide for their needs, that He is leading them in the right way, even though they may not understand His providences. They

know that God can protect them and deliver them, that is, if He sees that this is for the best interests of all. But they do not attempt to dictate to God, or try to determine what God ought to do for them in every circumstance of life. This trust and confidence means that nothing can persuade them to forsake their God or break His commandments. They are faithful, even unto death. They are the very opposite of the "faithless and perverse generation" of Jesus' day. Matt. 17:17. Jesus came to His own, and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11), but to as many as received Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God (John 1:12); and down through the centuries these sons of God have been a faithful people.

The article by Ellen G. White which follows this lesson was printed in the *Review and Herald*, June 27, 1907. "Faithfulness in Service" is to be read as supplementary material for this week.

Part 1
CONSTANT IN
ADVERSITY
Ps. 46:1, 2

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

God's people are a faithful people because God is a faithful God in whom they can place absolute trust and confidence. God has chosen them; He loves them; He has made a covenant with them; and He will keep His word with them forever. Deut. 7:9.

If God is so good to His people, how is it that they often fall into adverse circumstances? John 16:33.

It is an inevitable part of life in this world that the Christian will face trouble not of his own making. God is able to protect and keep believers, but He does not necessarily prevent arrests or imprisonment or unjust treatment. The constancy of the Christian under trial is part of his witness to a true and loving God.

What are some of the values of passing through tribulation? Rom. 5:3; 2 Cor. 1:4.

Pain is always difficult to bear, but pain and sorrow that result in good can be welcomed. Can we glory in tribulations as Paul said he did? Do we recognize that when we pass through a difficult experience we can sympathize more with other people and point them to the source of comfort and help?

What does Peter say is the cause of rejoicing in tribulations? 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

It is paradoxical that people can be happy and contented while suffering hardships. They are able to do so because they trust God who has permitted the experiences, and the Holy Spirit aids them in viewing the situation from a Christian viewpoint.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is it that enables a Christian to put up with persecution and unjust treatment? Do you think a Christian ought to fight for his rights?

"No cross, no crown. How can one be strong in the Lord without trials? To have strength we must have exercise. To have strong faith, we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be exercised. . . . It is through much tribulation that we are to enter the kingdom of God. Our Saviour was tried in every possible way, and yet He triumphed in God continually. It is our privilege to be strong in the strength of God under all circumstances and to glory in the cross of Christ."
—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 67.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 574-577.

Part 2
TRUSTING FOR
THEIR NEEDS
Phil. 4:19

“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

God's faithful people have the assurance that their needs will always be supplied. They never have to worry about food or clothing.

Think: What is the difference between our needs and our wants? To what extent does God supply our needs? Eph. 3:20.

Sometimes we think of needs as being barest essentials. We admit that our bread and water are sure. But God is always generous with His gifts. Consider the situation of Job before his trials and after. Job 1:1-3; 42:10-16.

What are the dangers of wanting more than one has? 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

Paul came from a well-to-do family, but when he entered the service of God, there were times when he was in need. Apparently he never grumbled. Phil. 4:11, 12.

What was Paul's secret of success in always being content with what he had? Phil. 4:13.

The apostle points out that godliness with contentment is great gain. Contrast the human tendency to covet.

“All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 140.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my greatest need?

“Our greatest need is faith in God. When we look on the dark side we lose our hold on the Lord God of Israel. As the heart is opened to fears and conjectures, the path of progress is hedged up by unbelief. Let us never feel that God has forsaken His work.

“There must be less talking of unbelief, less imagining that this one and that one is hedging up the way. Go forward in faith; trust the Lord to prepare the way for His work. Then you will find rest in Christ.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 211.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 240-243.

Part 3
LOYAL UNDER
STRESS
John 16:33

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Although the Christian enjoys many privileges, he is not guaranteed a life of ease. On the contrary, he is assured that he will be the target of animosity in the world. Yet he need not be distressed. The victory that Christ gained by maintaining loyalty to God under the trial of hatred by men is a victory that may be his.

What are some of the troubles that the Christian and the church may reasonably expect? Luke 21:16.

Satan has always been angry with the people of God, but in the last days his anger will know no bounds because he knows that he has a short time. "Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control even of many professing Christians. But here is a little company who are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. Men will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 587, 588.

One of the ways Satan attacks the people of God is to point out their sins and seek to discourage them. "Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 588.

From Zechariah's vision about Joshua the high priest, what lesson can we learn about the way the Lord defends the believer when the accuser of the brethren presses his claims against him? Zech. 3:2.

"But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition; and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 589.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there ever an excuse for doing wrong? What is it that keeps us loyal to God under great duress? Rom. 8:31-39.

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. . . .

"Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 472, 473.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 585-592.

Part 4
GRATEFUL FOR
DELIVERANCE
Rom. 8:38, 39

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's people know that God is able to deliver them from any kind of trouble, but whether He will do so in any set of circumstances is something they cannot determine.

What experience in the Old Testament indicates that God can, and does deliver, but that, whether He will do so or not, is not known beforehand? Dan. 3:16-18.

"In vain were the king's threats. He could not turn the men from their allegiance to the Ruler of the universe. From the history of their fathers they had learned that disobedience to God results in dishonor, disaster, and death; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the foundation of all true prosperity."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 507, 508.

What experience in the New Testament gave reason for the early Christians to rejoice? Acts 12:5, 7, 11, 16.

God's people are convinced that God can deliver; but they cannot be certain that He will always do so. There were many times when God's servants were allowed to suffer the ire of the enemy. John the Baptist was beheaded because of the fancy and jealousy of a licentious woman. James suffered martyrdom at the hands of a wicked king. Acts 12:1, 2. One principle holds true in their lives. They would rather die than commit a wrong deed. For death is not the greatest tragedy that can come to anyone; the greatest tragedy is to lose the fellowship of God and the angels throughout eternity.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it always safe to do the right thing and leave the outcome of rightdoing in the hands of God? Matt. 10:28.

"In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 482.

"The consistent course is to commit our desires to our all-wise heavenly Father, and then, in perfect confidence, trust all to Him. We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 230.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 597-602.

Part 5
CONFIDENT
BEFORE THE
ENEMY
Ps. 91:5

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day."

Although there are many times when the Christian falls a victim to the evil intentions of the enemy, there are many more occasions when he experiences deliverance. Therefore he goes about his duty, even in dangerous circumstances, with a trust that all things will work out for good, even if he does not seem to be protected.

What experience in the Old Testament shows that God protects His own? 1 Sam. 19:10.

"As Saul's hatred of David increased, he became more and more watchful to find an opportunity to take his life; but none of his plans against the anointed of the Lord were successful. Saul gave himself up to the control of the wicked spirit that ruled over him; while David trusted in Him who is mighty in counsel, and strong to deliver."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 651.

God's deliverance and saving of life does not ensure that the Christian who receives these blessings will thereafter escape hardships and physical inconveniences. The Christian looks upon the difficulties he encounters as challenges to follow Jesus, and he sees the beatings he receives as matters of secondary importance in relation to the accomplishment of God's purposes. He can even rejoice in tribulation! He takes as his motto: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31.

What was Paul's attitude to the vicissitudes of life? 2 Cor. 12:10. Note some of the experiences he went through. 2 Cor. 11:24-27.

This attitude of not caring what may come to one in life's experience so long as one is right must be frustrating to the enemy. He finds the Christian invincible in spirit because of a supreme trust in the goodness of God and in his final victory over sin.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between the legitimate trust and confidence in God and fatalism?

"Remember that you will never reach a higher standard than you yourself set. Then set your mark high, and step by step, even though it be by painful effort, by self-denial and sacrifice, ascend the whole length of the ladder of progress. Let nothing hinder you. Fate has not woven its meshes about any human being so firmly that he need remain helpless and in uncertainty. Opposing circumstances should create a firm determination to overcome them."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 331, 332.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Shall Not God Avenge His Own?" pages 164-180.

Part 6
OBEDIENT IN THE
POWER OF THE
SPIRIT
Phil. 4:13

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

There is one thing that the people of God are absolutely sure about, and that is that the good that they do is not the result of any goodness in themselves, but the power of Jesus that operates in their lives.

How does Paul describe the relationship between himself and Christ in his daily life? Gal. 2:20.

"Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. . . .

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us."—*Steps to Christ*, pages 62, 63.

Is there any lack in the Christian when Christ dwells fully in him? Col. 2:10.

"Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed."—*Education*, page 257.

God's people are obedient to God's commandments, not because of any legalistic attitude of compulsion to do what is distasteful, but because a power has come into their lives that makes obedience not only a possibility, but a delight. They have been transformed from men and women who were dead in trespasses and sins, to children of God who enjoy the more abundant life of fellowship with all that is good and beautiful.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between having an inferiority complex and recognizing that Christ is all in all to us?

"Faith is needed in the smaller no less than in the greater affairs of life. In all our daily interests and occupations the sustaining strength of God becomes real to us through an abiding trust."—*Education*, page 255.

"Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness."—*Education*, page 253.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 668-671.

Faithfulness in Service

ELLEN G. WHITE

The parable of the talents should receive prayerful, critical attention. By it we are shown the importance of trading diligently and conscientiously on our Lord's goods. Not one thread of selfishness is to be woven into his work. Worldly ambition is not to be cherished. We are to keep self out of sight, holding Christ before the world. We are to bring glory to God by doing our best to be perfect men and perfect women.

Christ gave the parable of the talents to show us that all the blessings we have come from God. Our gifts belong to him. They are not to be used according to human judgment, but according to the directions given in God's Word. We are to study how we may use these gifts for the up-building of the cause of truth.

In the parable our Saviour says, "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." Here we are shown that different gifts are entrusted to different individuals. With the talents given him, be they many or few, each one is to do his utmost to glorify God. Talents improve and multiply as they are used in the service of the Master.

In the parable, the one who received five talents and the one who received two are represented as trading wisely on their talents, so that when their Lord returned, they were able to present to him that which he had entrusted to them, together with what they had gained by trading. And to each were spoken the words of commendation, "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."

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his

lord's money." When the time came for him to render an account, he said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

To-day thousands are doing as the unfaithful servant did. They live for self, when God desires them to improve their abilities for him, that they may act their part in his work. They excuse themselves by saying that they have but one talent. But if used for God, that one talent would accomplish much. By careful use the slothful servant might have doubled the talent, which instead of using he hid in the ground.

This parable shows the need of using every gift aright. To all comes the opportunity of blessing others by speaking helpful, uplifting words. This is a talent, and the failure to improve it brings great loss.

In our work this thought of glorifying God is to be made prominent. The business man is to bring the principles of heaven into every line of his work. In all he does the Christlikeness is to be clearly revealed. He who tills the soil is to make his work an object-lesson of the careful, thorough work which must

be done in the culture of the soil of the heart. The mechanic is to do his very best, bringing his work as near perfection as possible.

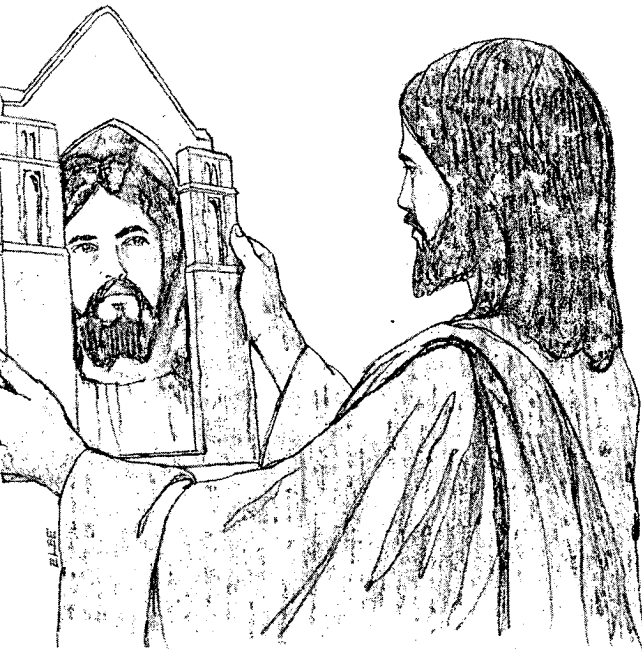
"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." The Lord can not unite with those who are careless and slothful in their work. He leaves them to themselves, choosing for his service those who do well every piece of work they handle, those who manage economically, gathering up the fragments, so that nothing will be lost.

Those who work for the Lord must remember that they are members of the royal family, and that they are to do all that their hands find to do as in the sight of the heavenly universe. Never must they slight their work, doing it in such a way that he who has redeemed them will be ashamed of it. They are to

guard against doing anything that will lead to carelessness or irreverence. They are ever to remember the words, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." By following principles of strict integrity, they are to build up a symmetrical character.

Christ will increase the talents of every faithful worker. This is the principle he always follows in dealing with his servants in this world. But the full honor in store for the one who in this life works with an eye single to the glory of God, will not be bestowed until the day of judgment. Then Christ will say to him, "Well done, 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."—*Review and Herald*, June 27, 1907.

JESUS PURIFIES A PEOPLE



“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”
—Christ’s Object Lessons, page 69.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John 3:3.

God’s people look forward to the second coming of Jesus because that will be the end of sin and woe, and they know that they must be pure and holy to meet a pure and holy God. Therefore, they seek to put aside everything in their experience that is not in harmony with the character of Jesus, so that they will not be ashamed at His appearing or cause Him to be ashamed of them.

In our lesson this week we see how Jesus purifies a people. Our salvation involves more than forgiveness of sins; it has to do with transferring a man from the situation into which he has fallen because of sin, and making him worthy and capable of holding the position that God intended he should occupy from the very beginning.

Christ’s right to forgive sin is based on His deity, His being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and

His absolute sinlessness. God was not taken unawares by the entrance of sin. He had made provision for this eventuality before sin entered the world. It was agreed between the Father and the Son that the Son would take the place of man and vindicate the character of God. Jesus, as Son of God and Creator, not only redeems man but restores him into the image in which he was created.

Man is not merely a forgiven sinner; he is a being who has changed family connections. From being a child born into sin, he is adopted into the family of God, and as a son, grows up into Christ. He becomes a partaker of the divine nature and walks in the footsteps of his Master.

Finally, we see that the disciple of Jesus is not treated as a slave, but as a friend. This friendship involves community of understanding and a sharing in plans and purposes. In response, man commits himself to the service of Jesus and strives for that perfection of character which is in keeping with the character of God.

Part 1
HIGH PRIEST
AND INTERCESSOR
Heb. 7:25

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The question is often asked: What is Jesus doing now? The answer is that He is ministering in the heavenly sanctuary as our great High Priest. Heb. 4:14.

On the cross Jesus gained a signal victory over sin, and by His resurrection He broke the bands of death. Thus He provided a full and free salvation for everyone, but not everyone takes advantage of this provision. Many in the end will be lost. It is only those who repent and believe who will be saved, saved because what was accomplished on earth by Jesus is made applicable to them by the priestly ministry of Jesus in heaven.

"The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement."—*Early Writings*, page 260.

What is it that makes Jesus a faithful High Priest? Heb. 2:17, 18.

In the incarnation Jesus became one with man. He was tempted in all points possible to man. In this way man is assured that Christ fully understands the plight of man and can save him "to the uttermost." Therefore we can come "boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16.

The good news of the gospel is not only that Christ died for us and rose again, but that "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34. He is the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5); and as He intercedes for His true disciples, they are assured that their names will not be blotted out of the book of life. Rev. 3:5.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the work of an intercessor? What will happen on earth when Christ's work of intercession ceases?

"When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. . . . Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. . . . The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."—*The Great Controversy*, page 614.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 489-491.

Part 2
THE LAMB SLAIN
John 1:29

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Jesus is not only the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary; He is also the offering. “As in the typical service the high priest laid aside his pontifical robes and officiated in the white linen dress of an ordinary priest; so Christ laid aside His royal robes and garbed Himself with humanity and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 33.

Why did Jesus have to die in order to save humanity? Heb. 9:22.

“The Lord does not save sinners by abolishing His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth. The punishment has been endured by the sinner’s substitute. Not that God is cruel and merciless, and Christ so merciful that He died on Calvary’s cross to abolish a law so arbitrary that it needed to be extinguished, crucified between two thieves. The throne of God must not bear one stain of crime, one taint of sin. In the councils of heaven, before the world was created, the Father and the Son convalidated together that if man proved disloyal to God, Christ, one with the Father, would take the place of the transgressor, and suffer the penalty of justice that must fall upon him.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1070.

What kind of lamb was offered in the temple service? Ex. 12:5.

“Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar. . . . Only an offering ‘without blemish’ could be a symbol of His perfect purity who was to offer Himself as a ‘lamb without blemish and without spot.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 352.

Since Christ has done so much for us, what did Paul appeal that we should do for Him? Rom. 12:1.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do we know that the slaying of the Lamb of God was not a sign of weakness? Rev. 5:6.

“In the contemplation of Christ we linger on the shore of a love that is measureless. We endeavor to tell of this love, and language fails us. We consider His life on earth, His sacrifice for us, His work in heaven as our advocate, and the mansions He is preparing for those who love Him, and we can only exclaim, O the height and depth of the love of Christ!”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 333, 334.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 225-230.

Part 3
STANDARD OF
PERFECTION
1 Peter 1:13-16, TEV

“So then, have your minds ready for action. Keep alert, and set your hope completely on the blessing which will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant. Instead, be holy in all that you do, just as God who called you is holy. Scripture says, ‘You must be holy, because I am holy.’”

Since God has done so much for us, it seems only reasonable that we should devote our lives to Him. Since He, a holy God, is our pattern, we, His people, must be holy too.

What are the characteristics that Peter counsels his readers to possess? 1 Peter 1:13-16.

- a. They are mentally active and intelligent about their faith (cf. 1 Cor. 14:20).
- b. They have a serious purpose and exercise self-control.
- c. They look forward to the second coming of Jesus and the privileges that will come to them at that time.
- d. They keep God’s commandments and seek to do His will in every phase of their lives.
- e. They turn their backs on the world and its allurements.
- f. They commit themselves to God’s service and enjoy communion with Him.

They do all this gladly because they know that they have been redeemed by the costly sacrifice of Christ. 1 Peter 1:19.

How can the Christian attain such a high standard of Christian living? 1 Peter 1:23.

Just as a man cannot lift himself up by his bootstraps, so man cannot change his evil nature by good resolutions; he must be reborn into another family. The Word that created the universe must re-create him, and this God has promised to do for all those who will accept Him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do some people find it difficult to separate themselves from the world?

“The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 102.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “Like Unto Leaven,” pages 95-102.

Part 4
GROWING
INTO CHRIST
2 Peter 3:18

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Everyone is familiar with growth and development. Wherever there is life, there is growth. Spiritual growth is a phenomenon just as real as physical growth. It is equally dependent on the source of all life and subject to similar principles of environment, nourishment, and nurture.

How dependent is man upon God for all growth? Matt. 6:27.

“In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 68.

What is the main element for Christian growth? 1 Peter 2:2.

“If we would live a true Christian life, the conscience must be quickened by constant contact with the word of God. All the precious things which at infinite cost God has provided for us will do us no good; they cannot strengthen us and produce spiritual growth unless we appropriate them. We must eat the word of God—make it a part of ourselves.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 195.

How did Jesus say His disciples could grow spiritually? John 15:4, 5.

“Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly,—by abiding in Him,—that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 69.

It is a great privilege to grow and develop. But one must guard against an inordinate concern about his salvation. “We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 72.

THINK IT THROUGH

How should I study the Bible in order to grow in grace?

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ ”—*Steps to Christ*, page 70.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “Growing Up Into Christ,” pages 67-75.

Part 5
IN HIS STEPS
1 Peter 2:21

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

Just as children resemble their parents in a number of characteristics, so God's people are to be distinguished by living on earth just as Jesus lived.

What is one reason that it is important for the Christian to live a Christlike life? Matt. 4:19.

"It is not only by preaching the truth, not only by distributing literature, that we are to witness for God. Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity, and that a cheap Christian character works more harm in the world than the character of a worldling. . . . Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 21.

What is the evidence to the world that a believer is a true Christian? John 13:35.

"No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value."—*The Great Controversy*, page 487.

"The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves."—*Education*, page 16.

With what two features does Luke sum up the earthly life of Jesus? Acts 10:38.

Just as Jesus lived to bless others, so the Christian is to be a center of love, light, and comfort to all. Isa. 58:7, 8. "Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. . . . If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 417.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is a loving and lovable Christian the strongest argument for Christianity?

"The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 470.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 25-28.

Part 6
FRIENDS RATHER
THAN SERVANTS
John 15:15

What evidence did Jesus give of the disciples' status as His friends?

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The prodigal son returned to his father and offered to be one of his hired servants. But the father would not think of it. He treated him like an honored son, and rejoiced that he had returned. So it is with Jesus and His people. He died for them; He pleads for them; He treats them much better than they deserve; and then He takes them into His counsel and considers them His friends.

What was the relationship of God to Moses that prompted the analogy of human friendship to describe it? Ex. 33:11.

What made Abraham a friend of God? James 2:23.

"Abraham, 'the friend of God,' set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In following years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he . . . repaired the altar and there worshiped the living God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 128.

THINK IT THROUGH

What has Jesus revealed to His friends?

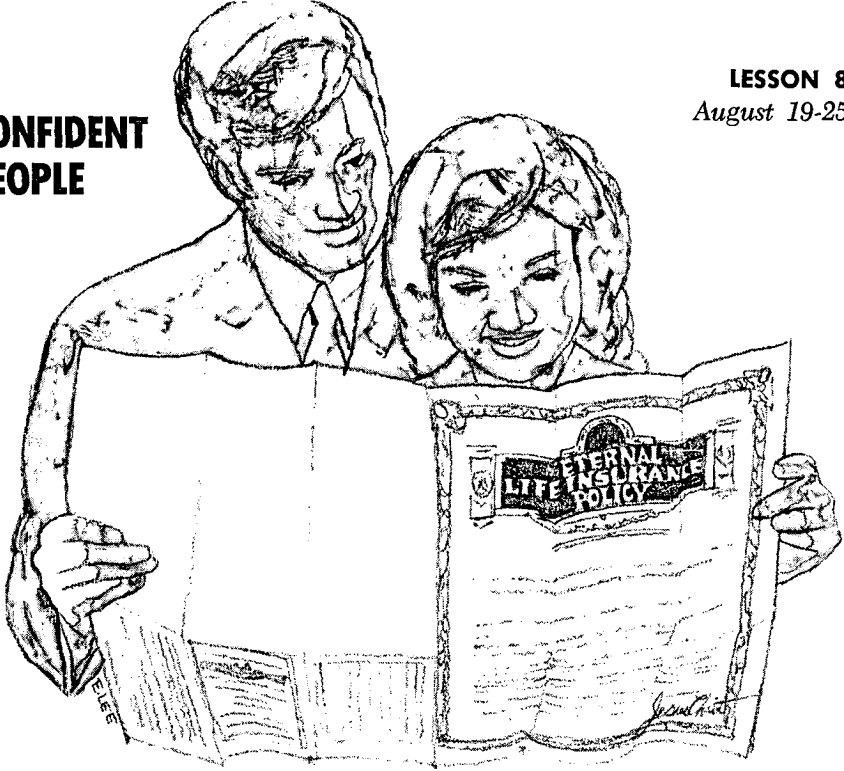
"What is our profession? We profess to be following Christ. We claim to be Christians. Do we, then, reveal the Christlikeness? Do we serve the Saviour intelligently? Does the love of God continually flow from us to others? Do we, in word and action, confess our Redeemer? Do we conform our lives to His holy principles? Are we pure and undefiled? Christians must hold the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end. It is not enough to profess the faith. There must be a patient endurance of all trials and a brave resistance to all temptations. Faith can be maintained only by bringing the Christian religion to the test of practice, thus demonstrating its transforming power and the faithfulness of its promises."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, pp. 928, 929.*

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 128-134.

A CONFIDENT PEOPLE

LESSON 8
August 19-25



"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Ps. 118:8.

In our lesson this week we see how people turn away from God and place their confidence in things other than God. Some think that their ancestry gives them an element of superiority. Others are impressed by their riches and material success and see no need to depend upon God for their future plans. Still others are meticulous about the way they fulfill their religious obligations, and, because they have kept the commandments, they think they will doubtless enter the kingdom. Others again feel that they know the right people and can make the right alliances to be able to succeed in their ventures. They pride themselves in their prowess and achievement, so that they have no sense of dependence upon God.

These same people may profess faith in God and feel spiritually secure. Their fervor and zeal are often exemplary. Yet

they are wholly mistaken, and their confidence is misplaced.

How can such people be warned? The objective of this lesson is to point out the areas of danger and indicate, by contrast, the right pathway, so that those who accept the Bible as the norm of their conduct will be duly warned and rightly directed. We need to be God's people in the sense that we put our trust wholly in God, and not be self-confident people, who place confidence in themselves and what they can achieve.

The article by Ellen G. White which follows this lesson was printed in the *Review and Herald*, Sept. 27, 1892. "Need of Dependence on God" is to be read as supplementary material for this week.

Part 1
CONFIDENCE
IN ANCESTRY
Matt. 3:9

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Ancestry can be a great privilege, and family connections are always important, but when it comes to salvation it is the personal decision that is vital.

What claims could Paul make as far as family connections were concerned, and what was his attitude toward them? Phil. 3:4-7.

We must not deny the advantages that come to us as a result of inheritance. We can always thank God for good constitutions, strong mental powers, and an environment in which we have learned of the truth from early years. But these blessings come as challenges, and lay solemn responsibilities upon us to live up to the light and the privileges we enjoy. They are talents that we can use to God's glory. It is when we assume that because we have these things we can automatically enter the kingdom that we make a mistake.

What was the teaching of Jesus in regard to family connections and salvation? John 8:39; Matt. 8:11, 12.

"Christ recognized no virtue in lineage. He taught that spiritual connection supersedes all natural connection. The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham; but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not his true children. Only those who prove themselves to be spiritually in harmony with Abraham by obeying the voice of God, are reckoned as of true descent."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 268.

"The Jews regarded their natural descent from Abraham as giving them a claim to this promise. But they overlooked the conditions which God had specified."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 106.

THINK IT THROUGH

Should we blame the Jew today for the mistakes his ancestors made many centuries ago? Why is it not right to claim a right to heaven on the basis of parentage?

"To a people in whose hearts His law is written, the favor of God is assured. They are one with Him. But the Jews had separated themselves from God. Because of their sins they were suffering under His judgments. This was the cause of their bondage to a heathen nation. Their minds were darkened by transgression, and because in times past the Lord had shown them so great favor, they excused their sins. They flattered themselves that they were better than other men, and entitled to His blessings."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 106.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pages 64-68.

Part 2
CONFIDENCE
IN WORKS
Luke 18:9

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

It is very easy to take pride in what we have done, especially when people praise us. This does not mean that we should cease to do good works, but it does mean that when people compliment us we should be sure to give God the glory.

On what basis will some religious people seek entrance to the kingdom of God? Matt. 7:21-23. What does Jesus say to them? Verse 23.

"Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, 'I know you not.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 413.

The relationship between works and faith is an important one. It is possible to engage in works without faith, but this kind of activity is worthless. Some people emphasize faith to the detriment of works, but this is also false. James 2:20. Works must be the natural result of the life of faith, the fruit that is borne by one who abides in Christ. John 15:4.

What was one result of certain Jews taking pride in their righteousness? Luke 18:9.

"Whoever trusts in himself that he is righteous, will despise others. As the Pharisee judges himself by other men, so he judges other men by himself. His righteousness is estimated by theirs, and the worse they are the more righteous by contrast he appears. His self-righteousness leads to accusing. . . . Thus he is making manifest the very spirit of Satan, the accuser of the brethren. With this spirit it is impossible for him to enter into communion with God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 151.

Most false religions teach that one moves upward by counterbalancing evil deeds with righteous ones, that a surplus of righteous deeds will ensure salvation. But the Bible teaches otherwise. Ezek. 33:13-16. A man determines his destiny by his decisions, not his works.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should we do when we do not feel like keeping the Sabbath or paying the tithe? Should we discipline ourselves to do what is right?

"No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 159.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Two Worshipers," pages 150-163.

Part 3
CONFIDENCE
IN RICHES
Luke 12:20

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Contrary to the opinion of many, a man's life is not fulfilled when he owns many things. Rather, his many possessions may be a source of embarrassment.

What dangers does Paul point out as inherent in the desire for money? 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

Riches are often thought of as a kind of insurance in a world where nothing seems to be sure. But many have found to their sorrow that riches can disappear overnight. We are not to strive for riches, although wealth may come our way as a result of God's blessing or of God's test. Our trust must be placed in the living God.

Why did a would-be follower of Jesus make the wrong decision? Luke 18:23-25.

"The lover of self is a transgressor of the law. This Jesus desired to reveal to the young man, and He gave him a test that would make manifest the selfishness of his heart. He showed him the plague spot in his character. The young man desired no further enlightenment. He had cherished an idol in the soul; the world was his god. He professed to have kept the commandments, but he was destitute of the principle which is the very spirit and life of them all. He did not possess true love for God or man. This want was the want of everything that would qualify him to enter the kingdom of heaven. In his love of self and worldly gain he was out of harmony with the principles of heaven."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 392.

What is the believer's true wealth? James 2:5.

There is no virtue in poverty for poverty's sake, although many Christians have given up their wealth for the sake of the gospel. The point is that the Christian must center his life on Christ and His service, and not on the world and what the world can offer.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that some people are materially rich and some are poor?

"To the rich no less than to the poor are the words of the Holy Spirit spoken, 'Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price.' 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. When men believe this, their possessions will be held as a trust, to be used as God shall direct, for the saving of the lost, and the comfort of the suffering and the poor. . . . By beholding the matchless love of Christ, the selfish heart will be melted and subdued."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 394.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Reward of Grace," pages 390-395.

Part 4
CONFIDENCE
IN FALSEHOOD
Jer. 28:15

"Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie."

Strange as it may seem, some people would rather believe a lie than the truth. This was the case in the days of Jeremiah when the people were told that they would have to go into captivity because of their sin, but they did not want to acknowledge their sin or accept their fate. See Jer. 27:6-11. Hananiah's fate was certainly a terrible one, and a warning to all time-servers.

What kind of people will definitely be outside the kingdom of heaven? Rev. 21:27.

We are told that in the latter days people "will not stand wholesome teaching, but will follow their own fancy and gather a crowd of teachers to tickle their ears. They will stop their ears to the truth and turn to mythology." 2 Tim. 4:3, 4, NEB.

Paul, writing to the Romans, points out that everyone can know about God because nature reveals "his eternal power and Godhead." Rom. 1:20. When people turn away from God, it is not because of ignorance, but by deliberate choice. The result of such decision is clearly shown in verses 22-32.

The apostle John tells us that Jesus is the "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), so that those who do not accept the light are those who do not want to see it.

What power did Paul describe as coming before the second coming of Jesus? 2 Thess. 2:3-11.

It is those who do not love the truth in order to be saved that will be deceived by the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:10). Their decision having been made, God sends them a strong delusion and they "believe a lie," apparently with all sincerity. We must not be deceived by sincerity, but differentiate between truth and error.

THINK IT THROUGH

In view of the widespread acceptance of error, what do you think the Christian ought to be doing?

"I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant."—*Early Writings*, page 261.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 596-600.

Part 5
CONFIDENCE
IN NUMBERS
Deut. 7:7

"The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people."

There is nothing wrong in numbers, for there are myriads of angels that serve God; and God promised Abraham that his seed would be "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." Gen. 22:17. What is dangerous is that we place confidence in numbers rather than in God.

What experience of the children of Israel shows that God does not need numbers in order to grant a victory? Judges 7:2-7.

People generally feel more confident when they have numbers on their side. They feel that large numbers of people cannot be wrong. But truth is not always with the majority; often it is with the minority. Therefore a person must know what he believes because he understands the truth and he has asked the Holy Spirit to guide him.

"In comparison with the millions of the world, God's people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 590.

What was the true secret of success for Judah after the exile? Zech. 4:6.

"As the chosen people of God we cannot copy the habits, aims, practices, or fashions of the world. We are not left in darkness to pattern after worldly models and to depend on outward appearance for success. . . . As the Lord sees fit, He imparts to those who keep His way, power that enables them to exert a strong influence for good. On God they are dependent, and to Him they must give an account of the way in which they use the talents He has entrusted to them."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 90.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it unsafe to gauge the importance of a church by the number of its members?

"Not in our learning, not in our position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through Him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 404.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 459, 460.

Part 6
CONFIDENCE
IN SELF
Joshua 7:3

"Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few."

After the signal capture of Jericho the children of Israel felt they could take Ai without any difficulty. "The great victory that God had gained for them had made the Israelites self-confident. Because He had promised them the land of Canaan they felt secure, and failed to realize that divine help alone could give them success. Even Joshua laid his plans for the conquest of Ai without seeking counsel from God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 493.

On whom did Jesus depend? John 5:30.

"Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 479.

What danger is there in self-confidence? 1 Cor. 10:12.

"Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. . . . Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 155.

Self-confidence often leads to dogmatism, and dogmatism leads to persecution. While the church needs to be positive in its teaching, it must never be arrogant or make claims for itself that cannot be substantiated. The power of the church is not in its size or wealth or position, but in its close connection with God as His appointed agency for the salvation of men.

THINK IT THROUGH

When is it proper to have a reasonable confidence in oneself, and when is it dangerous?

"As men rejoice in the freedom which the truth brings them, they are inclined to extol those whom God has employed to break the chains of error and superstition. Satan seeks to divert men's thoughts and affections from God, and to fix them upon human agencies; He leads them to honor the mere instrument and to ignore the Hand that directs all the events of providence. Too often religious leaders who are thus praised and revered lose sight of their dependence upon God and are led to trust in themselves. As a result they seek to control the minds and consciences of the people, who are disposed to look to them for guidance instead of looking to the word of God."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 169, 170.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 633-636.

Need of Dependence on God

ELLEN G. WHITE

Jesus said: "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

We should constantly feel our dependence upon the Lord God of Israel, and know that God is our strength, and that the more we depend upon him, the more we shall draw from Christ, the living Vine, and have the mind that was in Christ. Our experience will be after the character of that upon which we feed spiritually. If we feed upon Christ, we shall have a Christlike experience; and we cannot afford to make any mistake in regard to our experience here in the things of God; for eternal interests are involved. In the path of life we may go carelessly, stumbling along; we may make crooked paths for our feet; but it will be at the terrible loss of our own souls and the souls of others. We are running the risk of losing the eternal weight of glory when we do not follow Christ, and we cannot afford to do this, because it would have been better for us had we never been born, than to lose eternal life.

We need to know and may know that Christ is abiding in our hearts by faith, and that we are abiding in Jesus by faith. Jesus says, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Now listen to the conclusion of the verse: "For without me ye can do nothing." From this you can see how our Lord Jesus Christ regards un sanctified, human ability. We may have

an education in the sciences, we may have all the knowledge in the world, and yet if it is not sanctified, if it is not brought under contribution to God, if we are not depending upon his merits every moment, if we are not continually drawing from Christ, we cannot live the life of Christ; we can do nothing worthy of his name. We want to hear the voice of Jesus and invite his presence. We should open the door of the heart to Christ, and invite him to come in. He says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Is it because men work without Christ that we see so many efforts made without accomplishing any good? Is it because man depends upon his own efforts, and his own power, and thinks that he can do great things of himself? I know that this is why the Lord can do so little for man. He uses the gifts of God as weapons to destroy himself. We want Jesus simply, Jesus who offers himself to us as a free gift; and if we accept the offering with the whole heart and soul, we shall praise God at every step, we cannot help it, because he has given us this manifestation of his love and condescension. What we want is Jesus, and the power of his grace; and may God baptize us with his Holy Spirit. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

That is a wonderful promise, "If ye abide in me, and my words"—be careful to take that in—"my words abide in you." How are we to know that the words of Christ are abiding in us? how are we to understand them? It is by appropriating his promises to our souls that we feed upon Christ. We are to

study his words carefully, and be doers of his word. Many trust in a flight of feeling, and think that in order to be accepted of God, they must have some special emotion come upon them, or they do not have the grace of Christ. But this is not what we are to look for. Jesus came that we might obey as well as receive; but we must believe in him, and receive, in order to obey. We are to ask, Are his words cherished by us? Are we doers of the word of Christ? This is an important question. If we are following the light just as far as it shines upon our pathway, if we are seeking to do the will of our heavenly Father, just so surely shall we be prepared for greater light to come into the heart and mind. Especially will this be the case when we are prayerfully searching the Scriptures. We have had the Spirit of God here in this meeting; we would dishonor God if we did not appreciate this, and praise his holy name that we have felt the manifestation of his Spirit in power.

Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life, I am that bread of life. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." When some of the disciples were offended at these sayings of Christ, he said: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The word of Christ is spirit and life, and the more knowledge we have of his word, the more vigorous will be our spiritual growth.

Many are singing beautiful songs in the meetings, songs of what they will do, and what they mean to do; but some do not do these things; they do not sing with the spirit and the understanding also. So in the reading of the word of God, some are not benefited, because they do not take it into their very life,

they do not practice it. We listen to the presentation of truth, it is all good; but do we listen to it as we would to a pleasant song, or receive it as the voice of God to us, and obey its precepts? Many go away after listening to the most solemn messages of truth, and pursue the same careless, unsanctified course they did before, as though they had not heard the appeal of God to them. They go away and live to please themselves, live to suit their own fancy, in a way directly opposed to the way and will of God. We should not seek to follow our own way; we have had enough of that; it amounts only to weakness. We need to have the Holy Spirit of God with us moment by moment. And where are we to find our soul consolation? In a happy flight of feeling?—O no; we are by faith to partake of the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, becoming partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

I want to know more and more of God's word and of his works. I do not want to build myself up in myself; for I am nothing. What I desire is to know the ways of the Lord. I do not wish to be so particular as to how my house is furnished; spending unnecessary time and money, so that everything may be just to my taste in this or that arrangement, and neglect the all-important question, Is it well with my soul? What is the order of my soul? Is the soul temple pure? Is the defilement of sin in my heart? Have I felt the necessity of cleansing my heart from all impurity? It is of the greatest importance to understand and practice the truth; for this sanctifies the soul. Our greatest anxiety should be to stand perfect before the Lord, clothed in the spotless garments of Christ's righteousness.

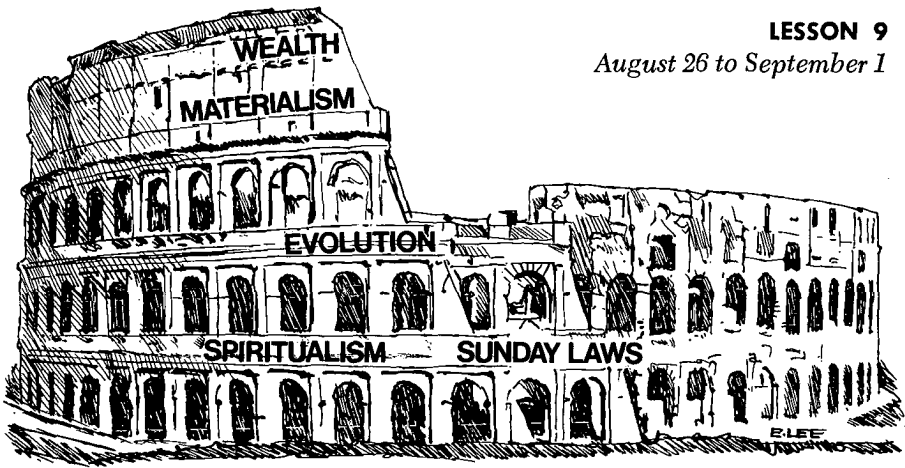
Souls are perishing for the bread of life, and every one of us should be engaged in earnest work for the Master. Jesus came into the world to be our example, and we should study and imitate his life. Moments are golden, and we should constantly guard ourselves, lest we make a world of an atom, and an atom of a world. We should guard ourselves, lest we fail to magnify the things of eternal interest, and fail to appreciate the blessings of heaven. Why is it that the truth as it is in Jesus is

made of so little importance? The words of Paul to the Galatians apply to those who fail to discern the worth of spiritual things, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Why is it that you do not walk in the light? Why is it that you permit the bewitching power of Satan to paralyze your spiritual energies? The influence of the world holds many of you in captivity. Satan has his allurements presented before every one professing the name of Christ, that if possible he may attract the mind from Jesus, and fasten it on the things of this world. He is the master of manifold temptations, and is prepared to find access to the hearts of those who have not made a complete surrender to Christ. Shall the enemy of all righteousness have possession of our souls?

The Christian should continually realize that every moment of life should be spent for the Master. We should not live to glorify ourselves; for it would be sin to serve self. Our life must be hid with Christ in God, that every power of our being, every talent given of God, may be used to aid on the influences that are constantly flowing heavenward. It is for us to fulfill the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Christ must be our only master, abiding in our hearts by living faith, that we may be laborers together with God. We should seek to know more of him day by day, dwelling upon his matchless charms, till by beholding, we become changed into his glorious image. We are to keep our eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of our salvation.

John says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." No language can express this love; we can describe but a faint degree of love that passeth knowledge. It would require the language of the Infinite to express the love that has made it possible for us to be called the sons of God. In becoming a Christian, a man does not step down. There is no shame

in having connection with the living God. Jesus bore the humiliation and shame and reproach that justly belonged to the sinner. He was the Majesty of heaven, he was the King of glory, he was equal with the Father; and yet he clothed his divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity, that divinity might lay hold of divinity. Had he come as an angel, he could not have been a partaker with us of our sufferings, could not have been tempted in all points like as we are, he could not have sympathized with our sorrows; but he came in the garb of our humanity, that as our substitute and surety, he might overcome the prince of darkness in our behalf, and make us victors through his merits. Standing under the shadow of the cross of Calvary, the inspiration of his love fills our hearts. When I look upon Him whom my sins have pierced, the inspiration from on high comes upon me; and this inspiration may come upon each one of you through the Holy Spirit. Unless you receive the Holy Spirit, you cannot have the love of God in the soul; but through a living connection with Christ, we are inspired with love and zeal and earnestness. We are not as a block of marble, which may reflect the light of the sun, but cannot be imbued with life. We are capable of responding to the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness; for as Christ illuminates our souls, he gives light and life. We drink in the love of Christ as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted into Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the living Vine, we shall give evidence of this fact by bearing rich clusters of fruit. If we are connected with light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. Those who are truly Christians, grasp the golden chain which links earth to heaven, which binds finite man to the infinite God. The light that shineth in the face of Jesus, shines in the hearts of his followers, to the glory of God.—*Review and Herald*, Sept. 27, 1892.



JESUS' PEOPLE UNDER ATTACK

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Rev. 12:6.

Although God's people are to be lights in a dark world, and their light is not to be hid, there are times when the church is compelled to recede into the background. The attacks of Satan make this necessary, and although it would seem that the forces of evil are gaining the ascendancy, the fact is that God is in control. He has a place for His people, a shelter within which the church can continue to give its witness. He nourished the church and protected it from the ravages of the enemy for twelve hundred and sixty years. Many commentators agree that this prophecy in Revelation refers to the period of papal supremacy from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798, when the true church was compelled to hide in the mountains and other secret locations, symbolized in the Bible as the wilderness.

In our lesson this week we see how the church must leave the limelight sometimes because it is the object of hatred. Jesus Himself had to do the same thing when He was on earth. But the church still contends for the faith. In straitened circumstances it acts wisely and uncomplainingly. In the mountains it looks to God as the Source of all help and faithfully points to the Bible as the only source of true doctrine. Although the time of persecution is long, God's people endure hardness like good soldiers, trusting that their General knows what is best and will lead to victory. Satan in his fury seeks to put an end to the church, but his purposes are frustrated. God has a thousand ways to give deliverance of which men are not aware.

Finally the church emerges triumphant as it always has and always must do, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. God's people know that even though Satan goes about like a roaring lion, he is a defeated foe.

Part 1
SHINING IN THE
BACKGROUND
Luke 21:12, 13, RSV

"But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony."

Jesus told His disciples that they would be the object of hatred and persecution. At the same time He assured them of His protection and help. The apostle John foresaw the conflict between the dragon and the church and indicated that the church would have to flee into the wilderness.

What do the following verses suggest as to why God's people are the object of the hatred of the world? 1 John 3:12; John 3:20.

"The brighter the heavenly light that is reflected from the character of God's faithful servants, the more clearly the sins of the ungodly are revealed, and the more determined will be their efforts to destroy those who disturb their peace."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 74.

It is interesting to note that the devil with all his fury cannot frustrate God's plans. Even in prison, the people of God have a joy that cannot be quenched, and God's work goes forward.

Why are adverse circumstances a cause of joy for the Christian? James 1:2-4.

The Christian does not seek persecution. He prays: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matt. 6:13. He knows how weak he is, and so seeks protection from anything that would cause him to fall. Yet in the moment of trial he counts it a privilege to be able to suffer for the truth and give his testimony to the One who has saved him from sin to walk in the path of righteousness.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that some people seem to suffer much more than others?

"Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the living Vine is flowing to the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart; and in the day of final accounts we shall see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 344.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 606-610.

Part 2
CONTENDING
FOR THE FAITH
Jude 3, RSV

"Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Even under adversity the Christian is to contend for his faith. There is no suggestion that in difficult circumstances the Christian might find it expedient to hide his identity. His witness to the faith is more important than life itself.

What is the result of either proclaiming or hiding one's faith in Jesus? Matt. 10:32, 33.

We value our lives very highly, and it is natural to try to save our lives at any cost. Satan knows this and therefore attacks us at this point. But we must differentiate between this temporal life and eternal life. The real tragedy is not to die now, but to die eternally.

Whom did Jesus say we should fear? Matt. 10:28.

"What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered persecution for Christ's sake? It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. Reproach and persecution have separated many from earthly friends, but never from the love of Christ. . . . When for the truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him and cheers his heart with His love. When he suffers death for Christ's sake, the Saviour says to him, They may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 85.

The martyrdom of the Christian is not the end of his life or influence. It has rightly been said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are ways in which a Christian may deny his Lord?

"He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them." —*The Desire of Ages*, page 357.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 97, 98.

Part 3
LOOKING TO
GOD FOR HELP
Ps. 121:1, 2, RSV

**"I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help come?"**

**My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth."**

Mountains have always been a symbol of strength and stability. People who have fled to the mountains have often found protection and safety. In ancient Israel the hills were sites of idolatry. But there is One who is stronger than all the mountains put together; He is the One who has placed them there and can remove them at His will. The psalmist recognized, as do all those in similar circumstances, that true help comes only from the Lord.

What did Jesus say was stronger than mountains? Matt. 17:20.

"Throughout the history of God's people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unfaltering trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 594, 595.

What illustration does Isaiah use to contrast the mountains and the power of God? Isa. 40:12.

When we look at the vastness of the sea or the solidness of the mountains, we need to remember the One who created them and remember that He is on our side. There is nothing He cannot do for us. Though we may be helpless and weak, He can supply all our lack.

Jesus went to a mountain to pray. Moses received the Ten Commandments in a mountain. The wicked will call upon the mountains to fall on them. In prophecy, mountains symbolize powers. Thus mountains are more than objects of beauty; they point us to God and remind us of lessons of Scripture.

THINK IT THROUGH

What other truths do mountains call to mind besides the ones mentioned in this part of the lesson?

"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. . . . To those faithful exiles the mountains were an emblem of the immutable righteousness of Jehovah."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 65, 66.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 65-67.

Part 4
ENDURING
HARDNESS
2 Tim. 2:3

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

The Christian life is compared to warfare, and the Christian is told that he must put on armor and go out to fight. Eph. 6:11-17; 1 Tim. 6:12.

What is the nature of the fight in which the Christian is engaged? Eph. 6:12.

The Christian is not out to destroy life, but to preserve it. His conflict is with the forces of evil, and that is why the struggle is constant and taxing. There is no letup in the controversy. "Till the close of time there will be a conflict between the church of God and those who are under the control of evil angels."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 219. The tempter is subtle, and only too often he succeeds in causing the unwary to fall.

In view of the danger the Christian confronts, what did Jesus say were two characteristics he should have? Matt. 10:16.

Wisdom will prevent us from doing things that may be perfectly right but are not expedient at the moment. The Christian's objective is always to save, and therefore he will modify his action in order not to create prejudice, or cause someone to stumble. Not all things that are lawful are always expedient. 1 Cor. 6:12.

Harmlessness is another characteristic of the Christian. Sometimes he feels righteous indignation rising in his blood, and he would like to call down fire and brimstone on the enemy. But this is not the spirit of Christ. The Christian warfare is against sin, not sinners; against the author of sin, and not those who have been deceived by him. Sometimes the Christian has quite a struggle with himself!

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that Satan seems to succeed in deceiving many?

"The tempter often works most successfully through those who are least suspected of being under his control. The possessors of talent and education are admired and honored. . . . The opinion prevails with many that all which appears like courtesy or refinement must, in some sense, pertain to Christ. Never was there a greater mistake. These qualities should grace the character of every Christian, for they would exert a powerful influence in favor of true religion; but they must be consecrated to God, or they also are a power for evil. Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners, who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, is but a polished instrument in the hands of Satan."—*The Great Controversy*, page 509.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 76-78.

Part 5
A TIME CUT SHORT
Matt. 24:22

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

God, in His mercy, knows how much the frail human nature can endure, and He acts accordingly. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Cor. 10:13, RSV.

John foresaw the church, pictured as a woman, flee into the wilderness for a period of "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Rev. 12:6. This period of time is mentioned seven times in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, and applies to the period of papal supremacy from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. See *SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 12:6. During this time the church was to be "nourished" (Rev. 12:14), which indicates that God looks after His own even though they may be driven into exile or suffer persecution. God permits His people to be tried, but He will not permit all His people to be destroyed or the light of truth to be extinguished. The annals of history reveal how a dominant church linked up civil and religious power in the Middle Ages and rose to authority never witnessed before. Daniel had seen the rise of this power and described it in Dan. 7:8, 21, 24, 25. It was a power that would make outstanding claims for itself and would persecute the saints and almost destroy them.

What characteristics of this dominant church indicate that its teaching and practice are not in harmony with the Word of God? Dan. 7:25.

The period of domination was cut short by the Protestant Reformation.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that we do not have as much information about the Waldenses and other members of the church in the wilderness as we would like?

"The history of God's people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome's supremacy is written in heaven, but they have little place in human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low." —*The Great Controversy*, page 61.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 61-64.

Part 6
HELP IS SENT
Rev. 12:16

"And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

How did the dragon try to destroy the woman who had been enabled to flee into the wilderness? Rev. 12:15.

Water is necessary for life, but in quantity it can be a destructive element. Water in prophecy refers to people. Rev. 17:15. The dragon seeks to destroy the true church by flooding it with people so that the identity of the church may be lost. It is not the size of the church or the number of its adherents that determines the character of the church; it is the number who reflect the character of Christ.

What agent helped the woman so that she was not carried away by the flood? Rev. 12:16.

The *SDA Bible Commentary* suggests two interpretations of the word "earth." See under Rev. 12:16. One has to do with the North American continent which was sparsely populated at the time of the Reformation; and the other refers to the Protestant Reformation itself. The main point is not *how* the woman was helped, but that she was helped. The dragon is angry with anything that represents God and His government. He wants to destroy every vestige of it, but his plans are foiled at every twist and turn. Even before he begins to fight, he is a defeated foe. Therefore God's people have no need to fear. Satan may "wear out" saints; he may "prevail" against them; but he can never destroy them, for they are in God's hands.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does one differentiate the true church from the false?

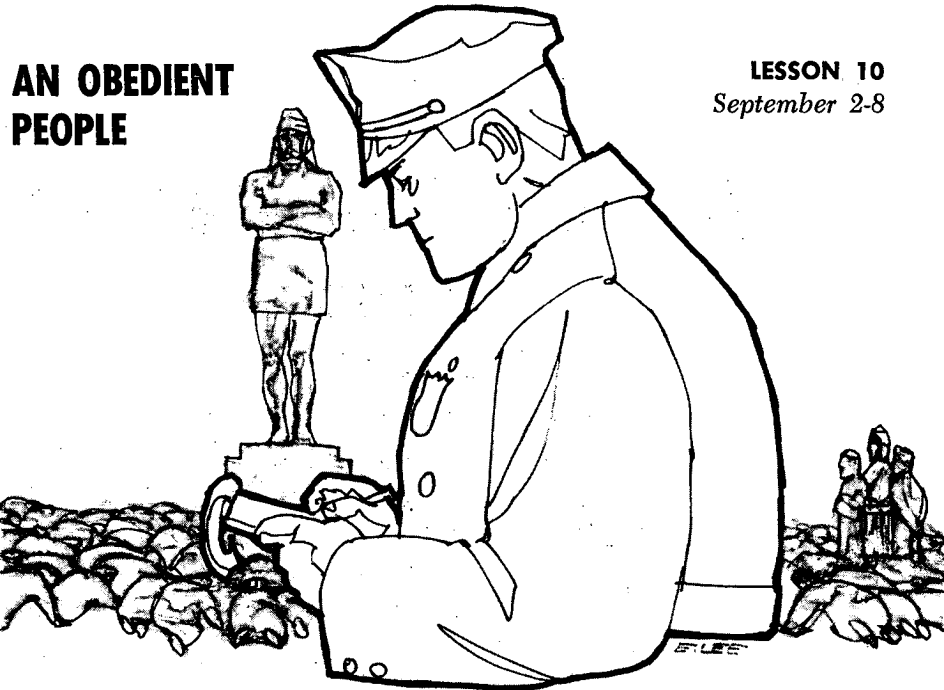
"Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 168.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 633, 634.

AN OBEDIENT PEOPLE

LESSON 10
September 2-8



"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."
Dan. 3:17, 18.

In last week's lesson we studied the experience of the church presented symbolically in Bible prophecy as the woman in the wilderness. Oppression will come to God's people again when earthly governments will use coercive measures to secure obedience to human laws which are contrary to God's law. Believers from many lands and in many years have faced similar threats. The ways, in which some of these believers have related to the conflicting requirements of men and God can be instructive to believers today who are preparing for Christ's return and the events preceding it.

A Biblical event that has much in common with events yet to take place

under the image to the beast is the experience of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. This is not merely an exciting story for little children; but it teaches principles that are relevant to the most critical moment in the history of God's people. This, then, is the purpose of studying during this week the familiar story of the fiery furnace.

Ellen G. White has compared the two events to be studied this week in the following paragraph:

"By many, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is made void, being treated as a thing of naught; while the spurious sabbath, the child of the papacy, is exalted. In the place of God's laws, are elevated the laws of the man of sin,—laws that are to be received and regarded as the wonderful golden image of Nebuchadnezzar was by the Babylonians. Forming this great image, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that it should receive universal homage from all, both great and small, high and low, rich and poor."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1169.

Part 1
THE IMAGE
Dan. 3:1

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”

What was the difference between this image and the one which God showed Nebuchadnezzar in a dream? Dan. 2:38-44.

“The words, ‘Thou art this head of gold,’ had made a deep impression upon the ruler’s mind. . . . The wise men of his realm, taking advantage of this and of his return to idolatry, proposed that he make an image similar to the one seen in his dream, and set it up where all might behold the head of gold, which had been interpreted as representing his kingdom.

“Pleased with the flattering suggestion, he determined to carry it out, and to go even farther. Instead of reproducing the image as he had seen it, he would excel the original. His image should not deteriorate in value from the head to the feet, but should be entirely of gold—symbolic throughout of Babylon as an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever.”—*Prophets and Kings*, page 504.

The image of Daniel 2 pointed to the overthrow of earthly kingdoms at the coming of Jesus and their replacement by the kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar’s image was intended to portray Babylon, not merely as the greatest of earthly kingdoms, but as the kingdom that would replace God’s kingdom, as it had been shown in the dream, and which would stand forever. If Babylon replaced God’s kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s plan, then the king of Babylon took the place of God. Certainly Nebuchadnezzar realized that he could not remain king of Babylon forever, but he and his successors would rule an everlasting kingdom and they would correspond to the God of Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar’s plan to erect a golden image representing Babylon was not an original idea, but a perversion of revealed truth. The idea originated with the God-given dream, but “Daniel’s interpretation was to be rejected and forgotten; truth was to be misinterpreted and misapplied.”—*Prophets and Kings*, page 505.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we be certain we are not misinterpreting truth?

“In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Lawgiver. It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. . . .

“No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, none is more directly opposed to the dictates of reason, none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God’s law is no longer binding upon men.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 583, 584.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 503-505.

Part 2
WORSHIP OF
THE IMAGE
Dan. 3:2-5

What does it appear to you that Nebuchadnezzar was trying to achieve by the dedication ceremony?

"To bow down when in prayer to God is the proper attitude to occupy. This act of worship was required of the three Hebrew captives in Babylon. . . . But such an act was homage to be rendered to God alone—the Sovereign of the world, the Ruler of the universe; and these three Hebrews refused to give such honor to any idol even though composed of pure gold. In doing so, they would, to all intents and purposes, be bowing to the king of Babylon."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 312.

The apparent center of the story is the image, but it is really Nebuchadnezzar himself. He had the image made and erected; he called together the audience of officials; it was his herald that declared the procedure for the dedication; and it is repeatedly called "the golden image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up," as though that was its name.

An object of worship usually has meaning, but no meaning is given to the image in the story. The only meaning seen is in Nebuchadnezzar's command enforced by threat of death by burning. Allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar or allegiance to Babylon was the same thing. Where all the representatives of "peoples, nations, and languages" bowed down at the king's command, it appeared that he had achieved unity of power and allegiance throughout the empire. Each representative could now carry to his home territory the report of the total, worldwide allegiance to Babylon, demonstrated at Dura, thus further solidifying Nebuchadnezzar's power.

To worship the image was to obey Nebuchadnezzar and disobey God.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways are we in constant danger of giving to man allegiance due to God only?

"This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast. . . .

"History will be repeated. False religion will be exalted. The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will be set up as was the image at Babylon. All nations and tongues and peoples will be commanded to worship this spurious sabbath. This is Satan's plan to make of no account the day instituted by God, and given to the world as a memorial of creation."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 976.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, page 506.

Part 3
THE ENFORCEMENT
Dan. 3:6, 7

“And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”

Nebuchadnezzar provided music for the dedication. It was used as a signal, but it must have had more significance than merely designating the order of the ceremony. A single trumpeter could have done that. The king provided a whole orchestra. The moment was as attractive as man could make it—an image made of the most beautiful metal, an orchestra providing enchanting music, and the elite of society composing the audience. But these circumstances were not sufficient to assure Nebuchadnezzar of the total success of his plan. Beyond the aesthetic and social appeal of the occasion there was the threat of death by burning for noncompliance.

The word “therefore” which begins verse 7 indicates that it was fear of the consequences of refusal that brought the representatives of the world to their knees on the plain of Dura.

This threat was the ultimate fruit of Nebuchadnezzar’s choice to exalt himself. It was the same attitude toward life as resulted in Satan’s fall.

“He [Lucifer] sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 435, 436.

THINK IT THROUGH

What practices and attitudes in my life tend to exalt myself?

“The decree enforcing the worship of this day [Sunday] is to go forth to all the world. In a limited degree, it has already gone forth. In several places the civil power is speaking with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.

“Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God’s servants in the conflict with paganism.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentaries*, Vol. 7, p. 976.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 758, 759.

Part 4
THE ACCUSATION
Dan. 3:8-12

Read Dan. 3:8-12.

What was the triple accusation brought against the three Hebrews? Verse 12.

The Chaldeans' lives were saved by Daniel's revelation of the king's dream, and it was this group with whom Daniel and his companions were closely identified. See Dan. 2:10-12, 18. There is no way to know if the same persons were now involved in the accusation against the three Hebrews, although this is possible; but it is clear that the three Hebrews had been associated with the Chaldeans, and circumstances made it virtually impossible that the Chaldeans were not at least acquainted with the three Hebrews. The accusation against the three came from acquaintances and associates of the three Hebrews.

The Babylonian officials were quick to seize the opportunity to discredit the three Jews who had been given positions of responsibility, authority, and financial gain.

The words of verse 8 mean literally, "They ate the pieces of the Jews." The verb usually means "to slander, to accuse falsely and maliciously." The Chaldeans were not bringing some idle complaint, but a malicious attack.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the basic motivation behind accusations against a person?

In connection with events of the last days, Ellen White has written:

"Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. . . .

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them."—*The Great Controversy*, page 608.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 606, 607.

Part 5
TRIAL AND DEFENSE
Dan. 3:13-18

Read Dan. 3:13-18.

Seen from the viewpoint of his own principles, Nebuchadnezzar was quite magnanimous to offer a second chance to the three Hebrews, but seen from the viewpoint of God's character the only truly loving act Nebuchadnezzar could have performed under the circumstances would be to permit the three Hebrews to follow their consciences. The second chance was under the same threat of death as the first.

"Careful. The response of the defendants may be translated, 'We have no need to answer you in this matter' (RSV). Some have interpreted this reply as highly arrogant, and have pointed to martyrs reacting similarly toward their persecutors. . . . Analogies from cognate and other languages show that the sense is to 'make defense,' or 'apology.' Since the defendants did not deny the truth of the indictment, they saw no need to make a defense. Their case rested in the hands of their God (see v. 17), and they made their answer in complete submission to His will, whatever might be the outcome of their trial. That they were not sure of coming through this experience alive can be seen from their further statement (v. 18). Had they been sure of deliverance, their reply could be interpreted as revealing spiritual arrogance. As the case stood, their attitude showed their firm conviction that their course of action was the only feasible one, which needed no defense, or even further explanation."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 3:16.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the deciding factor in whether I should take a firm stand in a situation, even risking life itself, or whether I should be moderate and yielding? See "Testimonies to Ministers," pages 252, 253.

"The light is to be brought before kings and before the great men of the earth, although they may receive it in the same manner in which Pharaoh received the testimony of the servants of the Lord, and asked, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?'"

"Kings, governors, and great men will hear of you through the reports of those who are at enmity with you, and your faith and character will be misrepresented before them. But those who are falsely accused will have an opportunity to appear in the presence of their accusers to answer for themselves. They will have the privilege of bringing the light before those who are called the great men of the earth, and if you have studied the Bible, if you are ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, your enemies will not be able to gainsay your wisdom."—*Evangelism*, pages 560, 561.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 507, 508.

Part 6
DELIVERANCE FROM
EXECUTION
Dan. 3:19-30

Read Dan. 3:19-30.

The three Hebrews decided it was better to die than to disobey God. To have decided it was better to live than to defy the king would have made impossible the glorification of God that took place before the assembled officials, many of whom had come from distant points. The story they now could recount to the citizens of their home territories was the story of deliverance from the fire by the God of the Jews.

Notice the results of the miraculous deliverance: (1) Nebuchadnezzar's plans to institute a new recurring ceremony were foiled; (2) the rule of Nebuchadnezzar was demonstrated to be less than absolute; (3) the God of the Hebrews was shown to be superior to the gods of Nebuchadnezzar; and (4) God was shown to be on the side of conscience and free choice and against compulsion.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should be the believer's attitude when God does not choose to deliver him?

"The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. In the soon-coming conflict we shall see exemplified the prophet's words: '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 Great Controversy*, page 592.

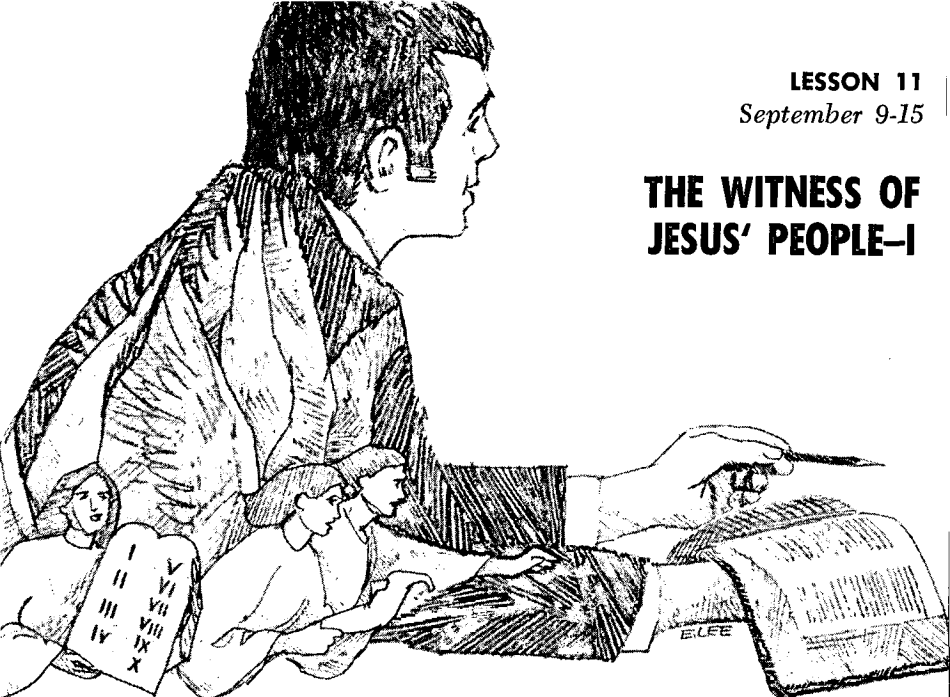
"Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God's servants, though innocent of wrongdoing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.

"The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 512, 513.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 509-513.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS' PEOPLE—I



"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." Rev. 14:6.

In last week's lesson attention was given to events that center in the work of the lamblike beast of Revelation 13. God has revealed to His people a message that is relevant to these events. The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 contain the information that relates directly to the crisis situation that develops out of the erection of an image to the beast.

On the other hand the messages contain the information precisely pertinent to God's relation to the world in the final days of earth's civilization. These messages are meant for the day when the challenge of Satan to Jesus and His people culminates. The issue will be: Who should be worshiped?

Thus the purpose of the three angels' messages recorded in Rev. 14:6-12 is to provide content for the witness of Jesus' people that is relevant to the issues of their times.

"Prophecy represents Protestantism as having lamblike horns, but speaking like a dragon. Already we are beginning to hear the voice of the dragon. There is a satanic force propelling the Sunday movement, but it is concealed.

"Let not the commandment-keeping people of God be silent at this time, as though we gracefully accepted the situation. There is the prospect before us of waging a continuous war, at the risk of imprisonment, of losing property and even life itself, to defend the law of God, which is being made void by the laws of men. . . .

"The time is at hand when Satan will work miracles to confirm minds in the belief that he is God. All the people of God are now to stand on the platform of truth as it has been given in the third angel's message. All the pleasant pictures, all the miracles wrought, will be presented in order that, if possible, the very elect will be deceived. The only hope for anyone is to hold fast the evidences that have confirmed the truth in righteousness."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 975.

Part 1
TIME OF THE
MESSAGES

The first angel's message (Rev. 14:6, 7) begins abruptly after a passage dealing with the Lamb and 144,000 followers. Since the context of these verses places their fulfillment after the second coming of Jesus, the question arises as to when the three angels' messages reach their fulfillment. To relate these messages to their correct period is the purpose of today's lesson.

Revelation 13 begins with a prophecy of the leopardlike beast and the narration of his work closes in verse 10 with the words "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." With verse 11 there begins a prophecy of the lamblike beast, and the narration of the prophecy that pertains to him closes with Rev. 14:12 where again are found the words "Here is the patience of the saints." Thus the three angels' messages are in the prophetic sequence dealing with the lamblike beast.

A closer look at Rev. 13:11-14:12 shows that verses 11-18 are about the beast—his work, followers, and mark. The next passage, Rev. 14:1-5, is about the Lamb—His followers and mark.

The prophecy of the beast deals only with the beast, and the action opposing him does not enter at any point in Rev. 13:11-18. The recital of the Lamb's redemption of His followers makes no mention of the beast. To complete the picture, there should be seen God's action during the time of the lamblike beast. This is the subject of Rev. 14:6-12, often referred to as the three angels' messages. When are these messages to be proclaimed? During the time of the lamblike beast.

The lamblike beast is pictured in prophecy as continuing up to the second advent, and his origin is noted after the rule of the leopardlike beast, which ended with the close of the 1260 years, or in 1798. So the lamblike beast, and thus the three angels' messages, fit into the period from 1798 to the second advent. Ellen G. White, in explaining the point of beginning for the first angel's message wrote: "But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near."—*The Great Controversy*, page 356.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways are the three angels' messages of importance to me?

"The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old. . . .

"The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. . . . These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 104, 105.

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pages 258, 259.

Part 2
GOOD NEWS AND
THE ANGELS
Rev. 14:6

“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.”

What is the gospel or “good news” carried by the angel? Some see in this passage a good news different from the gospel of Jesus Christ. This, they say, is indicated by the fact that no definite article appears with “gospel” in the Greek. It is reasonable to assume that when the angel speaks he is declaring the good news that has been entrusted to him. He shouts a threefold command to fear, glorify, and worship God. The fear and the glory because the judgment has arrived; the worship because God is Creator. Is this the gospel of Jesus Christ?

In the preaching of Jesus “the thought of judgment is central. Jesus’ call to repentance is urgent because God’s judgment hangs over every man. The task of Jesus is continually to impress on men the seriousness of this judgment and to awaken fear of the Judge.”—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 936.

Paul proclaimed to the people of Lystra that he brought to them “good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.” Acts 14:15, RSV. This turning to God the Judge and God the Creator is a basic element of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The good news of the angel is described as eternal or everlasting because it is good news of the eternal God, and the proclaiming of this good news of the Eternal is precisely the purpose of the life and work of Jesus Christ. It is proclaimed worldwide because all earth dwellers will be judged.

Who did Jesus command to preach this message? Matt. 28:19, 20.

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 978, 979.

THINK IT THROUGH

What meaning did Jesus give to the worldwide preaching of the gospel? (See Matt. 24:14.) What significance does this give to the message of the first angel?

“We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God’s love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 297.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 822, 823.

Part 3
THE JUDGMENT
Rev. 14:7, first part

“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.”

The reason for the angel's proclamation of good news is the arrival of the time of judgment. Judgment is not good news to one who expects condemnation. The good news is that by giving fear and glory to God one can be acquitted in the judgment. The good news is that there is a way out.

If the call to fear and glorify God is still a possibility when the angel proclaims it, then the judgment of God of which he speaks cannot be an event that is immediately fully accomplished; and yet the passage states that “the hour of his judgment is come.” In some way the judgment and the possibility of turning to God must be simultaneous for a time. There is judgment, and there is opportunity to repent; but it is the last time, and therefore the message is urgent. When do these circumstances exist?

“The announcement, ‘The hour of His judgment is come,’ points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. The work of judgment which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation. That men may be prepared to stand in the judgment, the message commands them to ‘fear God, and give glory to Him,’ ‘and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.’”
—*The Great Controversy*, pages 435, 436.

Refraining from sin in the light of the judgment is to be accompanied by giving glory to God. “To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 979. Thus, giving glory to God is the other side of the coin from fear. It is the combination of giving up sin and living Godlike lives that prepares men for the judgment. This is the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To fear and to glorify God is to be righteous by faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my personal standing in relation to the judgment?

“We are rapidly approaching the end of this earth's history; and as we realize that Jesus is indeed coming soon, we shall be aroused to labor as never before. We are bidden to sound an alarm to the people. And in our own lives we are to show forth the power of truth and righteousness. The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over His broken law. Those only who turn from transgression to obedience can hope for pardon and peace.”—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 402, 403.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 483-486.

Part 4
THE CREATOR

Rev. 14:7, last part

What identification is given of the God that men are called to worship?

“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.”

Mention of the judgment of the Creator sets forth the end and the beginning of the world. Men today live between these two divine events, which provides a basis for them to know how to relate to life. They are held accountable by God because they have been made by God; and because God has made them and will judge them, they are commanded to worship Him.

The command to worship the Creator is especially pertinent in the light of the coercive efforts, prophesied to take place under the lamblike beast-power, to bring men to worship the image of the beast. Thus in the time of this beast-power people will be faced with a command to worship the Creator and also a demand, under threat of death, enforcing the idolatrous worship of the beast's image. Since the warning against this form of idol worship is given in the third message, it is clear that the call to the true worship of God, as given in the first message, precedes persecution for non-worship of the beast's image.

“In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.’”—*The Great Controversy*, page 437.

THINK IT THROUGH

Of what significance is it to me that God is both Judge and Creator? How should I relate to each of these positions of my heavenly Father?

“Since the Reformation, there have been some in every generation to maintain its [Sabbath] observance. Though often in the midst of reproach and persecution, a constant testimony has been borne to the perpetuity of the law of God and the sacred obligation of the creation Sabbath.

“These truths, as presented in Revelation 14 in connection with ‘the everlasting gospel,’ will distinguish the church of Christ at the time of His appearing. For as the result of the threefold message it is announced: ‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ And this message is the last to be given before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following its proclamation the Son of man is seen by the prophet, coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 453, 454.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 433-436.

Part 5
BABYLON
Rev. 14:8

"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."

The name Babel, from which Babylon developed, first appears as the name of a city and proposed tower, built to hold men together and make a name for themselves. The city was founded by Nimrod. Centuries later, when Babylon was, as an empire, ruled by Nebuchadnezzar, the nation of Judah was three times invaded, and the populace taken captive. Thus, historically Babylon was in opposition to God and His people; and when Rome came into opposition against both Christians and Jews, the name Babylon became a derogatory nickname for Rome. In the book of Revelation the meaning is expanded and is used as a symbol "of all apostate religious organizations and their leadership, from antiquity down to the close of time."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 14:8.

"In Babylonian the name *Bab-ilu* (Babel, or Babylon) meant 'gate of the gods,' but the Hebrews derogatorily associated it with *balal*, a word in their language meaning 'to confuse' (see on Gen. 11:9). The rulers of Babylon doubtless called their city the 'gate' of the gods in the sense that they chose to think of it as the place where the gods consorted with men, to order the affairs of earth (see on Judges 9:35; Ruth 4:1; 1 Kings 22:10; Jer. 22:3). The name thus seems to have reflected the claim of the Babylonian kings that they had been commissioned to rule the world by divine mandate."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 14:8.

But why should the figure of Babylon be introduced here in a prophecy that pertains to the lamblike beast? The beast is part of a larger whole, as is indicated by the fact that he orders others to make an image to the leopardlike beast. But he has not only accomplices but also predecessors, since it is from the leopard beast that he is said to get his power. This larger whole, accomplices and predecessors, is called Babylon; but the power center of Babylon's last-day manifestation is the lamblike beast.

"It is, however, possible that this meaning [gate of the gods] was secondary, and that the name was originally from the Babylonian verb *babalu*, meaning 'to scatter,' or 'to disappear.' Perhaps the Babylonians were not particularly proud of a name that reminded them of the inglorious climax of earlier plans for the city, and so invented an explanation that made it appear to be a compound of the names *bab*, 'port,' and *ilu*, 'god.'"—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Gen. 11:9.

Thus the symbolic name Babylon combines the connotations of a religious power, a confusion of humanity, and an unstable, non-permanent situation.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I retained any ties with Babylon?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 381, 382.

Part 6
BABYLON'S FALL
Rev. 14:8

"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."

The text states that Babylon *is* fallen, which raises the question if this prophecy is not still wholly for the future. While it cannot be said that this prophecy is fulfilled until Babylon is fully fallen, nevertheless the first evidences of fall are pertinent to the complete fall.

"The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that 'Babylon is fallen, . . . because she made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;' and they that 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' will be left to receive 'strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 389, 390.

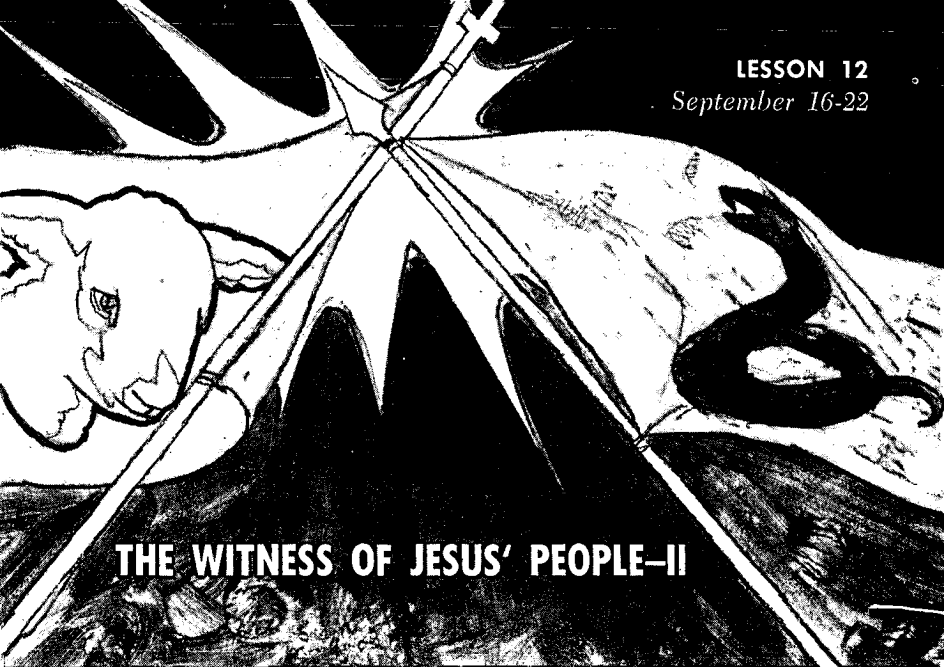
THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible that the fall of Babylon induces a corresponding decline in adherence to godly principles among God's people?

"The sins of the popular churches are whitewashed over. Many of the members indulge in the grossest vices and are steeped in iniquity. Babylon is fallen and has become the cage of every foul and hateful bird! The most revolting sins of the age find shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity. Many proclaim the law of God abolished, and surely their lives are in keeping with their faith."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 13.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 378, 379.



THE WITNESS OF JESUS' PEOPLE—II

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

This week's lesson begins with the last part of the second angel's message and continues through the third. It is well to recall here that these messages are really prophecies of the witness that is to be borne by God's people in the last days. The lessons during the week do not reiterate this thought, but it will be helpful to keep in mind that this is in reality, as indicated in the title, the witness of Jesus' people.

There are, in verses 8-12, an announcement about Babylon and her wine, a warning about worship of the beast and drinking the wine of God's wrath, and a call to endure by obedience to God and faith in Jesus. The final verse (12) marks the whole prophetic sequence as the message of righteousness by faith. On the other hand, it will be by obedience to, and faith in, earthly powers that men will be lost. The root, personal question here is this: Is my life and being oriented toward men, the world, and things, or is it oriented wholly toward God, heaven, and the Word?

Are my belief, trust, and action founded on men, or on God?

"The exceeding great and precious promises given us in the Holy Scriptures have been lost sight of to a great extent, just as the enemy of all righteousness designed that they should be. He has cast his own dark shadow between us and our God, that we may not see the true character of God. The Lord has proclaimed Himself to be 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.'

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 372.

The article by Ellen G. White which follows this lesson was printed in the *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896. "Character of the Last Conflict" is to be read as supplementary material for this week.

Part 1 **What is the symbol representing the relation between Babylon and the nations?**
THE WINE
Rev. 14:8

“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.”

Babylon is pictured here as causing nations to drink wine. When Jeremiah in Jer. 51:7, 8 wrote of the fall of Babylon, he referred to the nations as being “mad” (RSV) because they drank of Babylon’s wine. The action of ancient Babylon was military conquest. To drink of her wine was to experience conquest by Babylon’s armies. But mystic Babylon’s action is stated to be fornication, not conquest by armies. To drink the wine of her “passionate unchastity” then is to experience conquest by a harlot instead of an army. But what is the meaning of the fornication to which the nations have submitted? In the Old Testament Israel is represented as guilty of harlotry because she forsook the true God and worshiped false gods, and also because she entered into alliance with the great nations of earth instead of trusting God to protect her. Thus symbolically harlotry has represented, in the Bible, both idolatry and worldly alliances. The context of Rev. 14:8 points to both meanings combined. That it involves idolatry is indicated by the image of the beast; that it is alliances is pointed to by “all nations” participating with her in fornication.

“The third angel’s message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 979.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is the status of my fidelity to God?**

“The great sin charged against Babylon is that she ‘made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 388.

FURTHER STUDY *The Great Controversy*, pages 536, 537.

Part 2
THE BEAST
Rev. 14:9

“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 central point of the warning in this third message is the beast and its image. What beast? A beast that is worshiped. According to Rev. 13:12 it is the leopardlike beast toward which worship will be directed. This is the beast that was to rule for 1260 years and then be wounded and later healed. What is the image of the beast? A replica of the beast-power so lifelike that it speaks. Rev. 13:15.

“In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman Empire.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 439.

“When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result. . . .

“‘The beast’ mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopardlike beast of Revelation 13—the papacy. The ‘image to the beast’ represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 445.

Contrast the animal symbol used in Revelation to represent Jesus, and those used to represent earthly powers. Rev. 5:6, 9; 14:1; 12:3; 13:2, 11. What is the significance of this contrast?

THINK IT THROUGH

If my character were to be represented symbolically by an animal, what would it be? Could my life be accurately symbolized by a lamb? Or is it more like a leopard?

“To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah’s kingdom is a lamb. While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity.”—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1171.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 443-446.

Part 3
THE WORSHIP
Rev. 14:9

The warning here is against worship of the beast and his image. This is in contrast to the call to worship God in the first angel's message. The Greek word translated worship in this verse designates the act of prostrating oneself before, or reverencing, another who is regarded as belonging to the realm of the supernatural. The beast and his image will acquire a reputation as supernatural powers because of the miracles that lead to the image's development. The beast and his image will be designated as worthy of worship by the miracle-working lamblike beast. Rev. 13:12-15. The worship that men are warned against is a worship substantiated by miracles and enforced under penalty of death for noncompliance.

In the first angel's message, what is the substantiation given for worship of the true God? Rev. 14:7.

What is the means by which people can know whom to worship? John 4:24; 17:17.

On what basis did Jesus refuse to worship Satan? Matt. 4:9, 10.

"Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict, when all will take sides. After the gospel has been proclaimed in the world for nearly two thousand years, Satan still presents to men and women the same scene that he presented to Christ. In a wonderful manner he causes the kingdoms of the world in their glory to pass before them. These he promises to all who will fall down and worship him. Thus he seeks to bring men under his dominion.

"Satan is working to the utmost to make himself as God and to destroy all who oppose his power. And today the world is bowing before him. His power is received as the power of God. . . .

"In his visions of things to come the prophet John beheld this scene. This demon worship was revealed to him, and it seemed to him as if the whole world were standing on the brink of perdition. But as he looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God's commandment-keeping people."
—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, pp. 14, 15.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does a miracle mean? Have I based my worship wholly on the Word?

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 598.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 593-595.

Part 4
THE MARK
Rev. 14:9

“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 worship of the beast and reception of his mark are mentioned together. The precise relationship between worship and mark is not stated. It can be inferred that they are related, because they are mentioned together; and that worship and mark are mutual characteristics, because they are connected by *and*, not *or*. Man *gives* worship, but he *receives* the mark. The penalty for nonworship is death; for having no mark, economic boycott. In the eight references in which the mark is mentioned it is always in association with worship. It never stands alone. It is also clear that worship is regarded as more significant than the mark because nonworship carries the death penalty, but lack of the mark carries economic boycott.

This would indicate that the object sought is the worship of the beast, and the mark would then be the means to accomplish beast-worship and the evidence of such worship. Rev. 13:16 indicates that it is the evidence factor that is of primary importance. This is so in the very nature of law enforcement.

Worship is very personal and subjective. The being worshiped privately and revered in one's inmost soul may be known to no other person. The situation described here is where worship becomes a public matter that can be determined objectively and enforced by law. This can be accomplished only by prescribing a public manner of worship. It would have to relate to a particular kind of action, or worship in a prescribed location, or worship at a specified time. The prophecy does not say whether the mark is action, place, or time.

The Biblical prescription for worship is by time in memory of Creation, which is pointed to in Rev. 14:7.

“When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday. Those who, after having heard the truth, continue to regard this day as holy bear the signature of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 980.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I be assured of sufficient courage to face the majority, the law, boycott, and death in the time of test?

“They are hedged in with difficulties. Satan assails them with fierce temptations. The work which they have undertaken seems far beyond their ability to accomplish. They are threatened with destruction. The enthusiasm which animated them is gone; yet they cannot turn back. Then, feeling their utter helplessness, they flee to the Mighty One for strength. They remember that the words which they have spoken were not theirs, but His who bade them give the warning. God put the truth into their hearts, and they could not forbear to proclaim it.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 609.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 603-608.

Part 5
THE WRATH OF GOD
Rev. 14:10, 11

"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."

Those who drink of Babylon's wine (Rev. 14:8) will drink also of the "wine of God's wrath." Verse 10. In Psalm 75:7, 8 wine symbolizes God's judgment. Wrath and judgment belong together. Men have rejected God, and God cannot maintain His relationship with them without their consent.

"This message embraces the two preceding messages. It is represented as being given with a loud voice; that is, with the power of the Holy Spirit. Everything is now at stake. The third angel's message is to be regarded as of the highest importance. It is a life and death question. The impression made by this message will be proportionate to the earnestness and solemnity with which it is proclaimed."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 980.

For what did Jesus pray in Gethsemane? Matt. 26:39.

"He knew that His hour was come; He Himself was the true paschal lamb, and on the day the Passover was eaten He was to be sacrificed. He was about to drink the cup of wrath; He must soon receive the final baptism of suffering."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 642.

Jesus experienced God's wrath, and no other human being need suffer this experience, for Jesus made escape from God's wrath possible. "At first the angels could not rejoice; for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. Jesus told them that He would stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man, that He would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive Him as the Son of God."—*Early Writings*, pages 149, 150.

The mention of God's wrath in the Bible is really the negative approach to righteousness by faith, just as the verbally negative command against killing really expresses a principle that is positive—help the fellowman live.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I prepared to receive God's mercy—or God's wrath?

"Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 753.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 752, 753.

Part 6
THE SAINTS
Rev. 14:12

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

The Greek word translated “patience” in the KJV has a fuller meaning than the English word “patience.” Its meaning is a combination of waiting and endurance.

“[It] ‘is an endurance which is grounded in waiting, a waiting which expresses itself in endurance.’ Waiting for Jesus . . . is on the one side the attitude which fills the whole soul of believers. On the other side salvation depends on their steadfastness to the end. . . . The final clash between the power of the world and the community will also be the final and supreme test of faith. It will demand of believers supreme steadfastness if everything is not finally to be in vain.”—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 588.

In what way are the characteristics of the saints (commandment keeping and faith of Jesus) related to the context of the three messages? Rev. 14:6-12.

“The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: ‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 436.

“In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond’ (Revelation 13:16), to receive ‘the mark of the beast,’ yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds ‘them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God’ and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 450.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does my experience compare with the commandment keeping and faith in Jesus that identifies the true saints?

“The third angel is flying in the midst of heaven, heralding the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This represents the work which is to be done in these last days. The message loses none of its power in its onward flight. John sees the work increasing in power till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God. The message, ‘Fear God and keep his commandments; for the hour of his judgment is come,’ is to go with a loud voice. With intensified zeal and energy human beings are to carry forward the work of the Lord. In the home, in the school, and in the church men, women, and youth are to be prepared to give the message to the world.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 207.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 8, pp. 41, 42.

Character of the Last Conflict

ELLEN G. WHITE

The great controversy between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness has not abated one jot or tittle of its influence as time has gone on. The stern conflict between light and darkness, between truth and error, is deepening in its intensity. The synagogue of Satan is intensely active, and in this age the deceiving power of the enemy is working in the most subtle way. Every human mind that is not surrendered to God and is not under the control of the Spirit of God, will be perverted through satanic agencies. The enemy is working continually to supplant Jesus Christ in the human heart, and to place his attributes in the human character, in the place of the attributes of God. He brings his strong delusions to bear upon the human mind, that he may have a controlling power. He seeks to obliterate the truth and abolish the true pattern of goodness and righteousness, in order that the professed Christian world may be swept to perdition through separation from God. He is working in order that selfishness may become world-wide, and thus make of no effect the mission and work of Christ.

Christ came to the world to bring back the character of God to man, and to retrace on the human soul the divine image. Through his entire life, Christ sought by continuous, laborious efforts to call the world's attention to God and to his holy requirements, so that men might be imbued with the Spirit of God, might be actuated by love, and might reveal in life and character the divine attributes. Christ came to be the light and life of the world, and his life was one of continual self-denial and self-sacrifice. The Lord Jesus valued every human being, and could not endure the thought that one soul should perish. His great heart of love embraced the whole

world, and led him to provide complete salvation for all who would believe in him. In the character of Christ, majesty and humility were blended. Temperance and self-denial were seen in every act of his life, but there was no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity, manifested in his manner to lessen his influence over those with whom he came in contact. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature; yet united with his divine majesty were meekness and humanity that attracted all to himself. He speaks to all, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Christ is man's example. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Christ, our Redeemer, comprehended all the necessities of man. He formulated the mighty plans by which fallen man is to be uplifted from the degradation of sin. In every circumstance, however trivial, he represented the Father. Though upholding the world by the word of his power, he would stoop to relieve a wounded bird. O that we all had an intelligent knowledge of Jesus Christ! Weary and worn as he often was, he pleased not himself. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." Who are those that refuse to hear the voice of Christ!—They are those who do not hear and practise his word. They are

those whose hearts are crowded and overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life; who are eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage. They are those who will not receive the message of warning for these last days.

The agencies of Satan are at work to keep the minds of men engrossed with the things of this life, in order that he may work counter to the mission and work of Christ. Of Satan, Christ declares he "abode not in the truth." Once Satan was in co-partnership with God, Jesus Christ, and the holy angels. He was highly exalted in heaven, and was radiant in light and glory that came to him from the Father and the Son; but he became disloyal, and lost his high and and holy position as covering cherub. He became the antagonist of God, an apostate, and was excluded from heaven. He established his empire, and planted the standard of rebellion against the law of Jehovah. He invited all the powers of evil to rally about his standard, in order to form a desperate companionship of evil to league against the God of heaven. He worked perseveringly and determinedly to perpetuate his rebellion, and to cause men to turn from Bible truth, and to stand under his banner. As soon as the Lord through Jesus Christ created our world, and placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Satan announced his purpose to conform to his own nature the father and mother of all humanity, and to unite them with his own ranks of rebellion. He was determined to efface the image of God from the human posterity, and to trace his own image upon the soul in place of the divine image. He adopted methods of deception by which to accomplish his purpose. He is called the father of lies, an accuser of God and of those who maintain their allegiance to God, a murderer from the beginning. He put forth every power at his command to win man to co-operate with him in apostasy, and succeeded in bringing rebellion into our world.

All the vast, complicated machinery of evil agencies is put into action in these last days. Through generation after generation, from age to age, Satan has gathered human agencies through whom to work out his diabolical pur-

poses, and to bring about the enforcement of his plans and devices in the earth. The great putrid fountain of evil has been continually flowing through human society. Though unable to expel God from his throne, Satan has charged God with satanic attributes, and has claimed the attributes of God as his own. He is a deceiver, and through his serpentine sharpness, through his crooked practises, he has drawn to himself the homage which man should have given to God, and has planted his satanic throne between the human worshiper and the divine Father.

But in man's behalf, Christ met the specious temptations of Satan, and left to man an example as to how to overcome Satan in the conflict. He exhorts his followers, saying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Satan has made masterly efforts to perpetuate sin. He arrayed all his evil agencies to war against Jesus Christ in an active, desperate conflict, in order that he might bruise the heart of infinite Love. He seduced the people to bow to idols, and thus [he] gain[ed] supremacy over earthly kingdoms. He considered that to be the god of this world was the next best thing to gaining possession of the throne of God in heaven. In a large measure he has been successful in his plans. When Jesus was on earth, Satan led the people to reject the Son of God, and to choose Barab-bas, who in character represented Satan, the god of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ came to dispute the usurpation of Satan in the kingdoms of the world. The conflict is not yet ended; and as we draw near the close of time, the battle waxes more intense. As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world who has rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. He will exercise his power, and work upon the human imagination. He will corrupt both the minds and the bodies of men, and will work through the children of disobedience, fascinating and charming, as does a serpent. What a spectacle will the world be for heavenly intelligences! What a spectacle for God, the Creator of the world,

to behold! The form Satan assumed in Eden when leading our first parents to transgress, was of a character to bewilder and confuse the mind. He will work in as subtle a manner as we near the end of earth's history. All his deceiving power will be brought to bear upon human subjects, to complete the work of deluding the human family. So deceptive will be his working, that men will do as they did in the days of Christ; and when asked, Whom shall I release unto you, Christ or Barabbas? the almost universal cry will be, Barabbas, Barabbas! And when the question is asked, "What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" the cry again will be, "Crucify him!" Christ will be represented in the person of those who accept the truth, and who identify their interest with that of their Lord. The world will be enraged at them in the same way that they were enraged at Christ, and the disciples of Christ will know that they are to be treated no better than was their Lord. But Christ will surely identify his interest with that of those who accept him as their personal Saviour. Every insult, every reproach, every false accusation made against them by those who have turned their ears away from the truth and are turned unto fables, will be charged upon the guilty ones as done to Christ in the person of his saints.

Those who love and keep the commandments of God are most obnoxious to the synagogue of Satan, and the powers of evil will manifest their hatred toward them to the fullest extent possible. John foresaw the conflict between the remnant church and the power of evil, and said, "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." The forces of darkness will unite with human agents who have given themselves into the control of Satan, and the same scenes that were exhibited at the trial, rejection, and crucifixion of Christ will be revived. Through yielding to satanic influences, men will be transformed into fiends; and those who were created in the image of God, who were formed to honor and glorify their Creator, will become the habita-

tion of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his masterpiece of evil,—men who reflect his own image.

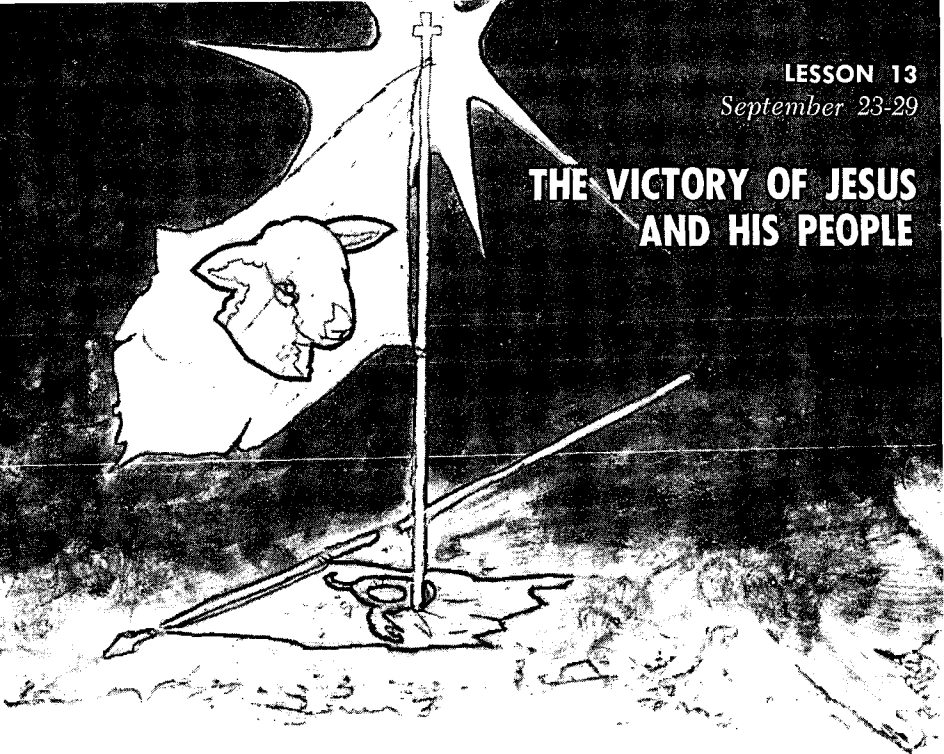
Men were imbued with a satanic spirit at the time when they decided that they would have Barabbas, a thief and murderer, in preference to the Son of God. The demoniac power triumphed over humanity; legions of evil angels took entire control of men, and in answer to Pilate's question as to whom he should release unto them, they shrieked out, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." When Pilate spoke again to them concerning Jesus, the hoarse cry was raised, "Crucify him, crucify him." Through yielding to demoniac agencies, men were led to take their stand on the side of the great apostate. Unfallen worlds looked upon the scene with amazement, unable to comprehend the degradation that sin had wrought. Legions of evil angels controlled the priests and rulers, and gave voice to the suggestions of Satan in persuading and tempting the people by falsehoods and bribes to reject the Son of God, and to choose a robber and murderer in his stead. They appealed to the very worst passions of the unregenerate heart, and stirred up the worst elements of human nature by the most unjust accusations and representations. What a scene was this for God to look upon, for seraphim and cherubim to behold! The only begotten Son of God, the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, was mocked, insulted, taunted, rejected, and crucified by those whom he came to save, who had given themselves to the control of Satan.

Christ said, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" "They shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. . . . Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." "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." The agencies of

Satan are having their last chance to develop before the world, before angels and men, the true principles of their attributes. The people of God are now to stand as representatives of the attributes of the Father and the Son. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to

be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods."—*Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896.

THE VICTORY OF JESUS AND HIS PEOPLE



"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Rev. 15:2.

Not long from now the righteous will stand victorious over the beast. The justice and majesty of God will be proclaimed in the anthem sung on the sea of glass: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Rev. 15:3. The tares will have been separated from the wheat, all unrighteousness will have been detected and exposed, the wicked will have been vanquished, and the faithful exalted. God's ways will be seen as just and true, and His works great and marvelous.

The confession, "just and true are thy ways," will be one in which the lost will

join with the redeemed. Even the condemned will know that they could not have received a more equitable judgment. The chorus, chanted on the sea of glass, tells us that God will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. Here the oldest of recorded events and words will be joined with the latest possible events and words. Here are the words of earth and heaven coupled together. The song of Moses, and the song of the Lord Christ—the song of Israel's victory and of the Christians' victory, in one anthem of thanksgiving.

As we observe more carefully, we see that it is all very full of parallels. The singers in both cases stand by a sea—the Red Sea of Egypt, and heaven's sea of glass. They are each singing of victory and of deliverance from enemies. And the sentiments of the two songs are the same. They have to do with God's great power and the acknowledgment that He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Part 1
VICTORY FOR
GOD'S PEOPLE
Rev. 15:3

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

This song is one of exultation, sung by the righteous and occasioned by judgments which have overwhelmed the wicked. The song is one not only of thanksgiving to the Lord, but one which magnifies Him for the vindication of His name. The sad fact is that in that day families will be divided—one member will be on the inside, another on the outside. Some whom they loved will have earned a heritage of shame and despair. And the ransomed of the Lord will recognize how the divine attributes have been magnified in the punishment awarded the impenitent.

What is the great reward for those who have been obedient to God through faith in Jesus? Rev. 22:14.

"Then they that have kept God's commandments shall breathe in immortal vigor beneath the tree of life; and through unending ages the inhabitants of sinless worlds shall behold, in that garden of delight, a sample of the perfect work of God's creation, untouched by the curse of sin—a sample of what the whole earth would have become, had man but fulfilled the Creator's glorious plan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 62.

What welcome will be given the righteous by the King? Matt. 25:34.

What emotion does Isaiah attribute to the redeemed as they enter the renewed earth? Isa. 35:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

The cross of Christ is to be the science and song of the redeemed throughout eternity. How can I make it a part of my contemplation and a part of my song now?

"The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. 'The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' Daniel 7:18."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 342.

"It is only to those who are waiting in hope and faith that Christ will appear, without sin unto salvation. Many have the theory of the truth who know not the power of godliness. If the word of God dwelt in the heart, it would control the life. Faith, purity, and conformity to the will of God would testify to its sanctifying power."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 15.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 648-652.

Part 2
VICTORY OVER
THE BEAST
Rev. 15:2

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

Christ's death and victory give hope in the struggles and victories of the servants of God everywhere. As we are led through a life of discipline, told to do without this or that, contend with this or that selfishness, pressed hard by this or that sorrow, tempted to give up trust in God's care, pressured to be indifferent and reckless, we should think of the struggle of the Lamb of God. Our struggle and victory today is no mere disjointed, separated thing, done alone and without lasting effect; but if we are true to our calling, it will be a part of the great victory of the Lamb already won.

What will be the fate of the beast and those who give their allegiance to it? Rev. 19:20. (See also Rev. 18:6, 7, 20, 21; cf. Dan. 7:11.)

What does the psalmist say about the security afforded the godly under siege? Ps. 91:1-7.

THINK IT THROUGH

The subjects of Christ's kingdom are being gathered even now into a spiritual fellowship called the "kingdom of grace." What assures me that I am a member of that fellowship? Can those who behold my life see the difference between those who serve God and those who do not?

"The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. 'They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth His own son that serveth Him.' Malachi 3:17. If the blood of Christ's faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. . . . [Ps. 27:5; Isa. 26:20, 21 quoted.] Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life."—*The Great Controversy*, page 634.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 640-642.

Part 3
VICTORY OVER
THE DRAGON
Rev. 12:7, 9

“And there was war in heaven.” “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

The dragon primarily symbolizes Satan, the archenemy of Christ and His people. It is used also of powers through whom Satan works his will. In the days of Christ's earthly life pagan Rome constituted the “dragon.” Later, papal Rome became the instrument of Satan's nefarious designs.

How was Jesus delivered from the dragon immediately after His birth? Matt. 2:13.

“The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour's mercy and love, His compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God. Satan contested every claim put forth by the Son of God and employed men as his agents to fill the Saviour's life with suffering and sorrow.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 501.

Satan failed to destroy the Infant Jesus; later he failed to hold the Lord of life in the tomb after the crucifixion. The ascension signalized Satan's utter defeat.

Repeatedly baffled, against whom does the dragon finally vent his wrath? Rev. 12:17.

With whom will be the final victory? Rev. 17:14.

THINK IT THROUGH

The flood of persecution was stemmed by the association of many European princes with the Reformation movement. How did the opening up of America as a new nation also help?

“Satan's work of ruin is forever ended. For six thousand years he has wrought his will, filling the earth with woe and causing grief throughout the universe. The whole creation has groaned and travailed together in pain. Now God's creatures are forever delivered from his presence and temptations. ‘The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they [the righteous] break forth into singing.’ Isaiah 14:7. And a shout of praise and triumph ascends from the whole loyal universe. ‘The voice of a great multitude,’ ‘as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,’ is heard, saying: ‘Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’ Revelation 19:6.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 673.

“The vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord.”—Ellen G. White, *Watchman*, Nov. 7, 1905. (Clifton L. Taylor, *Outline Studies From the Testimonies*, page 84.)

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 658-661.

Part 4
CHRIST AND HIS
PEOPLE CONQUER
Rev. 19:20

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

As a result of immigration and propaganda, the United States, which in its beginnings was basically Protestant, today has nearly two and a half times as many Roman Catholics as the largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptists. Bertrand Russell has predicted that in thirty years America is likely to be “predominantly Catholic.”

What actions of the lamblike beast indicate the extent to which this nation will become the instrument for papal authority? Rev. 13:12.

To what political eminence will the papacy be restored in the latter days? Rev. 17:12, 13, 17.

Already there are evidences of a desire on the part of statesmen and leaders of both Europe and America to invoke the aid of the papacy in the establishment of international harmony.

What last appeal will God make to those who are being drawn into the fold of antichrist? Rev. 18:4.

What peculiar marks will distinguish the worshipers of God in the last days? Rev. 14:12.

THINK IT THROUGH

Standing apart from all compromise with Rome, the last-day church will hold fast to the “faith once delivered unto the saints,” and obedience to all the “commandments of God.” What will it mean to be faithful under these most adverse conditions? Am I, by God’s grace, faithful to Him now?

“The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples: ‘Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’ Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, ‘whose names are in the book of life.’ Philippians 4:3. Daniel, looking down to ‘a time of trouble, such as never was,’ declares that God’s people shall be delivered, ‘everyone that shall be found written in the book.’ And the revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names ‘are written in the Lamb’s book of life.’ Daniel 12:1; Revelation 21:27.”—*The Great Controversy*, pages 480, 481.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 644-647.

Part 5
THE FINAL VICTORY
Dan. 7:21, 22

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

The Bible describes the false and counterfeit religions of Satan that we might shun them and choose the gospel of Christ. The books of Daniel and the Revelation show the awful results of rebellion that we might appreciate the reward of righteousness and the blessing of obedience.

The final victory will come after the people of God have put on the garments of salvation and have accepted the principles of God's government.

"By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. . . .

"At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth. . . .

"Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church. . . .

"Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 414-419.

"'You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in.' We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city."—*Early Writings*, page 17.

How suddenly will modern Babylon's judgment come? Rev. 18:8, 17. Compare Isa. 13:19.

What similar fate will befall all who associate with her idolatries? Rev. 14:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

Where will the victory of the remnant be celebrated? By what means does God distinguish those who are to take part in this event?

"Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have 'gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.' With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, 'having the harps of God,' they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men."—*The Great Controversy*, page 648.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 653-657.

Part 6
NO MORE CURSE
Rev. 22:3

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.”

The curse was pronounced after the first transgression. But in the time here foretold all will be reversed. There is the curse upon individuals, as it fell upon Cain (Gen. 4:11), and the curse upon cities, as it fell upon Jericho (Joshua 6:1-5). But this curse will cease to be, according to the Scripture, for there will be no iniquity, and hence no devastation. And there will be no one to trouble God's people and bring the curse upon the inheritors of the land.

Beyond our present restricted vision, what great joy awaits the child of God? 1 Cor. 2:9; 13:12.

“There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, . . . the sacred ties that bind together ‘the whole family in heaven and earth,’ (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 677.

What happy state will be restored at this time? Rev. 21:3.

What beautiful promise of comfort is given to all who suffer pain and sorrow? Rev. 21:4.

“Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. There will be no more tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. . . . ‘The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.’ . . . Isaiah 33:24.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 676.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we have enough in our own experience to teach us the meaning of the curse? How wonderful when the heavy load of toil, poverty, infirmities, and death will be shaken off in everlasting glory!

“In the City of God ‘there shall be no night.’ None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning and shall ever be far from its close. . . . The glory of God and the Lamb floods the Holy City with unfading light.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 676.

“To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results. For these God will do great things. He will work upon the minds of men so that, even in this world, there shall be seen in their lives a fulfillment of the promise of the future state.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 160.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 674-678.

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