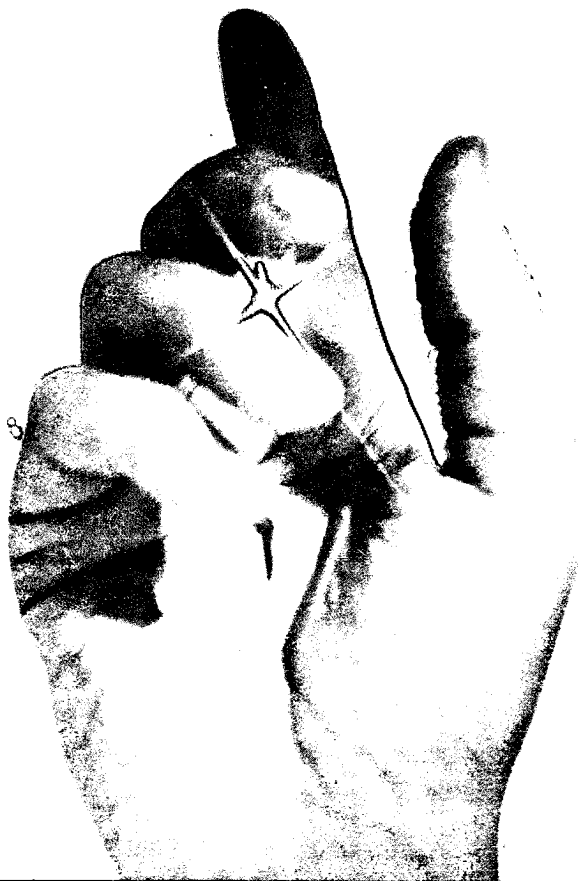




GOD IS LIKE THIS...



SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION OF

Seventh-day Adventists

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R. S. LOWRY, PRESIDENT

C. B. GUILD, SECRETARY

B. H. STICKLE, TREASURER

Dear Fellow Sabbath School Member:

Thank you for the thirteenth Sabbath offering overflow to Southern Asia in third quarter, 1972. This provided expansion for facilities at the Burma Union Seminary, a new dormitory for boys at the Kottarakara High School in South India, and improvement of administration buildings and dormitories at the Roorkee School in North India.

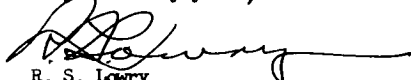
At the present our needs are sky-rocketing while the value of our money is dropping; therefore we appeal for your support again.

Two-thirds of the overflow will go to Spicer Memorial College. In 1942, Spicer Memorial College was designed for 200 students. Today over 1,000 students are on campus. Under God's providence the College has been able to adhere to Adventist educational philosophy and its graduates have been accepted into universities in various parts of the world. Circumstances now indicate, however, that we should obtain official government recognition. Providentially, the way is opening for us to obtain this favor. This calls for: (1) expansion of library facilities, (2) a new science complex, and (3) demonstration schools for both secondary and primary divisions.

The other one-third of the offering will be applied toward the purchase of land on which to build churches for our rapidly growing constituency. Ten years ago, in the Kerala section, there was a membership of just over 4,000. Today it exceeds 12,000--a growth of over 300%. Southern Asia has today three such sections with membership in excess of ten thousand. Church buildings continue to be our urgent need in many places.

May we urge you to give liberally while you can, and your money still retains value. And, thank you, again.

Very sincerely yours,



R. S. Lowry
President
Southern Asia Division

Lesson Titles for the Quarter

1. Jesus Reflected Him
2. He Cares About People
3. He Readily Forgives
4. He Hates Sin
5. He Hears People's Pleas
6. He Is Concerned for Individuals
7. He Gives Grace
8. He Requires Obedience
9. He Sustained Jesus in Trouble
10. He Heals People
11. He Is Self-denying
12. He Gives Life
13. He Desires People's Freedom

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The regular Adult Sabbath School Lessons 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.

THE COVER

The nail-wounded hand is a readily recognized symbol of Jesus, emphasizing especially His self-sacrificing love. The heavenward pointing finger represents the purpose of Christ's whole earthly life to tell the world what God is really like.

WHAT IS "DAYBREAK"?

A new series of Adult Sabbath School Lessons entitled "Daybreak" begins with this issue. The series grows out of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. The lessons for each quarter will be on a subject which is included in the three angels' messages, but they will not be a study of the passage in Revelation which records the three messages. Ellen G. White has stated regarding these messages:

"The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in the daily life, for this is essential to salvation. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost."—*Evangelism*, page 196.

But why have a *series* of lessons? There are two main reasons. First, to assure balance in the lessons over an extended period of time so that a given topic is studied neither too few nor too many times. Second, to provide a connection between one quarter's lessons and the next. Thus the lessons for each quarter will be related to those of the preceding quarter *and* to those of the following quarter. This sequence of subjects will provide, as the series advances, a constantly growing base on which each member may build his study in any current quarter.

While the "Daybreak Series" has been planned with balance and sequence, provision has also been made for flexibility. Thus, if circumstances make it desirable, the sequence of the lessons could be changed or a new subject introduced, but prepared in such a way as to be compatible with the overall plan.

The plan for the series is based on six areas of study:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Revelation of God | 4. Worship of the Creator |
| 2. God and man | 5. Worldwide mission |
| 3. The Christian life | 6. Last-day prophecy |

Each of these areas will be infused with the gospel. These six areas will not be entirely discrete, as some overlapping between subjects is nearly unavoidable. These areas may be regarded as six peaks or high points of the message. Thus the other five areas may be viewed from any one of the six.

This present subject—"God Is Like This"—comes under the heading of area 1, Revelation of God. Next quarter the lessons will come under the heading of God and man, and so on consecutively for six quarters. Every seventh quarter during the series the lessons will return to area 1 and thus begin another round of study in the same areas as the previous six quarters, but on new themes.

The name, "Daybreak," points to the second advent of Jesus. The goal of these lessons is to encourage and aid Sabbath School members to prepare to meet Jesus, and hasten His appearing. "Daybreak" will help to remind us of this goal as we study each lesson.

May we suggest that at the beginning of the "Daybreak Series" is a good time for a renewal of your daily study pledge.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

INTRODUCTION

It may seem to people that God is distant and unknowable. They don't see Him, and they don't think they have personally heard from Him. The Adventist person's whole religious life stems from his belief that, while God can't be seen, He is near and has been heard from. He believes that since the Fall, God has communicated with people through nature, prophets, and special providences. These avenues conveyed to people a knowledge of God, but always one step removed from actually seeing God. One could see His products in nature, or His mighty acts in emergency situations, or hear His words proclaimed by a prophet, or see symbols that represented His acts of salvation for His earthly children. What more could man hope for? He could hope to see God Himself. Nature, tarnished by sin, gave only a partial testimony about God; words, plagued by ambiguity, gave an equivocal testimony; and symbols, subject to misinterpretation and perversion of purpose soon lost their meaning.

But why is it important to hear from God? For the same reason that it is important to find directions for use enclosed with a product you purchase.

The manufacturer of the product, especially if the product is complex, provides directions for use. These directions are necessary in order to prevent injury to the user or damage to the product and to assure that the buyer has the right product to fit his need. This world, its people, and other life forms are God's products. How shall people, at once products and users, know how to use what God has made, especially themselves—especially when someone else has distributed directions for use destructive to the user and libelous to the Maker? So we need to hear from the Maker. We need to know that He is to be trusted in the directions He gives.

Even more importantly we need to know the nature of His character because the directions for human character grow out of the divine character; and as one by knowing God learns to trust God, his confidence in Him prompts consent to God's character as the base of his own life-style. So God Himself came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth in order that people could become acquainted with the unseen Father through the visible Jesus. Ellen G. White wrote: "In every circumstance, however trivial, he [Jesus] represented the Father."—*Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896.

The entire life of Jesus—His teachings, miracles, incidents, and personal experiences—is a reflection to the world that "God is like this."

“As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. . . .

“Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. . . .

“Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. . . .

“He [God] sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.”

—The Ministry of Healing, pages 418, 419.

“No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.” John 1:18, RSV.

God revealed Himself to men in Old Testament times. Reference is made to this revelation in Hebrews 1:1. He revealed Himself first of all to Adam and then to a succession of prophets who spoke and later wrote God's messages. He came down on Mount Sinai in majesty in the presence of the congregation of Israel.

The tabernacle was established to reveal in some detail how God related Himself to man. But all of these revelations had one weakness. They did not show in human experience what God is like. Words and other symbols could reveal many things about God, but only a living person could communicate the

GOD IS LIKE THIS— Jesus Reflected Him

experience of shaping life in a sinful world according to the character of God. Ellen G. White wrote.

"No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God, thus showing that He had the power to unite humanity to divinity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 924.

"All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son. . . .

"Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and a sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 286.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus Revealed the Father, John 14:9
2. His Deeds Prompted by His Father, John 5:19
3. His Words Prompted by His Father, John 12:49
4. Jesus Did His Father's Will, John 6:38
5. Jesus Relied on the Scriptures, Matt. 4:4, 7, 10
6. The Meaning of Jesus' Life, John 14:10

Part 1
JESUS REVEALED
THE FATHER

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" John 14:9.

"Is it possible, Christ said, that after walking with Me, hearing My words, seeing the miracle of feeding the five thousand, of healing the sick of the dread disease leprosy, of bringing the dead to life, of raising Lazarus, who was a prey to death, whose body had indeed seen corruption, you do not know Me? Is it possible that you do not discern the Father in the works that He does by Me? . . .

"Christ emphatically impressed upon them the fact that they could see the Father by faith alone. God cannot be seen in external form by any human being. Christ alone can represent the Father to humanity. This representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1141, 1142.

In the introduction to his gospel what relationship does the apostle John show exists between God and Jesus? John 1:1-3, 14.

"What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. . . . He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1131.

In what way does the Word becoming flesh correspond to the Old Testament prophecy quoted by the evangelist Matthew? Matt. 1:23; cf. Isa. 7:14.

How has the unseen God become known to men? John 1:18.

THINK IT THROUGH

Of what importance, if any, is Christ's incarnation to the restoration of man to his pristine perfection?

"The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 664.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 19-22.

Part 2
HIS DEEDS
PROMPTED BY
HIS FATHER

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." John 5:19.

See also John 5:30.

"My authority, He [Jesus] said, for doing the work of which you accuse Me, is that I am the Son of God, one with Him in nature, in will, and in purpose. . . . The Son of God was surrendered to the Father's will, and dependent upon His power. 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 was to be the attitude of Jesus toward His Father's will as foreseen prophetically by the psalmist? Ps. 40:8. How does the prophet Isaiah express the same idea in a servant song? Isa. 50:4, 5.

The Living Bible paraphrases part of Isaiah 50:4, 5 this way: "Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will. The Lord God has spoken to me and I have listened; I do not rebel nor turn away."

What is my attitude toward God's expressed will in His Word and the promptings of His Holy Spirit to me personally?

"God's way is always the right and the prudent way. He always brings honor to His name. Man's only security against rash, ambitious movements is to keep the heart in harmony with Christ Jesus. Man's wisdom is untrustworthy. Man is fickle, filled with self-esteem, pride, and selfishness. Let the workers doing God's service trust wholly in the Lord."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 106.

"The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. His understanding will be placed at their service, that they may not err in the carrying out of His purposes."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 11.

"We are to exercise wisdom and judgment in every action of life, that we may not, by reckless movements, place ourselves in trial. We are not to plunge into difficulties, neglecting the means God has provided, and misusing the faculties He has given us. Christ's workers are to obey His instructions implicitly. The work is God's, and if we would bless others His plans must be followed. Self cannot be made a center; self can receive no honor. If we plan according to our own ideas, the Lord will leave us to our own mistakes. But when, after following His directions, we are brought into strait places, He will deliver us."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 369.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 478, 479.

Part 3
HIS WORDS
PROMPTED BY
HIS FATHER

What was the source of Jesus' words?

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." John 12:49.

See also John 3:34; 8:26, 28.

Today's English Version translates John 12:49: "The Father who sent me has commanded me what I must say and speak."

From John 3:34 it is clear that it was through the Holy Spirit that Jesus was given the appropriate words to speak on each particular occasion. God is likewise eager to guide you and me in our activities, and even in our speech.

"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.

Note how Jesus, through this guidance, was able to speak apt words in difficult situations. Matt. 21:23-27; 22:15-22; John 8:1-11; cf. Isa. 50:4.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do you know that God was not partial to Jesus in guiding Him more minutely than He is willing to guide you and me?

"When you rise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness and your need of strength from God? and do you humbly, heartily make known your wants to your heavenly Father? If so, angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 363, 364.

FURTHER STUDY

The Sanctified Life, pages 14-17.

Part 4
JESUS DID HIS
FATHER'S WILL

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38.

See also John 4:34; 8:29.

Today's English Version renders John 4:34: "'My food,' Jesus said to them, 'is to obey the will of him who sent me and finish the work he gave me to do.'"

"Jesus' complete submission to His Father is an assurance to the believer that all that Jesus does for him has its source in the loving heart of God. Christ's words here clearly demonstrate the falsity of the opinion that God is angry with man and that salvation for sinners has its basis in Christ's having appeased the Father's wrath. Rather, Jesus' life of ministry and sacrificial death for man were expressions of His Father's love."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 6:38.

From whom did the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus seek honor and approval, and to whom was Jesus on the other hand supremely loyal? John 5:41-44.

Phillips translates John 5:41 in this way: "Men's approval or disapproval means nothing to me, but I can tell you that you have none of the love of God in your hearts."

"The ultimate success of Jesus' work did not depend upon whether the Jewish leaders of His day recognized Him as the Messiah. The purposes of His message and His ministry transcended any approbation that human beings could give. His ultimate aim was the conquest of the kingdom of evil for the glory of God."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 5:41.

What words had the psalmist prophetically put in the mouth of Jesus, expressing the source of His joy and pleasure? Ps. 40:8.

"The one law of His [Jesus'] life was the Father's will. In the visit to the temple in His boyhood, He had said to Mary, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' Luke 2:49."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 486.

THINK IT THROUGH

How may I be honored by God? John 12:26.

"If you would, as a church, secure the rich blessing of God, you must individually make Him first and last and best in every thought, plan, and work. Obedience to God is the first duty of the Christian. A humble mind and a grateful heart will elevate us above petty trials and real difficulties. The less earnest, energetic, and vigilant we are in the service of the Master, the more will the mind dwell upon self, magnifying molehills into mountains of difficulty. We shall feel that we are abused, when no disrespect even was designed."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, pp. 610, 611.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 107.

Part 5
JESUS RELIED ON
THE SCRIPTURES

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4.

See also verses 7, 10.

As a man, Jesus did not follow His own notions or convenience as to what to do when faced with a choice; He accepted the Scriptures as His guide. The Scriptures of His day were the Old Testament. That He knew its teachings is evident from the answers He gave Satan in response to his temptations. All His replies were from the book of Deuteronomy; namely, 8:3; 6:16; 6:13.

What admission did the Jews make about Jesus? John 7:15.

"The question asked during the Saviour's ministry, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' does not indicate that Jesus was unable to read, but merely that He had not received a rabbinical education. John 7:15. Since He gained knowledge as we may do, His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures shows how diligently His early years were given to the study of God's word."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 70.

In encountering the tempter, Jesus appraised his statements solely by the Written Word rather than by his appearance. "In the wilderness of temptation Satan came to Christ as an angel from the courts of God. It was by his words, not by his appearance, that the Saviour recognized the enemy."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 22, 1909.

How do the three basic temptations listed by the apostle John compare with the temptations Jesus faced? 1 John 2:16.

THINK IT THROUGH

By what means do you and I evaluate the ideas and plans presented to us?

"Satan comes to man with his temptations as an angel of light, as he came to Christ. . . .

"Those who would have clear minds to discern Satan's devices must have their physical appetites under the control of reason and conscience. The moral and vigorous action of the higher powers of the mind are essential to the perfection of Christian character. And the strength or the weakness of the mind has very much to do with our usefulness in this world, and with our final salvation."—*Messages to Young People*, pages 236, 237.

"God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. . . .

"There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 132.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 274-280.

Part 6
THE MEANING OF
JESUS' LIFE

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."
John 14:10.

Jesus repeatedly pointed to the Father as the source of His life-style. The acts He did, and the words He spoke, He attributed to His heavenly Father. In this way the Father became understandable to those who saw and heard Jesus.

"The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. . . . To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, 'with healing in His wings.' Mal. 4:2."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 22.

When Jesus performed a miracle of healing, that act had meaning. It showed not only that He possessed this mighty power, but that the deed He did was the deed of the Father. When Jesus spoke His lessons of truth, He was really saying that His lessons were the lessons of the Father. His whole life was the statement that "God is like this."

"Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 55.

"It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1145, 1146.

"The world's Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. He declared that He had no existence separate from the Father. The authority by which He spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly His own, yet He assures us that He and the Father are one. . . .

"As Legislator, Jesus exercised the authority of God; His commands and decisions were supported by the Sovereignty of the eternal throne. The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that He who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1142.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my responsibility in regard to God and His loving character?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 23-26.

LESSON 2

January 5-11

GOD IS LIKE THIS— He Cares About People

**"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
Luke 19:10.**

In this lesson man, lost in sin, is presented under the symbols of a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a wayward son. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, went in search of the lost. For this mission the Father gave the Son. The Son's search speaks to us of the love of both Son and Father. As a shepherd rejoices in the recovery of his lost sheep, so God joys in the rescue of His creatures.

For a misdemeanor a farmer told his son that he had to spend the night in the haymow and not in his comfortable bed in the house. The little son was frightened at the prospect of spending the night alone in the hay barn. But the sentence was irrevocable.

As the son was about to retire for the night, he bravely went out to his sleeping place in the hay while the rest of the family prepared to retire in the house. Then the father also went out; he found his son in the hay and spent the night with him. Although the sentence was unchanged, the son knew his father loved him. So it was with God. Although the sentence for sin could not be revoked, man learned that God loved him supremely because God Himself as Emmanuel came in search of him by coming to live with him.

"As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1084.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Lost Coin, Luke 15:8
2. The Lost Sheep, Luke 15:3, 4
3. The Good Shepherd, John 10:14, 15, 17
4. The Lost Son, Luke 15:11-13
5. Other Sheep, John 10:16
6. Father Gave Son to Die for Man, John 3:16



Part 1
THE LOST COIN

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" Luke 15:8.

The lost coin was not aware of its lost condition. As the coin was stamped with the image or superscription of the king, so man, though lost, is stamped with the image of his King. See Genesis 1:27. The coin, though lost, did not cease to be metal. So it is with man. "The lost coin represents those who are lost in trespasses and sins, but who have no sense of their condition. They are estranged from God, but they know it not. Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. In this parable Christ teaches that even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 193, 194.

What did the woman do when she found the lost coin? Luke 15:9.

How does God react when a sinner repents and turns to Him from his sinful way? Luke 15:7.

Ellen G. White suggests that the lost coin represents a member of the Christian family who has not found Jesus as his personal Saviour. "It was close at hand, yet it could be recovered only by diligent search."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 194.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there a member in my family who is lost to Christ? If so, what am I doing to bring him to Jesus?

"This parable has a lesson to families. In the household there is often great carelessness concerning the souls of its members. Among their number may be one who is estranged from God; but how little anxiety is felt lest in the family relationship there be lost one of God's entrusted gifts."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 194.

"When you see those who are going down to death, you will not rest in quiet indifference and ease. The greater their sin and the deeper their misery, the more earnest and tender will be your efforts for their recovery."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 197.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "This Man Receiveth Sinners," pages 192-197.

Part 2
THE LOST SHEEP

"And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" Luke 15:3, 4.

"By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin. This world is but an atom in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet this little fallen world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be 'wounded for our transgressions' and 'bruised for our iniquities.' (Isa. 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 190, 191.

When the shepherd finds his sheep, what is his reaction? Luke 15:5-7.

"As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, 'As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.' Eze. 34:12."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 187.

THINK IT THROUGH

Christ willingly left all to seek His lost sheep. Do I appreciate His salvation so much that I am willing to follow His example and go anywhere to seek those who are lost to Christ?

"Thank God, He has presented to our imagination no picture of a sorrowful shepherd returning without the sheep. The parable does not speak of failure but of success and joy in the recovery. Here is the divine guarantee that not even one of the straying sheep of God's fold is overlooked, not one is left unsuccored. Every one that will submit to be ransomed, Christ will rescue from the pit of corruption and from the briars of sin."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 188.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "This Man Receiveth Sinners," pages 186-192.

Part 3
THE GOOD
SHEPHERD

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." John 10:14, 15, 17.

In the Scriptures Christ is termed the "great shepherd" (Heb. 13:20) and the "chief Shepherd." 1 Peter 5:4. He calls Himself the "good shepherd." John 10:11. "The Bible reveals Christ to us as the Good Shepherd, seeking with unwearied feet for the lost sheep."—*Counsels to Teachers*, page 261.

Through the symbolism of the shepherd, Jesus is presented as tender and careful, as watchful and solicitous (Luke 15:4, 5), as sacrificial and unselfish (John 10:14, 15), as prepared to help (Ps. 80:1), and as seeking the straying. Ps. 119:176.

Who is the door to the sheepfold? John 10:9; cf. 14:6.

There is no other way to reconciliation or "at-one-ment" with the Father than through Jesus. Knowledge will not do it; philosophy cannot accomplish it. Innate human goodness will not suffice. "In all ages, philosophers and teachers have been presenting to the world theories by which to satisfy the soul's need. Every heathen nation has had its great teachers and religious systems offering some other means of redemption than Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 478. But all this has been in vain. There is but one way to the Father, and that way is Jesus. "I am the way," says Jesus. John 14:6.

THINK IT THROUGH

With such a Shepherd who was willing to give His own life to find me, to what extent am I willing to follow Him and His direction for me? Do I frequently insist on finding and going my own way?

"It is the gospel of the grace of God alone that can uplift the soul. The contemplation of the love of God manifested in His Son will stir the heart and arouse the powers of the soul as nothing else can. Christ came that He might re-create the image of God in man; and whoever turns men away from Christ is turning them away from the source of true development; he is defrauding them of the hope and purpose and glory of life. He is a thief and a robber."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 478.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 480-484.

Part 4
THE LOST SON

"And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." Luke 15:11-13.

Why did not the father go in search of the son, as the owner of the lost coin and the lost sheep had done? Unlike the lost coin, which did not know it was lost, and the lost sheep, which knew it was lost but did not know the way back, the prodigal both knew he was lost and also knew the way back to his father's house. He knew what he wanted and went in pursuit of it. Hence, the father did not go in search of him, pleading with him to return. A person who willfully practices what he knows is wrong may become more hardened through pleas to him to change. But the Holy Spirit can soften such a heart and prevail on such a person to return to the Father.

What did the father do for his son upon his return? Luke 15:22-24.

"When he came to himself: An idiom in Semitic languages as well as in Greek and Latin. In this instance it could be paraphrased: 'When he realized how foolish he had been.'—The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8, p. 273.

"The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father's house. . . . Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father's love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God's love that constrains the sinner to return to God. 'The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.' Rom. 2:4. A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul."—Christ's Object Lessons, page 202.

THINK IT THROUGH

Who only can bring conviction and change to a person who willfully pursues a course of wrongdoing and sin?

"Whatever the appearance may be, every life centered in self is squandered. Whoever attempts to live apart from God is wasting his substance. He is squandering the precious years, squandering the powers of mind and heart and soul, and working to make himself bankrupt for eternity. The man who separates from God that he may serve himself, is the slave of mammon. The mind that God created for the companionship of angels has become degraded to the service of that which is earthly and bestial. This is the end to which self-serving tends."—Christ's Object Lessons, pages 200, 201.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Lost and Is Found," pages 201-203.

Part 5
OTHER SHEEP

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:16.

When Jesus spoke these words, the "other sheep" referred to the Gentiles. After His death and resurrection the gospel went to the Gentiles, and God's church today is made up largely of non-Jews. But, despite this, the verse is true today. Not all persons who today serve God with pure motives and to the best of their knowledge have found God's truth and His remnant church. Wrote Ellen G. White: "Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion."—*The Great Controversy*, page 390.

God measures the commitment of His people qualitatively rather than quantitatively. He evaluates the diligence with which we have improved our opportunities to find His truth, and He observes our attitude toward the known portion of His will. Do His professed followers gladly respond to revealed truth, or do they rebel against it?

"If rational beings really desire the truth, God will give them sufficient light to enable them to decide what is truth. If they have a heart to obey, they will see sufficient evidence to walk in the light. But if they in heart desire to evade the truth, he will not work a miracle to gratify their unbelief. He will never remove every chance or occasion to doubt."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Jan. 5, 1886.

Is it possible for the evil one to separate God's committed followers from Him? John 10:28, 29; cf. Rom. 8:35-39.

"The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 483.

THINK IT THROUGH

What will happen to all these other sheep before Jesus returns in glory to receive His own?

"Not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. . . . Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently."—*The Great Controversy*, page 605.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 383, 390.

Part 6
FATHER GAVE SON
TO DIE FOR MAN

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Some are prone to think that God loves us because Jesus gave His life for us. But God does not love us because Jesus gave His life for us; rather the Father's love for lost man constrained Him to give His Son to die for us in order to redeem us. "As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1084.

To rescue man from the predicament into which he had fallen through disobedience, God was willing to empty the storehouse of heaven and deplete the resources of the universe. Anything that was needed God was willing to do to reinstate man, whom He had created in love, in his intended position as ruler of the earth and a son of God.

If but one soul would have accepted salvation, God was still willing to make this overture of love to fallen man.

What is the response in heaven when a sinner returns?
Luke 15:7, 10.

Zephaniah 3:17 gives an intimate picture of God's satisfaction and rejoicing when a sinner is saved. God is portrayed as singing in satisfied love. Picture a young husband in complete and happy contentment, singing or humming for sheer joy as he looks at his wife rocking their baby.

THINK IT THROUGH

How highly do I value a soul, or how much am I willing to do to rescue a soul from sin and eternal death?

"The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 196.

FURTHER STUDY

The Story of Redemption, pages 42-44.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Readily Forgives



LESSON 3

January 12-18

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18.

God's gracious promise of forgiveness through the prophet Isaiah presents God's plan for sinful man. Adam and Eve departed from God's will. Their descendants followed them in transgression. "With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. . . . But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 37.

Jesus' sacrifice provides forgiveness for individual repentant sinners. His teachings emphasize forgiveness, and His own personal attitude toward those who wronged Him was a forgiving one. Thus He taught and demonstrated that the Father forgives people when they repent.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Paralytic, Luke 5:18-20
2. The Roman Soldiers at the Cross, Luke 23:33, 34
3. The Thief on the Cross, Luke 23:39-43
4. Mary Magdalene, Luke 7:36-50
5. The Prodigal, Luke 15:21, 22
6. Forgive Seventy Times Seven, Matt. 18:21, 22

Part 1
THE PARALYTIC

"And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Luke 5:18-20.

Jesus desired to forgive sins; "it was to manifest His power to forgive sins that the miracle was performed. . . .

"This paralytic had lost all hope of recovery. His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse. . . .

"The palsied man was entirely helpless, and, seeing no prospect of aid from any quarter, he had sunk into despair. Then he heard of the wonderful works of Jesus. He was told that others as sinful and helpless as he had been healed; even lepers had been cleansed. And the friends who reported these things encouraged him to believe that he too might be cured if he could be carried to Jesus. But his hope fell when he remembered how the disease had been brought upon him. He feared that the pure Physician would not tolerate him in His presence."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 267.

What did the paralytic and his friends possess that enabled Jesus to heal him? Mark 2:5; cf. Matt. 13:58; Mark 6:5, 6.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do I most ardently desire—physical benefits or spiritual healing?

"In words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Saviour said, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.'

"The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed! the guilty sinner is pardoned!

"In simple faith he accepted the words of Jesus as the boon of new life. He urged no further request, but lay in blissful silence, too happy for words. The light of heaven irradiated his countenance, and the people looked with awe upon the scene."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 268.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 267-269.

Part 2
THE ROMAN
SOLDIERS AT
THE CROSS

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:33, 34.

Even in His excruciating suffering with nails piercing His tender flesh Jesus' thoughts were not centered on self. His mind went out in solicitude for others. Contrary to all human inclinations, He asked His Father for mercy upon His executioners.

"His mind passed from His own suffering to the sin of His persecutors, and the terrible retribution that would be theirs. No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling Him so roughly. No vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers, who were gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose. Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness,—'for they know not what they do.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 744.

According to what standard does God hold men responsible or apportion accountability for light? Luke 12:47, 48.

"Had they known that they were putting to torture One who had come to save the sinful race from eternal ruin, they would have been seized with remorse and horror. But their ignorance did not remove their guilt; for it was their privilege to know and accept Jesus as their Saviour. Some of them would yet see their sin, and repent, and be converted. Some by their impenitence would make it an impossibility for the prayer of Christ to be answered for them."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 744, 745.

"God will not condemn any at the judgment because they honestly believed a lie, or conscientiously cherished error; but it will be because they neglected the opportunities of making themselves acquainted with truth."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 437.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have you ever cherished a fleeting desire not to learn any more truth lest you be held responsible for added knowledge? What should be my attitude toward learning truth?

"That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. 'Whosoever will' may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 745.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 744, 745.

Part 3
THE THIEF ON
THE CROSS

Read Luke 23:39-43.

Note the punctuation of Luke 23:43 in *The Desire of Ages*, page 750: "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise." Without a doubt this is the correct punctuation of the verse.

The original Bible manuscripts contained no punctuation. Punctuation was supplied later. Naturally, it was supplied in accordance with a copyist's philosophy of life. Inasmuch as the common belief was that the soul went to heaven immediately upon death, it was punctuated so as to give that meaning. But from internal gospel evidence in John 20:17 we know that Jesus did not go to paradise on Friday. He had not yet ascended to His Father when He appeared to Mary Sunday morning.

In the assuring answer of Jesus to the thief's request, "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise," there is implicit and full forgiveness. In a moment the thief's sinful past was blotted out. He was accounted righteous or justified by God. As a babe just born into the kingdom of God, he was perfect in God's sight. His attitude toward God and His will had been changed from rebellion to willing obedience.

"For long hours of agony, reviling and mockery have fallen upon the ears of Jesus. As He hangs upon the cross, there floats up to Him still the sound of jeers and curses. . . . While the leading Jews deny Him, and even the disciples doubt His divinity, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, calls Jesus Lord. Many were ready to call Him Lord when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 750, 751.

Of what divine sentiment toward man is Jesus' answer to the thief on the cross a reminder? John 6:37.

THINK IT THROUGH

How may I experience the full and free deliverance from sin that the thief on the cross experienced?

"With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent soul to believe. In His humiliation He as a prophet had addressed the daughters of Jerusalem; as priest and advocate He had pleaded with the Father to forgive His murderers; as a loving Saviour He had forgiven the sins of the penitent thief."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 752.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 750, 751.

Part 4
MARY MAGDALENE

"And he [Jesus] turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head." Luke 7:44.

Read also Luke 7:36-50.

The woman at Simon's feast was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. See *The Desire of Ages*, pages 558, 559. Mary had been a fallen woman, and some still viewed her in that way. Simon was ashamed and embarrassed to have her appear at his feast. "Simon questioned whether the Saviour were a prophet. Because Christ allowed this woman to approach Him, because He did not indignantly spurn her as one whose sins were too great to be forgiven, because He did not show that He realized she had fallen, Simon was tempted to think that He was not a prophet. Jesus knows nothing of this woman who is so free in her demonstrations, he thought, or He would not allow her to touch Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 566.

What did Jesus say about the woman's sins? Luke 7:47, 48.

All Mary's scarlet sins God had freely forgiven because she had responded to the Spirit's pleadings to her heart.

"Mary knew not the full significance of her deed of love. She could not answer her accusers. She could not explain why she had chosen that occasion for anointing Jesus. The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings. Inspiration stoops to give no reason. An unseen presence, it speaks to mind and soul, and moves the heart to action. It is its own justification."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 560.

How frequently do I follow the Spirit's promptings and do the good deeds He urges me to perform?

"When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 568.

THINK IT THROUGH

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 566-568.

Part 5
THE PRODIGAL

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Luke 15:21, 22.

The prodigal was repentant. He admitted his sins and his unworthiness to be called a son of his father. On the basis of this the father, representing God, forgave him fully and freely. "Whom Christ pardons, He first makes penitent."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 7. With this the father kissed him tenderly and then gave back to him all the tokens of reinstatement as a son. His rags were removed and he was clothed in "the best robe." The ring was a symbol that the son was still a son. "Shoes were the token of sonship, for only slaves went barefoot."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 8, pp. 276, 277.

Only by the father's gift was he clothed in the way characteristic of his family. These gifts replaced the evidences of the son's impoverishment.

To what was the prodigal's return compared by the father? Luke 15:24; cf. John 5:24.

In the sight of God a man is really dead only when he is lost, that is, dead to the love of God. The prodigal had been dead to the father until he came to himself. He comes to life when he responds anew to his father's love. So we as sinners became alive when we accepted Jesus as our Saviour. The verse parallels the thought of verses 7 and 10 that there is joy in heaven when a sinner once again becomes alive to the will of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my attitude toward those who have deliberately strayed away from God but later returned? What should it be?

"Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. In the beautiful parabolic prophecy of Zechariah, the high priest Joshua, standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, represents the sinner. And the word is spoken by the Lord, 'Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. . . . So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.' Zech. 3:4, 5. Even so God will clothe you with 'the garments of salvation,' and cover you with 'the robe of righteousness.' Isa. 61:10. 'Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' Ps. 68:13."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 206.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Lost and Is Found," pages 204-206.

Part 6
FORGIVE SEVENTY
TIMES SEVEN

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Matt. 18:21, 22.

"The rabbis said that three pardons were enough. Peter proposed magnanimity, and so suggested seven."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 475. Jesus here corrected Peter. "Seventy times seven" is four hundred and ninety. By this Jesus meant that there must be no limit to forgiveness. As long as an offender comes back, God gladly and willingly forgives and welcomes him back. God had demonstrated this in His relation to Israel in the Old Testament. As a case in point, the book of Judges points out repeated departures of Israel from God, but every time they repented God gladly forgave. See Judges 3:7-9, 12-15; 4:1-4; 6:1-8.

Jesus thus reiterated His Father's eagerness to forgive the repentant sinner irrespective of his past. God is not primarily concerned with the past. All the failures and the shortcomings of the past are blotted out through Jesus' shed blood. But He is intensely concerned with my present response—my "now-reaction," or my attitude toward Him and His plan.

What will be the result of returning to the Lord? Isa. 55:7; Hosea 1-3; 2 Sam. 12:13.

Gomer is a symbol of God's people, while Hosea represents God. God found every one of us initially, as Hosea found Gomer, in spiritual adultery or sin. Then as Gomer we also have departed from God, although we espoused Him as our spiritual husband. Still God waits for our change of heart, ready to take us back, just as Hosea took Gomer back as his wife and the mother of his children.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I always willing to forgive those who have wronged me and also forget their wrongdoing? Why?

"The dictionary says that forgiveness means 'to give up resentment or claim to requital.' But is this true pardon? To forgive but not forget usually means not to forgive. Only to forgo resentment is a poor half forgiveness. Luke 17:5 tells us that when the disciples heard this requirement of Jesus . . . they exclaimed, 'Increase our faith!'—*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 475. May God also increase our faith!

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 334, 668.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Hates Sin

"And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Matt. 18:5, 6.

Sin is disloyalty to God. When we sin, we give our allegiance to someone else, or to self, rather than to God. It began in heaven. Lucifer, the light bearer and anointed cherub at the throne of God, withdrew his loyalty from God. He also led other angels to follow him and induced them to transfer their loyalty from God to him and to regard him as supreme rather than God.

The principle of selfishness underlying all sin is contrary to the character of God, and He has opposed it with all of His resources. Sin divided the universe. Rather than being a unit, or a universe, through sin it became basically a dualism with two forces in opposition to each other. On one side were God and those loyal to Him, and on the other side were Satan and his followers.

After the creation of Adam and Eve Satan transplanted sin to this earth. Adam and Eve became sinners by obeying Satan rather than God. Jesus came to this earth and demonstrated God's attitude toward sin. "The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are 'thoughts of peace, and not of evil.' Jer. 29:11. It declares that while God's hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 57.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus Condemned Sin, Rom. 8:3
2. Jesus Denounced Sin, Matt. 23:27, 28
3. Sin Separates From God, Matt. 27:46
4. Jesus Preferred Death to Sin, Matt. 4:2-4
5. Jesus Came to Do Away With Sin, John 1:29
6. Go, and Sin No More, John 8:11



Part 1
JESUS
CONDEMNED SIN

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8:3.

One of the great accomplishments of the life and death of Jesus was the refutation of the idea that sin is a valid and inevitable way of life for human beings. The intensity of this condemnation can be measured by the cross. Jesus considered the condemnation of sin of greater import than His personal existence.

"Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 758.

"The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, 'It is finished,' the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that 'through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Hebrews 2:14. . . .

"The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 503, 504.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does my estimate of sin compare with Christ's estimate of it?

"The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that 'the wages of sin is death,' that every violation of God's law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father's face, until His heart was broken and His life crushed out. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgression."—*The Great Controversy*, page 540.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 501-504.

Part 2
JESUS
DENOUNCED SIN

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matt. 23:27, 28.

Jesus unsparingly denounced sin that was carried on under a cloak of piety. He always opposed sin, but He did not always denounce it in the way that He did in Matthew 23.

"He [Jesus] hated but one thing in the world, and that was sin. He could not witness a wrong act without pain which it was impossible to disguise. Between the formalists, whose sanctity of appearance concealed the love of sin, and a character in which zeal for God's glory was always paramount, the contrast was unmistakable. Because the life of Jesus condemned evil, He was opposed, both at home and abroad. His unselfishness and integrity were commented on with a sneer. His forbearance and kindness were termed cowardice."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 88.

In writing of the woes that Jesus pronounced on the Pharisees, Ellen G. White wrote:

"With hand uplifted to heaven, and a divine light enshrouding His person, Christ spoke as a judge to those before Him. His voice, that had so often been heard in gentleness and entreaty, was now heard in rebuke and condemnation. The listeners shuddered. Never was the impression made by His words and His look to be effaced.

"Christ's indignation was directed against the hypocrisy, the gross sins, by which men were destroying their own souls, deceiving the people and dishonoring God. In the specious deceptive reasoning of the priests and rulers He discerned the working of satanic agencies. Keen and searching had been His denunciation of sin; but He spoke no words of retaliation. He had a holy wrath against the prince of darkness; but He manifested no irritated temper."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 619.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between righteous indignation and ordinary indignation?

"Divine pity marked the countenance of the Son of God as He cast one lingering look upon the temple and then upon His hearers. In a voice choked by deep anguish of heart and bitter tears He exclaimed, . . . [Matt. 23:37 quoted]. This is the separation struggle. In the lamentation of Christ the very heart of God is pouring itself forth. It is the mysterious farewell of the long-suffering love of the Deity."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 620.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 617-619.

Part 3
SIN SEPARATES
FROM GOD

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27:46.

Jesus assumed man's sins. He carried the awesome burden of sin. He knew that sin could not exist in the presence of His Father, and it appeared to Him that the assumed burden of mankind's sins would forever separate Him from His Father.

"The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 753.

Note the similarity between God's pronouncement of judgment on Judah by Isaiah and Jesus' experience at the cross. Isa. 59:2. Note the difference.

Sin is destroyed by the presence of God. This fact is pointed out in the Scriptures. See Heb. 12:29. Anything and everything contaminated with sin becomes combustible in the presence of God. The prophet Isaiah repeatedly points out that sin will be destroyed by fire. See Isa. 33:11, 12; 30:33; 1:28-31; 9:18.

"If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 62.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I possess a realistic appraisal of the dire effects of sin? Do I realize that sin will inevitably separate me from God for eternity unless I am freed from it?

"The God of heaven is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil,' and cannot 'look on iniquity.' Habakkuk 1:13. It is not because He is unwilling to forgive that He turns from the transgressor; it is because the sinner refuses to make use of the abundant provisions of grace, that God is unable to deliver from sin."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 323.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 753.

Part 4
JESUS PREFERRED
DEATH TO SIN

"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:2-4.

Jesus had fasted for nearly six weeks. He "was faint from hunger, He was craving for food, when Satan came suddenly upon Him. Pointing to the stones which strewed the desert, and which had the appearance of loaves, the tempter said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 118.

Jesus had nearly reached the limit of human endurance. To continue fasting would have been fatal. Yet under these circumstances He rejected Satan's suggestion. "In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 117.

Satan confronted Jesus with two further temptations, but Jesus resisted them also and finally bade Satan flee.

"After the foe had departed, Jesus fell exhausted to the earth, with the pallor of death upon His face. The angels of heaven had watched the conflict, beholding their loved Commander as He passed through inexpressible suffering to make a way of escape for us. He had endured the test, greater than we shall ever be called to endure. The angels now ministered to the Son of God as He lay like one dying. He was strengthened with food, comforted with the message of His Father's love and the assurance that all heaven triumphed in His victory. Warming to life again, His great heart goes out in sympathy for man, and He goes forth to complete the work He has begun; to rest not until the foe is vanquished, and our fallen race redeemed"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 131.

In His preference of death instead of sin Jesus revealed how the heavenly Father views sin. Nothing in the world can happen to a human being that is as serious as the commission of sin.

THINK IT THROUGH

"Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 122.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 129-131.

Part 5
JESUS CAME TO DO
AWAY WITH SIN

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

Jesus came to this earth to separate man from sin. He knew that lest man be separated from it, he will perish in it. A sinner, not cleansed from sin and covered with the righteousness of Christ, will perish in the presence of God. "The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 311.

Which is the last enemy that Jesus will destroy? 1 Cor. 15:26.

Death is caused by separation from God, since there is no source of life apart from God. Jesus will be able to abolish death only by teaching, persuading, and empowering intelligent beings to separate from sin. Sin will be eliminated from the universe by permitting those who do not choose to let Jesus rule them, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to reap the full result of separation from God—death. For "the sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15: 56.

What did the Lord, under the symbol of wisdom in the Old Testament, say that those actually do who hate Him? Prov. 8:36.

"By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 764.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my personal attitude toward God's will as expressed in the Bible and His inspired writings?

"However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 421.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 763, 764.

**Part 6
GO, AND SIN
NO MORE**

What is evident from the last part of the admonition of Jesus to the woman taken in adultery?

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

It is God's plan that those who have accepted Jesus and been born again cease from sinning. It is His hope and plan that we choose to be wholly His.

"The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 311.

For what purpose did Jesus come to this earth? Matt. 1:21.

"Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins; that you, through the merits of his righteousness, may be re-instated to the favor of God. Do you know that a holy and just God will accept your efforts to keep his law, through the merits of his own beloved Son who died for your rebellion and sin?"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

In teaching His disciples and the multitudes, what quality did Jesus repeatedly mention as necessary for Christian living? John 11:15; Mark 9:23; Matt. 8:13; Mark 11:22; Luke 7:50.

"Faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 229.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I really expect to be an overcomer of my sins? How?

"If it were not possible for human beings under the Abrahamic covenant to keep the commandments of God, every soul of us is lost. The Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of grace. 'By grace ye are saved.' . . . Disobedient children? No, obedient to all His commandments."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1092.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Beatitudes," pages 24-27.

ERIC KREYE



GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Hears People's Pleas

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. 7:7, 8.

When Jesus was on earth, He responded to the pleas of those who sought His help. There is no instance recorded in which He turned someone away. This attitude to people was a reflection of the way the Father treats those who make sincere requests of Him.

Every sincere request reaches the ear and heart of God. Though our God is the Ruler of an infinite universe, He is still "big enough" to be able to listen to the smallest plea of the most insignificant of His earth-born children.

"Jesus sees His true church on the earth, whose greatest ambition is to cooperate with Him in the grand work of saving souls. He hears their prayers, presented in contrition and power, and Omnipotence cannot resist their plea for the salvation of any tried, tempted member of Christ's body."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 19.

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. . . . Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. . . . The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."—*Steps to Christ*, page 100.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Centurion, Matt. 8:5-7
2. The Leper's Plea, Luke 5:12
3. The Syrophenician Woman, Matt. 15:22
4. The Importunate Widow, Luke 18:2-5
5. Peter's Plea for Help, Matt. 14:29, 30
6. Father Himself Loves Us, John 16:26, 27

Part 1
THE CENTURION

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." Matt. 8:5-7.

To the centurion's expressed confidence that Jesus could heal, the response of Jesus was instant. Thus, His reply, "I will come and heal him."

The centurion's faith was so strong that he did not even think it was necessary for the Master to come to his house and see his servant. He thought of Jesus as a man in authority who could heal by His word of command.

"He [Jesus] marveled at the faith of the centurion who came to Him. The centurion did not question the Saviour's power. He did not even ask Him to come in person to perform the miracle. 'Speak the word only,' he said, 'and my servant shall be healed.' . . .

"He believed that Jesus could heal him. He had not seen the Saviour, but the reports he heard had inspired him with faith."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 315.

How was the centurion's implicit faith in Jesus' power and willingness rewarded? Matt. 8:13.

Who was correct—the centurion who said he was unworthy, or the Jewish elders who said the centurion was worthy of Jesus' help because of the good he had done? Matt. 8:8; Luke 7:4.

The Jews fallaciously thought that a man through his goodness could merit the favor of God. They failed to realize that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) and that man merits nothing except death for his sins. It is not his goodness that commends man to God, but his desperate need.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is our faith in Jesus sufficiently strong so that we can take Him at His word before seeing the deed?

"The Jewish elders who recommended the centurion to Christ had shown how far they were from possessing the spirit of the gospel. They did not recognize that our great need is our only claim on God's mercy. In their self-righteousness they commended the centurion because of the favor he had shown to 'our nation.' But the centurion said of himself, 'I am not worthy.' His heart had been touched by the grace of Christ. He saw his own unworthiness; yet he feared not to ask help. He trusted not to his own goodness; his argument was his great need."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 316, 317.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 315-317.

Part 2
THE LEPER'S PLEA

"And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Luke 5:12.

The leper entertained no doubts about Jesus' ability or power to cure him of his dreadful disease, but he wondered whether the Master would be willing to stoop down to his wretchedness and heal him. As a leper he was a human outcast and was shunned for fear of lethal contamination. The Jews counted a leper as good as dead along with the blind, the poor, and the childless. Hence, he was afraid to approach the Master with his plea for healing. Nevertheless, he mustered his courage and spoke to Jesus. But he did not possess sufficient boldness to ask for healing. He left that up to the Master as he said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

There are certain requests we may present to God with full assurance of fulfillment. One is a request for forgiveness of sin. See 1 John 1:9.

As Jesus put forth His hand and touched the leper, what change took place in him? Luke 5:13.

"Immediately a change passed over the leper. His flesh became healthy, the nerves sensitive, the muscles firm. The rough, scaly surface peculiar to leprosy disappeared, and a soft glow, like that upon the skin of a healthy child, took its place."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 263.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways am I like the leper? Am I uncertain of Jesus' willingness to heal me of the leprosy of sin? If so, place indelibly on memory's wall Hebrews 7:25.

"In the region of Christ's ministry, there were many of these sufferers [lepers], and the news of His work reached them, kindling a gleam of hope. But since the days of Elisha the prophet, such a thing had never been known as the cleansing of one upon whom this disease had fastened. They dared not expect Jesus to do for them what He had never done for any man. There was one, however, in whose heart faith began to spring up."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 262, 263.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 263, 264.

Part 3
THE SYROPHOENI-
CIAN WOMAN

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matt. 15:22.

"This woman had heard of the prophet, who, it was reported, healed all manner of diseases. As she heard of His power, hope sprang up in her heart. Inspired by a mother's love, she determined to present her daughter's case to Him. It was her resolute purpose to bring her affliction to Jesus. He must heal her child. She had sought help from the heathen gods, but had obtained no relief. And at times she was tempted to think, What can this Jewish teacher do for me? But the word had come, He heals all manner of diseases, whether those who come to Him for help are rich or poor. She determined not to lose her only hope."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 400.

Even though a Canaanite, or foreign heathen, she accepted and believed the reports that had reached her about the benevolent Jewish healer. Thus she resolutely approached Jesus for help.

What was the attitude of the disciples toward her request? Matt. 15:23. What was Jesus' attitude? Verse 28.

The disciples were typical of their times. They felt no inclination to listen to this woman and help her even though she was in sore need of help. She, as a heathen with no hope of salvation, was to them of less value than an animal. They wanted their Master to dismiss her, since she made an ado of their presence in a strange place.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do I, as the disciples, segregate people according to their class or background rather than look upon them as unique individuals with personal needs which Jesus stands ever ready to meet?

"Christ knew this woman's situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected, shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers were to be broken down."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 400.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 399-402.

Part 4
THE IMPORTUNATE
WIDOW

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." Luke 18:2-5.

Why did the judge finally decide to listen to the widow's plea and obtain justice for her? Verse 5.

Jesus in this parable presents the character of God through contrast. "Christ here draws a sharp contrast between the unjust judge and God. The judge yielded to the widow's request merely through selfishness, that he might be relieved of her importunity. He felt for her no pity or compassion; her misery was nothing to him. How different is the attitude of God toward those who seek Him. The appeals of the needy and distressed are considered by Him with infinite compassion."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 165.

God is not coerced into helping man. He never forgets His earth children. See Isaiah 49:15, 16. Though all earthly or human ties be broken, yet God will not forget us. Jesus reflected this concern for the needy of His day.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I extend help to those in need because I feel I have to, or do I respond to their needs cheerfully from a loving and helpful heart?

"The woman who entreated the judge for justice had lost her husband by death. Poor and friendless, she had no means of retrieving her ruined fortunes. So by sin, man lost his connection with God. Of himself he has no means of salvation. But in Christ we are brought nigh unto the Father. The elect of God are dear to His heart. They are those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, to show forth His praise, to shine as lights amid the darkness of the world. The unjust judge had no special interest in the widow who importuned him for deliverance; yet in order to rid himself of her pitiful appeals, he heard her plea, and delivered her from her adversary. But God loves His children with infinite love. To Him the dearest object on earth is His church."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 165, 166.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Shall Not God Avenge His Own?" pages 164-166.

Part 5
PETER'S PLEA
FOR HELP

"And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me." Matt. 14:29, 30.

"Looking unto Jesus, Peter walks securely; but as in self-satisfaction he glances back toward his companions in the boat, his eyes are turned from the Saviour. The wind is boisterous. The waves roll high, and come directly between him and the Master; and he is afraid. For a moment Christ is hidden from his view, and his faith gives way. He begins to sink. But while the billows talk with death, Peter lifts his eyes from the angry waters, and fixing them upon Jesus, cries, 'Lord, save me.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 381.

How did Jesus respond to Peter's desperate plea? Matt. 14:31.

Peter was in the predicament of being about to perish in the turbulent water through His own pride and self-conceit. Being able to walk on water, while his friends remained in the boat, Peter took his eyes off Jesus in complacent satisfaction over his achievement. Then he began to sink. Too late he recognized that walking on water was not his own accomplishment; Jesus alone had enabled him to do it. As he suddenly recognized this, he cried out to Jesus in desperation for immediate help. Instant help from the Master saved him.

THINK IT THROUGH

When have I, like Peter, taken the glory to myself, although it is only through God's enabling grace I am able to do anything good and worthwhile?

"When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us. 'Fear not,' He says; 'for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' Isa. 43:1-3."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 382.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 380-382.

Part 6
THE FATHER
HIMSELF LOVES US

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:26, 27.

God the Father loved and does love us. He does not love us because God the Son, Jesus, loved us and gave His life for us; rather, the Father was willing to give His Son for our redemption because He Himself loves us. See John 3:16. Thus as Jesus readily heard and responded to the pleas of sincere men, so does God the Father.

Is God's love for men dependent on their repentance of sin and acceptance of His plan for them? Rom. 5:8.

Jesus demonstrated the nature of God's love. He came to call and save sinners. Luke 5:32; Matt. 9:13. He loves sinners, and He came to save and deliver them from their sins. Even though He was willing to give His life for sinners, sin cannot exist in the presence of God. "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29) to sin. God does not change or vary. He remains constant. But to some He is the source of destruction or a burning fire (Isa. 33:14; 2 Thess. 2:8, 9; Rev. 6:15-17), because they retain sin, while to others He is the source of exceeding joy (Isa. 25:9). God is both justice and mercy. Which way He manifests Himself is determined by the character of the persons to whom He appears.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I realize that, although God is love, He will become a source of destruction to me unless I let Him save me from sin?

"Christ's lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science in prayer, and His illustration brings to view principles that all need to understand. He shows what is the true spirit of prayer, He teaches the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God, and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer prayer."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 142.

"When perplexities arise, and difficulties confront you, look not for help to humanity. Trust all with God. The practice of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak, and brings no strength to them. It lays upon them the burden of our spiritual infirmities, which they cannot relieve. We seek the strength of erring, finite man, when we might have the strength of the unerring, infinite God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 146.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Privilege of Prayer," pages 93-98.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Is Concerned for Individuals

"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:7.

Too often we have no time for individuals. We deal with groups of people—with classes or committees—but we neglect to talk to one person individually. Jesus took time to talk with single individuals. He still deals with us as persons and is concerned with our personal problems.

From the Gospels the reader gains the impression that Jesus spent more of His time talking to individuals than preaching to crowds. His healing ministry was of necessity a one-to-one relationship. And "during His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 350.

"The work of Christ was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. From that one soul the intelligence received was carried to thousands."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 115.

The concern of Jesus for the individuals whom He met on His earthly sojourn demonstrated the concern that the heavenly Father has for every one of us. "He knows each individual by name, and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 229.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. Nocturnal Visit With Nicodemus, John 3:1-3**
- 2. At the Sychar Well, John 4:5-7**
- 3. Jesus Prayed for Peter, Luke 22:31, 32**
- 4. Jesus' Care for His Mother, John 19:26, 27**
- 5. Jesus' Reply to John the Baptist's Inquiry, Luke 7:19, 20**
- 6. God Knows Us Minutely, Luke 12:7**

LESSON 6
February 2-8



Part 1
NOCTURNAL VISIT
WITH NICODEMUS

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:1-3.

Read also John 3:4-21.

Nicodemus possessed great talents, was highly educated, and was an honored member of the Sanhedrin, the highest council among the Jews. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 167. Although rich, learned, and honored, he was strangely stirred by the teachings of the unschooled Teacher from Nazareth. With his countrymen he looked for the promised Messiah to deliver His people from the Roman oppression their sins had brought upon them. As he observed the work of Jesus in the light of the Messianic prophecies, he thought he discerned in Him the promised Deliverer.

"In the interview with Nicodemus, Jesus unfolded the plan of salvation and His mission to the world. In none of His subsequent discourses did He explain so fully, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the hearts of all who would inherit the kingdom of heaven."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 176.

What apparently happened to the seed Jesus placed in Nicodemus' heart during this night visit? John 7:45-52; 19:38-40.

"The lesson that Christ had given to Nicodemus had not been in vain. Conviction had fastened upon his mind, and in his heart he had accepted Jesus. Since his interview with the Saviour, he had earnestly searched the Old Testament Scriptures, and he had seen truth placed in the true setting of the gospel."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1136.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I gain the courage and willingness to speak to one person alone?

The eighteenth century French preacher Bousset said: "It requires more faith and courage to say two words face-to-face with one sinner, than from the pulpit to rebuke two or three thousand persons, ready to listen to everything, on condition of forgetting all."

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 167, 168, 176, 177.

Part 2
AT THE
SYCHAR WELL

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." John 4:5-7.

Read also John 4:8-42.

"As she turned to go away, Jesus asked her for a drink. Such a favor no Oriental would withhold. In the East, water was called 'the gift of God.' To offer a drink to the thirsty traveler was held to be a duty so sacred that the Arabs of the desert would go out of their way in order to perform it. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 183, 184.

Jesus was anxious to reach the woman. Although a Samaritan and a sinner, He knew she was susceptible to truth. Truth pierced her assumed casualness and reached into her heart. In response to the earnest words of Jesus "her light, bantering manner began to change."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 184.

What confession did she make after Jesus had unveiled to her the secrets of her sinful life? John 4:19.

After Jesus had told her He was the looked-for Messiah, what did the woman do, and how fruitful was the personal work for one lone woman? John 4:28-39.

"As soon as she had found the Saviour the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. . . . Through the woman whom they [the disciples] despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Saviour. She carried the light at once to her countrymen."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 195.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I, as an ambassador for God, willing to present the best message I have to a one-person audience, or do I selfishly save it for a larger audience? Notice that Jesus did not.

"As Jesus spoke of the living water, the woman looked upon Him with wondering attention. He had aroused her interest, and awakened a desire for the gift of which He spoke. . . .

"Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 187.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 183, 184, 194, 195.

Part 3
JESUS PRAYED
FOR PETER

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31, 32.

Jesus was personally concerned with Peter's salvation. He therefore did not merely pray for the disciples, or for the church, as is indicated in John 17:9, 15, 20, but He prayed for Peter personally. He foretold his full and complete conversion after which he would feed the lambs and the sheep of the Lord. See John 21:14-17.

After the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome," according to Mark 16:1 (see Matt. 28:9), how did He again show His concern for Peter? Mark 16:7.

Jesus knew that Peter needed special encouragement after his denial in the judgment hall. Hence, He sent a special message to him and also appeared to Peter, before He appeared to any of the other disciples. See Luke 24:34 and 1 Cor. 15:5.

"Tell His disciples and Peter," the angels said. Since the death of Christ, Peter had been bowed down with remorse. His shameful denial of the Lord, and the Saviour's look of love and anguish, were ever before him. Of all the disciples he had suffered most bitterly. To him the assurance is given that his repentance is accepted and his sin forgiven. He is mentioned by name."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 793.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do I come short of being as solicitous as was Jesus to rebuild and restore the courage and the sense of belonging of one who has been trapped by Satan and fallen into sin?

"Peter was naturally forward and impulsive, and Satan had taken advantage of these characteristics to overthrow him. Just before the fall of Peter, Jesus had said to him, 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Luke 22:31, 32. That time had now come, and the transformation in Peter was evident. The close, testing questions of the Lord had not called out one forward, self-sufficient reply; and because of his humiliation and repentance, Peter was better prepared than ever before to act as shepherd to the flock."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 812.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pages 88-91.

Part 4
JESUS' CARE FOR
HIS MOTHER

"So when Jesus saw his mother and his favourite disciple standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, there is your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'And, there is your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his home." John 19:26, 27, Moffatt.

Even in His hour of excruciating pain on the cross Jesus was not oblivious of the future needs of His mother. As a loving son who would be unable to care for her in the future, Jesus at the cross committed her to the care of John. John was tender and loving and would give to her the care an aging woman needed.

"The last lesson of Jesus was one of filial love. He looked upon the grief-stricken face of His mother, and then upon John; said He, addressing the former: 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then, to the disciple: 'Behold thy mother!' John 19:27. John well understood the words of Jesus, and the sacred trust which was committed to him. He immediately removed the mother of Christ from the fearful scene of Calvary. From that hour he cared for her as would a dutiful son, taking her to his own home. The perfect example of Christ's filial love shines forth with undimmed luster from the mist of ages. While enduring the keenest torture, He was not forgetful of His mother, but made all provision necessary for her future."—*The Story of Redemption*, page 224.

How did Jesus' provision for His mother fit into God's instruction in the Old Testament concerning children's relationship to parents? Ex. 20:12.

Our first mundane duty is or should be toward our parents. This is pointed out both in the Old and the New Testaments. See Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20. Jesus lived by this precept.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does my concern for my parents' needs compare with that of Jesus for His mother?

"For nearly thirty years Jesus by His daily toil had helped bear the burdens of the home. And now, even in His last agony, He remembers to provide for His sorrowing, widowed mother. The same spirit will be seen in every disciple of our Lord. Those who follow Christ will feel that it is a part of their religion to respect and provide for their parents. From the heart where His love is cherished, father and mother will never fail of receiving thoughtful care and tender sympathy."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 752.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 752; cf. page 82.

Part 5
JESUS' REPLY TO
JOHN THE BAPTIST'S
INQUIRY

"And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" Luke 7:19, 20.

In the gloom of imprisonment in the damp dungeon of Herod Antipas the poison of doubt in Jesus as the promised Messiah entered John's mind. These doubts were instilled by John's own disciples. "Doubts which otherwise would never have arisen were suggested to John. Satan rejoiced to hear the words of these disciples, and to see how they bruised the soul of the Lord's messenger. Oh, how often those who think themselves the friends of a good man, and who are eager to show their fidelity to him, prove to be his most dangerous enemies! How often, instead of strengthening his faith, their words depress and dishearten!"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 215.

How did Jesus answer the anxious queries of John's disciples, and what were they to report to John the Baptist? Luke 7:21-23.

Jesus was aware of the troubled forebodings in the mind of His forerunner and friend. These were grounded in his misunderstanding of Christ's kingdom. He knew the reasons for John's perplexity; therefore He did not dismiss the messengers and their inquiry as foolish and unwarranted. He invited them to remain with Him and observe His work of healing and teaching.

"The Saviour did not at once answer the disciples' question. As they stood wondering at His silence, the sick and afflicted were coming to Him to be healed. The blind were groping their way through the crowd; diseased ones of all classes, some urging their own way, some borne by their friends, were eagerly pressing into the presence of Jesus."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 216, 217.

THINK IT THROUGH

Like Jesus, I should try to understand and emphathize with people with anxious, troubled hearts and not brush them off and dismiss their fears as foolish.

"At last Jesus called them to Him, and bade them go and tell John what they had witnessed, adding, 'Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me.' Luke 7:23, R.V. The evidence of His divinity was seen in its adaptation to the needs of suffering humanity. His glory was shown in His condescension to our low estate.

"The disciples bore the message, and it was enough."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 217.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 214-217.

Part 6
GOD KNOWS US
MINUTELY

"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:7.

Jesus assures us that He knows us individually. He knows the unique circumstances and peculiar needs of each one of us.

"God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear. When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark."—*Steps to Christ*, page 86.

How had God in the Old Testament expressed His awareness of the singular conditions and experiences of each individual? Ps. 87:4-6; 56:8.

James Moffat, in *A New Translation of the Bible*, renders Psalm 56:8: "Thou countest up my sleepless hours, my tears are gathered in thy bottle—are they not noted in thy book?"

God is aware of the conditions under which every one of us is born and reared as well as the unique circumstances of each person. When God shall write up His people, He will keep all this in mind.

It is our impression of having been forgotten by everyone—or our impression of complete aloneness—that at times makes our lot seem almost unbearable. If we could only remember that God is aware of us and that He still watches over us, we would indeed acclaim Him as our God as did Nathanael (see John 1:49), and our despair would evaporate. His promise to you and me today is this: "If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 173.

THINK IT THROUGH

What instances or experiences can I recall from my own life that convince me that God knows about my peculiar or unique needs and that He cares for me?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "A Knowledge of God," pages 86, 87.

“The Lord saw our fallen condition; He saw our need of grace, and because He loved our souls, He has given us grace and peace. Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved.”

—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 347.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Gives Grace

"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." Eph. 2:8, 9.

Man in himself is hopelessly lost. He may long for and strive for salvation, but he cannot attain to it. Only death—eternal death—awaits man as a result of his sin. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23. Thus all men, left to themselves, are doomed to death.

But does not God have a law? Cannot the law help man to attain salvation? Yes, God does have a law, but there is no possibility that man can receive help from the law. A law, the violation of which demands the life of the transgressor, cannot save anyone. Everyone who has violated it in the least particular can only look forward to death. This is man's sore plight. Although man was created to live for time and for eternity, he squandered this opportunity and privilege through sin. Through sin man became doomed to extinction. But through His grace God saves us. Jesus' teachings reflect to us the grace of God toward unworthy, but repentant, sinners.

"Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow His grace upon us, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. Our only claim to His mercy is our great need.

"The Lord God through Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 161.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. The Reward for Labor, Matt. 20:1, 2**
- 2. All Received What Was Right, Matt. 20:3, 4**
- 3. Same Pay for Each, Matt. 20:8-10**
- 4. The Invitation to the Wedding, Matt. 22:2, 3**
- 5. Examination of the Guests, Matt. 22:11-13**
- 6. Salvation Is a Gift, Eph. 2:8-10**

Part 1
THE REWARD
FOR LABOR

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard." Matt. 20:1, 2.

This parable was preceded by the incident of the rich young ruler who approached the Master Teacher asking what good thing *he* should do to have eternal life. Against the background of the disciples' having left all to follow Jesus, Peter questioned; "What shall we have therefore?" See Matt. 19:27-30. In answer to this question Christ showed the part played by grace in the Christian life.

The *New English Bible*, instead of "a penny a day," says the offer was "the usual day's wage." *The Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 7, p. 490) suggests that "a penny" denotes a generous wage for that time and place. *Lange's Commentary* (Vol. 8, p. 352) points out that a "*shilling* would be a far better popular equivalent for a *denarius* than *penny*." And cites as evidence that "Polybius (ii. 15) mentions that the charge for a day's entertainment in the inns of Cisalpine Gaul (today's northern Italy) was only . . . one twentieth of a denarius." Hence "a penny a day" denotes good pay for a day's work.

What is the meaning of the illustration of the camel and the needle's eye? Matt. 19:24, 26.

"It is only through the unmerited grace of Christ that any man can find entrance into the city of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 394.

How does this conform to the words of God through the prophet Isaiah? Isa. 55:1.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my motive in serving God?

"In the parable the first laborers agreed to work for a stipulated sum, and they received the amount specified, nothing more. Those later hired believed the master's promise, 'Whoever is right, that shall ye receive.' . . . They were rewarded, not according to the amount of their labor, but according to the generosity of his purpose.

"So God desires us to trust in Him who justifieth the ungodly. His reward is given not according to our merit but according to His own purpose."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 397.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 431.

Part 2
ALL RECEIVED
WHAT WAS RIGHT

"And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way." Matt. 20:3, 4.

Read also Matt. 20:5-7.

Hour after hour the householder called other men to work in his vineyard. With these he agreed about no wage. He only promised that "whatsoever is right I will give you." These men responded to the call. They did not argue nor haggle about wages. They went to work trusting that the householder would be fair with them.

"Those later hired believed the master's promise, 'Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.' They showed their confidence in him by asking no question in regard to wages. They trusted to his justice and equity."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 397.

Would you regard it as foolish to accept employment without knowing the exact wages you were to receive for your service?

It all depends upon your confidence in the party which hires you and how urgently you need employment. It is conceivable that a person may have unbounded confidence in his employer, or need money so badly, that he will do whatever work is offered him without inquiring about the rate of pay.

"The Lord desires us to rest in Him without a question as to our measure of reward. When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. It is true that in a subordinate sense we should have respect to the recompense of reward. God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation. We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow men should be our motive."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 398, 399.

By what illustration does the prophet Isaiah emphasize the fact that there is nothing man can do to earn God's salvation? Isa. 61:10.

"Were Jesus upon earth now, he would say to thousands whose names are on church-books, 'Why stand ye all the day idle?' 'Go ye also into the vineyard.'"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Jan. 6, 1885.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Reward of Grace," pages 397, 398.

Part 3
SAME PAY
FOR EACH

"So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny." **Matt. 20:8-10.**

"The reception of the penny by the laborers represents the character that God will give to those who follow Him."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 10, 1894.

At first sight it might appear unfair to give the same wage to all laborers regardless of the length of time they worked. But when we realize what the penny represents, we humbly recognize that it is a gift of God's grace to all of us.

To the first servants, the Jews, as to the last servants hired, the Gentiles, the penny—salvation—was a gift of God's grace. Everyone who appreciates God's gift of salvation will rejoice that he was called or found by God in the early morning of life, rather than saved at the last moment like the thief on the cross.

THINK IT THROUGH

How disinterestedly do I serve God without comparing my lot with that of others?

"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. Their hearts were full of gratitude to the one who had accepted them; and when at the close of the day the householder paid them for a full day's work, they were greatly surprised. They knew they had not earned such wages. And the kindness expressed in the countenance of their employer filled them with joy. They never forgot the goodness of the householder or the generous compensation they had received. Thus it is with the sinner who, knowing his unworthiness, has entered the Master's vineyard at the eleventh hour. His time of service seems so short, he feels that he is undeserving of reward; but he is filled with joy that God has accepted him at all. He works with a humble, trusting spirit, thankful for the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ. This spirit God delights to honor."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 397, 398.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Reward of Grace," pages 399-404.

Part 4
THE INVITATION
TO THE WEDDING

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come." Matt. 22:2, 3.

"In this parable, as in that of the great supper, are illustrated the gospel invitation, its rejection by the Jewish people, and the call of mercy to the Gentiles."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 307.

Although similar to the parable of the great supper in Luke 14:16-24, this story teaches different truths. Like the former, it illustrated the rejection of the gospel invitation by the Jews and the giving of the invitation to the Gentiles. "This was the message borne to the Jewish nation after the crucifixion of Christ; but the nation that claimed to be God's peculiar people rejected the gospel brought to them in the power of the Holy Spirit."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 308.

The king in the parable represents God; the son, Jesus. "By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 307.

To whom was the invitation to the wedding extended upon the rejection of the invitation by those first called? Matt. 22:8-10.

"He who is found wanting is cast out, but all who upon examination are seen to have the wedding garment on are accepted of God and counted worthy of a share in His kingdom and a seat upon His throne. This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above."—*The Great Controversy*, page 428.

THINK IT THROUGH

All of us are invited to the wedding, but what, in symbol and experience, determines our eligibility to attend it?

"The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today. They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 315.

"There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 319.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Without a Wedding Garment," pages 310-319.

Part 5
EXAMINATION OF
THE GUESTS

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 22:11-13.

"The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310.

"Previous to the wedding the king comes in to see the guests, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."—*The Great Controversy*, page 428.

It might appear unfair for the groom's father to throw out a poor guest at his son's wedding who could not afford formal attire. But it was not. Every guest had been offered suitable apparel by the groom's father. Hence, it was an insult to the wedding party for the guest not to wear it.

God has invited every one of us to His wedding feast in heaven. To be fit for heavenly society He offers us the garment of Christ's righteousness.

What was done to the guest who did not wear the wedding garment? Matt. 22:13, 14.

Lest we come away from the study of this parable more self-righteous and calloused to God's invitation to salvation extended to every one of us, we will turn our attention away from the Jewish nation and their rejection of God's plan to ourselves. God is inviting every one of us—and the whole world—to His wedding feast. The call in this parable is a personal call to each one of us.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I receive the messengers of faith, both through the Bible and the inspired writings and through His mouth-pieces today, and their pleas to me?

"The spiritual banquet has been set before us in rich abundance. We have had presented to us by the messengers of God the richest feast—the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God in His Word, free access to the Father by Jesus Christ, the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. We ask, What could God do for us that He has not done in preparing the great supper, the heavenly banquet?"—Ellen G. White *Comments*, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1097.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Without a Wedding Garment," pages 307-309.

**Part 6
SALVATION
IS A GIFT**

"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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:8-10.

Remembering that the penny, received as payment by the laborers in the vineyard, represents the character of Christ, it is obvious that no one can earn it or attain to such a state of maturity or perfection in their own wisdom and strength. We are to receive the character of Christ as a gift from God. In this way we become partakers of the divine nature.

We are forgiven for committed sins through Christ's death. This is justification, "our title to heaven," by which we are accounted righteous for Christ's sake, or for what He has done for us in response to our change of attitude toward Him and His will. Then we shall be preserved or given enabling power to resist temptation successfully through Christ's living out His life within us through the Holy Spirit; this is sanctification which is "our fitness for heaven." See *Messages to Young People*, page 35.

For what purpose did God send His Son into the world? Matt. 1:21.

Jesus came and died for us not merely to earn the right to forgive us for sins committed but to save us or deliver us from the bondage of sin. God had sent Him according to the prophecy of Isaiah not merely "to bind up the brokenhearted" but "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isa. 61:1; cf. 42:7.

To attain to God's plan for us we need not merely forgiving grace but sustaining or preserving grace. It was for such grace that Jesus daily implored His Father. "Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 56.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I expect to sin continuously, or do I believe Jesus can give me power to become victorious over the tempter?

"Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 311.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Spirituality of the Law," pages 76-78.



GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Requires Obedience

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Matt. 7:24.

It is God who initiated the search for man in sin. He has loved man before man responded in any way to His loving overtures. But God's loving search is in the hope of a voluntary, loving response from man. The response for which God looks is not only the inner response of man's mind, but a whole-life response of man to God's revealed will. Thought and action combined is the only valid response to God when man is found of Him.

Jesus repeatedly taught this principle. It comes to light clearly in the parable of the houses built on rock and on sand. But Jesus not only *taught* obedience; He Himself obeyed the Father. Thus by His teachings and His life He revealed that God requires man's obedience.

"Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society."

"So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever.

"Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied."—*Education*, pages 76, 77.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Friends of Jesus, John 15:14
2. Relatives of Jesus, Matt. 12:48-50
3. Believers in Jesus—I, Matt. 7:21-23
4. Believers in Jesus—II, Matt. 7:24-27
5. Rejecter of Jesus, Mark 10:21
6. Experience of Jesus, Matt. 26:39, 42, 44

Part 1
FRIENDS
OF JESUS

What condition for friendship with Him did Jesus state?
"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
John 15:14.

In ordinary human friendships obedience is not a requirement. For one to insist that his friends obey him places a strain on the relationship that will probably destroy it. But the relationship of the believer to Jesus is no ordinary friendship, because Jesus redeemed man. Obedience characterizes the servant-master relationship. But the obedience that Jesus requires is not the blind obedience of a servant. Jesus said (verse 15) that He revealed to them what the Father revealed to Him and therefore they were His friends, not merely His servants. The disciples were to obey Jesus because they understood His requirements. If, knowing Jesus' identity and His requirements, the disciples refused to obey Him, they would thus reject His friendship. Jesus pointed to His heavenly Father as the source of the commands that they were to understand, accept, and obey because they were Jesus' friends.

Jesus placed no burden on the disciples that He Himself had not borne. Jesus said (verse 10) that He had kept His Father's commandments. This was exactly the requirement that He sought to lay upon the disciples.

"We give evidence of being the friends of Christ when we manifest implicit obedience to His will. It is no evidence to say, and do not; but in doing, in obeying, is the evidence. Who are obeying the commandment to love one another as Christ has loved them?"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 691.

"The test is: What are you *doing* for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 188.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do I obey Jesus?

"When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 678.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 668.

Part 2
RELATIVES OF JESUS

"Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. 12:48-50.

Jesus had no lack of love for the members of His family, but He here pointed out that allegiance to the Father supersedes human relationships. A prime purpose of Christ's life was to attract people to do God's will. He taught that if they would respond to His teaching, they would hold a relation to Him that was closer than that of nearest relatives.

How important did Jesus regard the obedience to His Father's will in His own life? John 4:34.

"God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. . . . Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. . . .

"Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 282, 283.

THINK IT THROUGH

"When He gives you the mind of Christ, your will becomes as His will, and your character is transformed to be like Christ's character. Is it your purpose to do God's will? Do you wish to obey the Scriptures?"—"Testimonies," Vol. 5, p. 515.

"There is no such thing as following Christ unless you refuse to gratify inclination and determine to obey God. It is not your feelings, your emotions, that make you a child of God, but the doing of God's will. A life of usefulness is before you if your will becomes God's will. Then you may stand in your God-given manhood, an example of good works. You will then help to maintain rules of discipline instead of helping to break them down. You will then help to maintain order instead of despising it and inciting to irregularity of life by your own course of action. I tell you in the fear of God: I know what you may be if your will is placed on the side of God."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 515.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Work and the Life," pages 77, 78.

Part 3
BELIEVERS
IN JESUS—1

What persons did Jesus say would enter the kingdom?

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
Matt. 7:21-23.

Jesus did not here teach that the doing of the Father's will is the means by which the saved gain an entrance into the kingdom, but only that all those who enter the kingdom have done His will. People are redeemed by Christ. As a result of this redemption they will obey His will. For one to continue in sin, refusing to do God's will, negates redemption. This teaching of Jesus calls attention to two results of salvation by faith: (1) obedience to the heavenly Father, and (2) entrance into the kingdom. Faith must be adequate to accomplish the first result if it is to accomplish the second result.

“A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ they say, ‘and you need not keep the law.’ But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption. The apostle John says, ‘He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’ 1 John 2:4. Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. When persons will speak lightly of the word of God, and set their impressions, feelings, and exercises above the divine standard, we may know that they have no light in them.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 146.

THINK IT THROUGH

“I entreat you who have long professed the faith and who still pay outward homage to Christ: Do not deceive your own souls. It is the whole heart that Jesus prizes. The loyalty of the soul is alone of value in the sight of God.”—“Testimonies,” Vol. 5, p. 73.

“When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 146, 147.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 416, 417.

Part 4
BELIEVERS
IN JESUS—II

Jesus followed His teaching on doing the Father's will with His parable of the houses built on rock and on sand.

Read Matthew 7:24-27.

What is the meaning of building on the rock? Verse 24.

What is the meaning of building on the sand? Verse 26.

"It is not enough, He says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive Me; build on My words."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 314.

"There are many in the church who at heart belong to the world, but God calls upon those who claim to believe the advanced truth, to rise above the present attitude of the popular churches of to-day. Where is the self-denial, where is the cross-bearing that Christ has said should characterize His followers? The reason we have had so little influence upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world. Parents need to awake, and purify their souls by practicing the truth in their home life. When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, strait-laced extremists."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 289.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways am I failing to do what I have heard from Jesus?

"There are two great principles, one of loyalty, the other of disloyalty. We all need greater Christian courage, that we may uplift the standard on which is inscribed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. . . . The line of demarcation between the obedient and the disobedient must be plain and distinct. We must have a firm determination to do the Lord's will at all times and in all places. . . .

"Christian strength is obtained by serving the Lord faithfully. Young men and young women should realize that to be one with Christ is the highest honor to which they can attain. By the strictest fidelity they should strive for moral independence, and this independence they should maintain against every influence that may try to turn them from righteous principles."—*My Life Today*, page 73.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "Not Judging, But Doing," pages 149, 150.

Part 5
REJECTER
OF JESUS

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Mark 10:21.

"Christ made the only terms which could place the ruler where he would perfect a Christian character. His words were words of wisdom, though they appeared severe and exacting. In accepting and obeying them was the ruler's only hope of salvation. His exalted position and his possessions were exerting a subtle influence for evil upon his character. If cherished, they would supplant God in his affections. To keep back little or much from God was to retain that which would lessen his moral strength and efficiency; for if the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 520.

"Christ's dealing with the young man is presented as an object lesson. God has given us the rule of conduct which every one of His servants must follow. It is obedience to His law, not merely a legal obedience, but an obedience which enters into the life, and is exemplified in the character. God has set His own standard of character for all who would become subjects of His kingdom. Only those who will become co-workers with Christ, only those who will say, Lord, all I have and all I am is Thine, will be acknowledged as sons and daughters of God. All should consider what it means to desire heaven, and yet to turn away because of the conditions laid down. Think of what it means to say 'No' to Christ. The ruler said, No, I cannot give You all. Do we say the same? The Saviour offers to share with us the work God has given us to do. He offers to use the means God has given us, to carry forward His work in the world. Only in this way can He save us."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 523.

THINK IT THROUGH

What temptations place me in danger of rejecting Jesus' call to follow Him?

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

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 518-523.

Part 6
EXPERIENCE
OF JESUS

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

"And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." Matt. 26:39, 42, 44.

Jesus obeyed His heavenly Father just as He taught His followers to obey Him. To obey the Father Jesus went through agony and even came to the point of death in Gethsemane. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 693. His Father's will meant more to Jesus than His own existence.

"The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'

"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him, perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: 'If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 690-693.

The whole life of Jesus had been one of obedience to the Father, and the experiences of Gethsemane and then Calvary tested the ultimacy of His commitment to the Father's will. Nothing that Satan or man could do to Jesus could turn Him from obedience to His Father.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I successfully endure all the trials that Satan and people bring upon me?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 687-694.

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Sustained

“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Heb. 2:17.

Through the incarnation Jesus took upon Himself human nature. He was born in human flesh with the weaknesses resident in human nature after centuries in sin. “Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, page 49.

This week’s lesson differs from previous ones by being a presentation of the way in which the Father was reflected in the life of Jesus. Usually during the quarter we have been studying teachings and actions of Jesus that reflected the Father. What Jesus did for, or said to, people showed what the Father was like. But this week we study a truth about God that Jesus made known—a truth growing out of His own personal relationship with the Father. Jesus was a human being, and we can learn what the Father is willing to do for human beings who follow Jesus by seeing what He did for Jesus Himself.

Throughout His earthly life Jesus experienced much trouble—in His family, from His friends, from the government, and from religious leaders. His troubles did not come because God had forsaken Him; and the troubles of Christians do not result because God forsakes them. His troubles came because He was in the enemy’s territory, as are we. Although Jesus was not spared from trouble, His Father sustained Him in every difficulty. And so during this week we shall study Jesus in the kinds of trouble we experience and see Him sustained by the heavenly Father in the same way that the Father is willing to sustain troubled Christians today.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. He Came to His Own, John 1:11**
- 2. Misunderstood Among the People, Matt. 11:19**
- 3. Family and Friends Opposed Him, John 7:5**
- 4. Accused of Blasphemy, John 10:33**
- 5. His Own Betrayed Him, Matt. 26:14, 15**
- 6. His Oneness With Father Sustained Him, John 10:30**

LESSON 9

February 23-March 1

Jesus in Trouble

HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST; © PPPA



Part 1
HE CAME TO
HIS OWN

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."
John 1:11.

Jesus did not come to this earth because the prospect of the incarnation was filled with pleasure for Him. "When the Lord of glory left his station of high command to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, accepting ignominy and death in order to deliver man from the consequence of his disobedience, he did not consult his own convenience or pleasure."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 21, 1876. He came because it was the only way of delivering man from sin and death.

What Old Testament prophecies, for instance, did the Jews misinterpret in order to prove that Jesus was not the promised Messiah? Isa. 24:23; Ps. 72:8.

"Many who were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God were misled by the false reasoning of the priests and rabbis. . . . They made contemptuous comparisons between the glory here pictured [in Isa. 24:33; Ps. 72:8] and the humble appearance of Jesus. The very words of prophecy were so perverted as to sanction error."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 458.

What did His own townspeople at Nazareth do when He returned home for a visit? Luke 4:16, 28-30; cf. John 7:1.

"Across the bright days of Christ's ministry in Galilee, one shadow lay. The people of Nazareth rejected Him. 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' they said."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 236.

After Jesus had fed the five thousand and they were anxious to proclaim Him king, what did Jesus do with the excited crowd? Mark 6:46; cf. John 6:15.

"When Christ forbade the people to declare Him king, He knew that a turning point in His history was reached. Multitudes who desired to exalt Him to the throne today would turn from Him tomorrow. The disappointment of their selfish ambition would turn their love to hatred, and their praise to curses. Yet knowing this, He took no measures to avert the crisis."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 383.

THINK IT THROUGH

If you live in the country or in a small community where people know you, how do your neighbors greet your return after an absence?

"If men could have had the world with Christ, multitudes would have proffered Him their allegiance; but such service He could not accept."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 383.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 383, 384.

Part 2
MISUNDERSTOOD
AMONG THE PEOPLE

In His eating habits, of what was Jesus accused by the people?

"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children." Matt. 11:19.

John the Baptist had dressed very simply and had been abstemious in his eating habits. His diet consisted of "locusts and wild honey." Mark 1:6. The Jews, condemned by his simple eating habits, said he was devil possessed. See Matthew 11:18. When Jesus came and socialized over the well-spread table, the same people showed their unreasonableness by accusing Him of gluttony.

Jesus was indeed a friend of publicans and sinners. "Our Saviour never turned away from the truly penitent, no matter how great their guilt."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Jan. 11, 1881. Wherever there was a receptive heart, Jesus went irrespective of the criticism His enemies would bring against Him. He did associate and eat with the publicans and sinners. See Matt. 9:9 and Luke 19:5. The acceptance of salvation by such justified His sociability.

How did some Jews impugn His integrity? John 7:12.

Being the truth personified (see John 14:6), Jesus was still accused of deception. He was an honest person surrounded by a people preponderantly false and deceptive. He was endeavoring to deliver them from the entanglements of dishonesty and insincerity.

What did the apostle John, later in his book of Revelation, repeatedly call Jesus? Rev. 3:14; 1:5; 19:11; 22:6.

In our conversations we often use the phrases "I think," "I believe," "I presume," since we are not absolutely sure whether or not our report is true. Jesus does not employ these phrases; He knows, and what He says is reliable and true and without equivocation.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I regard the teachings of Jesus? Do I accept them as completely true and valid, or do I also suggest that some of what He says is not really so?

"The voice of the True Witness has been heard in reproof, but has not been obeyed. Men have chosen to follow their own way instead of God's way because self was not crucified in them."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 720.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels on Diet and Foods, pages 53, 54.

**Part 3
FAMILY
AND FRIENDS
OPPOSED HIM**

"For neither did his brethren believe in him." John 7:5. His brothers did not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, but "from the day when she heard the angel's announcement in the home at Nazareth Mary had treasured every evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. His sweet, unselfish life assured her that He could be no other than the Sent of God. Yet there came to her also doubts and disappointments, and she had longed for the time when His glory should be revealed."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 145.

What did His friends think of Him when they saw and heard of His activities? Mark 3:21.

"The sons of Joseph were far from being in sympathy with Jesus in His work. The reports that reached them in regard to His life and labors filled them with astonishment and dismay. They heard that He devoted entire nights to prayer, that through the day He was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give Himself time so much as to eat. His friends felt that He was wearing Himself out by His incessant labor; they were unable to account for His attitude toward the Pharisees, and there were some who feared that His reason was becoming unsettled."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 321.

"The enmity kindled in the human heart against the gospel was keenly felt by the Son of God, and it was most painful to Him in His home; for His own heart was full of kindness and love, and He appreciated tender regard in the family relation. His brothers desired that He should concede to their ideas, when such a course would have been utterly out of harmony with His divine mission. They looked upon Him as in need of their counsel."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 326.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you react if your own brothers and sisters and other relatives turned against you and thought you were insane when you complied with God's will for you?

"What a support Christ would have found in His earthly relatives if they had believed in Him as one from heaven, and had co-operated with Him in doing the work of God! Their unbelief cast a shadow over the earthly life of Jesus. It was a part of the bitterness of that cup of woe which He drained for us."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 325.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 326, 327.

Part 4
ACCUSED OF
BLASPHEMY

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John 10:33.

Arrogating to oneself, or to man, powers, privileges, or prerogatives that belong solely to God is blasphemy. Not knowing that Jesus was God, or refusing to accept Him as God among men, the Jews customarily accused Him of blasphemy when He forgave sins (see Matt. 9:23; Luke 7:47-49) or claimed oneness or identity with His Father (see John 8:58, 59).

At the time of Jesus' trial before the high priest Caiaphas, of what was Jesus again accused and why? Matt. 26:63-66.

Jesus was the Son of God, and He guarded His Father's name and honor. But for confessing His relationship to His Father He was repeatedly accused of blasphemy.

"This is one of the times when Christ publicly confessed His claim to be the Messiah, the One for whom the Jews had long looked. Weighted with such great results, it was to Christ one of the most wonderful moments of His life. He realized that all disguise must be swept away. The declaration that He was one with God must be openly made. His judges looked upon Him as only a man, and they thought Him guilty of blasphemous presumption. But He proclaimed Himself as the Son of God. He fully asserted His divine character before the dignitaries who arraigned Him before their earthly tribunal. His words, spoken calmly, yet with conscious power, showed that He claimed for Himself the prerogatives of the Son of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1104.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my attitude toward Jesus when He speaks to me in words of quiet authority because He is God?

"So perverted had the priesthood become that when Christ declared Himself the Son of God, Caiaphas, in pretended horror, rent his robe, and accused the Holy One of Israel of blasphemy.

"Many today who claim to be Christians are in danger of rending their garments, making an outward show of repentance, when their hearts are not softened nor subdued. This is why so many continue to make failures in the Christian life. An outward appearance of sorrow is shown for wrong, but their repentance is not that which needs not to be repented of."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1104, 1105.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 704-708.

**Part 5
HIS OWN
BETRAYED HIM**

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." Matt. 26:14, 15.

This meeting of Judas with the leaders of the Jews took place after Jesus had tacitly rebuked Judas at the feast in Simon's house. There He commended Mary for her generous deed of anointing His feet with ointment after Judas had severely censured her for what he considered a wasteful act. "The reproach rankled in his heart. He determined to be revenged. From the supper he went directly to the palace of the high priest, where he found the council assembled, and he offered to betray Jesus into their hands."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 563, 564. Now it only remained for Judas to find a suitable place and time to fulfill the agreement and deliver Jesus into their hands. This he did in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Matt. 26:47-55.

What did all the disciples do after Judas had betrayed their Master? Matt. 26:56.

Jesus in accordance with the prophecy was left to tread the winepress alone. See Isa. 63:3. But this was not the first time Jesus had felt lonely.

"The disciples were terrified as they saw Jesus permit Himself to be taken and bound. They were offended that He should suffer this humiliation to Himself and them. They could not understand His conduct, and they blamed Him for submitting to the mob. In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, 'they all forsook Him, and fled.' But Christ had foretold this desertion. 'Behold,' He had said, 'the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.' John 16:32."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 697.

Which other disciple later denied His Master? Matt. 26:69-75.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do I also, through my acts and words, betray and deny my Master?

"The loneliness of Christ, separated from the heavenly courts, living the life of humanity, was never understood or appreciated by the disciples as it should have been."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 565.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 695-697.

Part 6

**HIS ONENESS WITH
FATHER SUS-
TAINED HIM**

"I and my Father are one." John 10:30.

"The Father and the Son each have a personality,"—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 68, but Jesus was one with the Father "in nature, in will, and in purpose."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 208.

From the preceding parts of this lesson it is evident that Jesus often met disappointment and trouble. But in the experience of Jesus these did not result in discouragement. No disappointment, no enmity, no trial—nothing—separated Jesus from His Father. They were one "in nature, in will, and in purpose."

"As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 678.

Even when His earthly mission was nearly complete, what did His disciples still fail to understand? Acts 1:6; cf. Matt. 16:21; 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34.

"Just before leaving His disciples, Christ once more plainly stated the nature of His kingdom. He recalled to their remembrance things He had previously told them regarding it. He declared that it was not His purpose to establish in this world a temporal kingdom. He was not appointed to reign as an earthly monarch on David's throne."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 30.

How was it possible for Jesus to bear up amid this constant loneliness when no one, not even His disciples, understood Him? Isa. 26:3; 48:18; Ps. 119:165.

Jesus was constantly misunderstood by His friends; His enemies impugned His motives. Still He possessed complete peace of mind. The secret of this repose of mind amid constant conflicts was His undisturbed unity, or oneness, with His Father.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I cultivated such a friendship and intimacy with God that I can, like Jesus, be sustained by Him when all others forsake me?

"Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 664.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 486, 663, 664.



GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Heals People

“And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:31, 32.

“It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God’s law, but this truth had become perverted.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 471.

Although illness and suffering are the results of sin, they are often not the results of personal sin or wrongdoing. Rather they are the cumulative results of the sins of mankind.

As Jesus came to take away sin, so He also came to eliminate the results of sin. He came as a physician to heal the maladies of men. The scope of His healing ministry embraced both the physical and the spiritual.

“Christ was bound up in all branches of the work. He did not make any division. He did not feel that He was infringing on physicians when He healed the sick. He proclaimed the truth, and when the sick came to Him for healing, He asked them if they believed that He could make them whole. He was just as ready to lay His hands on the sick and afflicted as He was to preach the gospel. He was just as much at home in this work as in proclaiming the truth; for healing the sick is a part of the gospel.”—*Medical Ministry*, pages 237, 238.

Thus Jesus showed to the world that the Father is not the source of illness and suffering. He desires the health of every person.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Health—God’s Intention, 3 John 2**
2. **Nobleman’s Son Healed, John 4:46, 47**
3. **Boy Below Mount of Transfiguration, Mark 9:17, 18**
4. **Infirm Woman, Luke 13:11-13**
5. **The Gadarene Demoniacs, Mark 5:1-3**
6. **The Man at the Pool of Bethesda, John 5:2-9**

Part 1
HEALTH—GOD'S
INTENTION

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." 3 John 2.

"When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him.

"Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 113.

What was God's ideal plan for His people in Old Testament times? Ex. 15:26; 23:25; Deut. 7:15.

Many people erroneously differentiate between Jesus and the God of the Old Testament. In many instances God, or the Lord of the Old Testament, was Jesus personally. Where this is not the case, it is well to remember that although God the Father and God the Son are different persons, They are one in plans, purposes, and motives. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 208.

"Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The Great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them. 'If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,' He said, 'and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.' Ex. 15:26. Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, 'The Lord will take away from thee all sickness.' Deut. 7:15. When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. 'There was not one feeble person among their tribes.' Ps. 105:37."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 824.

THINK IT THROUGH

The laws of health are the laws of God.

"These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 824.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 824, 825.

Part 2
NOBLEMAN'S
SON HEALED

What did a certain nobleman ask Jesus to do?

"When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death." John 4:47.

How did Jesus counter his request? John 4:48.

"Notwithstanding all the evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the petitioner had determined to make his belief in Him conditional on the granting of his own request. . . .

"Yet the nobleman had a degree of faith; for he had come to ask what seemed to him the most precious of all blessings. Jesus had a greater gift to bestow. He desired, not only to heal the child, but to make the officer and his household sharers in the blessings of salvation, and to kindle a light in Capernaum, which was so soon to be the field of His own labors. But the nobleman must realize his need before he would desire the grace of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 198.

Realizing that his son's life was at stake due to his own wavering faith, what was the nobleman's further request? John 4:49.

"Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. In an agony of supplication he cried, 'Sir, come down ere my child die.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 198.

What was Jesus' response to his cry of faith? John 4:50.

"His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, 'I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.' Gen. 32:26."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 198.

Do I at times make my belief in God dependent on the fulfillment of certain requests? What is wrong with such an attitude?

"The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 198.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 197-200.

THINK IT THROUGH

Part 3
BOY BELOW
MOUNT OF
TRANSFIGURATION

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." Mark 9:17, 18.

"Authority over unclean spirits, to call them out, had been conferred on the disciples when Jesus sent out the twelve to preach through Galilee."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 427. But on this occasion, because of their unbelief, the disciples were unable to exorcise the evil spirit despite the Master's conferment of power.

The boy's father, noticing the inability of the disciples to drive out the evil spirit from his boy, was prone to believe that Jesus Himself would be unable to cure his son. Nevertheless, he brought him to Jesus and said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Mark 9:22.

Upon what did Jesus make the boy's healing dependent? Mark 9:23.

What was the father's desperately earnest response to Jesus' disclosure? Mark 9:24.

The father threw himself fully upon the mercy of Jesus, confessing his weakness and helplessness, but pleading with Jesus to supply his need of faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

On this particular occasion who manifested more faith—the nine disciples below the mountain or the father of the sick boy?

"The selection of the three disciples to accompany Jesus to the mountain had excited the jealousy of the nine. Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances. In this state of darkness they had undertaken the conflict with Satan.

"In order to succeed in such a conflict they must come to the work in a different spirit. Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart. They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God. Earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unre-served consecration to His work—can alone avail to bring men the Holy Spirit's aid in battle against principalities and powers."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 431.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 426-431.

Part 4
INFIRM WOMAN

"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Luke 13:11-13.

In this instance of healing there is no mention that the woman requested Jesus to heal her, but Jesus noticed her infirmity and wanted to heal her. This is the character of Jesus and also of the Father.

The compassion of Jesus was touched by illness and deformity. He delighted in setting men and women free from Satan's bonds, as He set this woman free. See verse 16. During His public ministry "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. About them were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house; for He had passed through them, and healed all their sick."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 241.

Yet His compassion sought more than physical care; He longed to cure the soul and enable the person restored to health to see and acknowledge God as Lord of life and Jesus as Saviour from sin.

What was the woman's response to her miraculous healing? Luke 13:13.

Her cure was complete. Deliverance from physical malady turned her eyes and attention to God, whom she now glorified. She wanted to serve Him in her new-found health. This woman through her healing "was made straight" not merely in body but also in soul.

Jesus called her "a daughter of Abraham." Verse 16. To a Jew that was tantamount to being called a "child of heaven." All of us likewise were created to be children of heaven and of God, not children of sin and of Satan.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I use my health—to serve sin and Satan or to glorify God?

"Health is a treasure. Of all temporal possession it is the most precious. Wealth, learning, and honor are dearly purchased at the loss of the vigor of health. None of these can secure happiness, if health is lacking. It is a terrible sin to abuse the health that God has given us."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 20.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels on Health, pages 504, 505.

Part 5
THE GADARENE
DEMONIACS

"And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains." Mark 5:1-3.

Read also Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39.

Matthew, undoubtedly an eyewitness to this event, mentions two men, while Mark and Luke speak of only one. Probably one of the demoniacs had been reported to them as being outrageously savage and fierce.

Even though demon-possessed, what did the man apparently faintly realize and desire to do; but what words came from his lips? Mark 5:6, 7.

What command did Jesus give to the demons, and what was the effect? Mark 5:8, 13.

"With authority He bade the unclean spirits come out of them. His words penetrated the darkened minds of the unfortunate men. They realized dimly that One was near who could save them from the tormenting demons. They fell at the Saviour's feet to worship Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 337, 338.

After the men had been delivered from demon possession, what did they desire to do and what was Jesus' advice to them? Mark 5:18-20.

"As Jesus was about to enter the boat, they kept close to His side, knelt at His feet, and begged Him to keep them near Him, where they might ever listen to His words. But Jesus bade them go home and tell what great things the Lord had done for them."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 339.

THINK IT THROUGH

Consider the cost of 2,000 swine sacrificed for the conversion of two poor men. What do you conclude?

"The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to preach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. . . . They bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 340.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 337-341.

Part 6
MAN AT THE POOL
OF BETHESDA

Read John 5:2-9.

Jesus healed the man who had been ill thirty-eight years. When the man carried his bed on the Sabbath, Jesus was brought into conflict with the religious leaders. Some of the statements Jesus made during this conflict present thoughts that advance the central concept of this week's lesson.

Who had healed the sick man? John 5:17.

What was the relation between Jesus and His Father in healing this man? John 5:19.

Jesus' act of healing was really the act of the heavenly Father. As Jesus desired the health of those about Him, so the Father desires the health of the people of this world. He is a sympathetic healer and never the cause of people's illnesses. If we would understand the relation of the heavenly Father to disease, we must see Jesus in His healing ministry. The following quotation from Ellen G. White has reference to the things of nature and not specifically to human disease and health, but the principles expressed are applicable to man and his illness.

"The God of nature is perpetually at work. His infinite power works unseen, but manifestations appear in the effects which the work produces. The same God who guides the planets works in the fruit orchard and in the vegetable garden. He never made a thorn, a thistle, or a tare. These are Satan's work, the result of degeneration, introduced by him among the precious things; but it is through God's immediate agency that every bud bursts into blossom. When He was in the world in the form of humanity, Christ said: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' John 5:17."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, pp. 186, 187.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God desires the health of all, why are not all well?

"There are cases where God works decidedly by His divine power in the restoration of health. But not all the sick are healed. Many are laid away to sleep in Jesus. John on the Isle of Patmos was bidden to write: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.' Revelation 14:13. From this we see that if persons are not raised to health, they should not on this account be judged as wanting in faith.

"We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 230, 231.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 202, 203.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6, 7.

"God gave His Son to die for sinful human beings a death of ignominy and shame. He who was Commander in the heavenly courts laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothing His divinity with humanity, came to this world to stand at the head of the human race, as the pattern-man. He humbled Himself to suffer with the race, to be afflicted in all their afflictions.

"The whole world was His, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 904.

Self-denial by the Godhead had a broader significance even than being a means of helping man. Ellen White wrote: "The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe, and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 974.

"He [Satan] had accused God of seeking merely the exaltation of Himself in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, and had declared that, while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, He Himself practiced no self-denial and made no sacrifice. Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make; for 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' 2 Corinthians 5:19. It was seen, also, that while Lucifer had opened the door for the entrance of sin by his desire for honor and supremacy, Christ had, in order to destroy sin, humbled Himself and become obedient unto death."—*The Great Controversy*, page 502.

LESSON OUTLINE

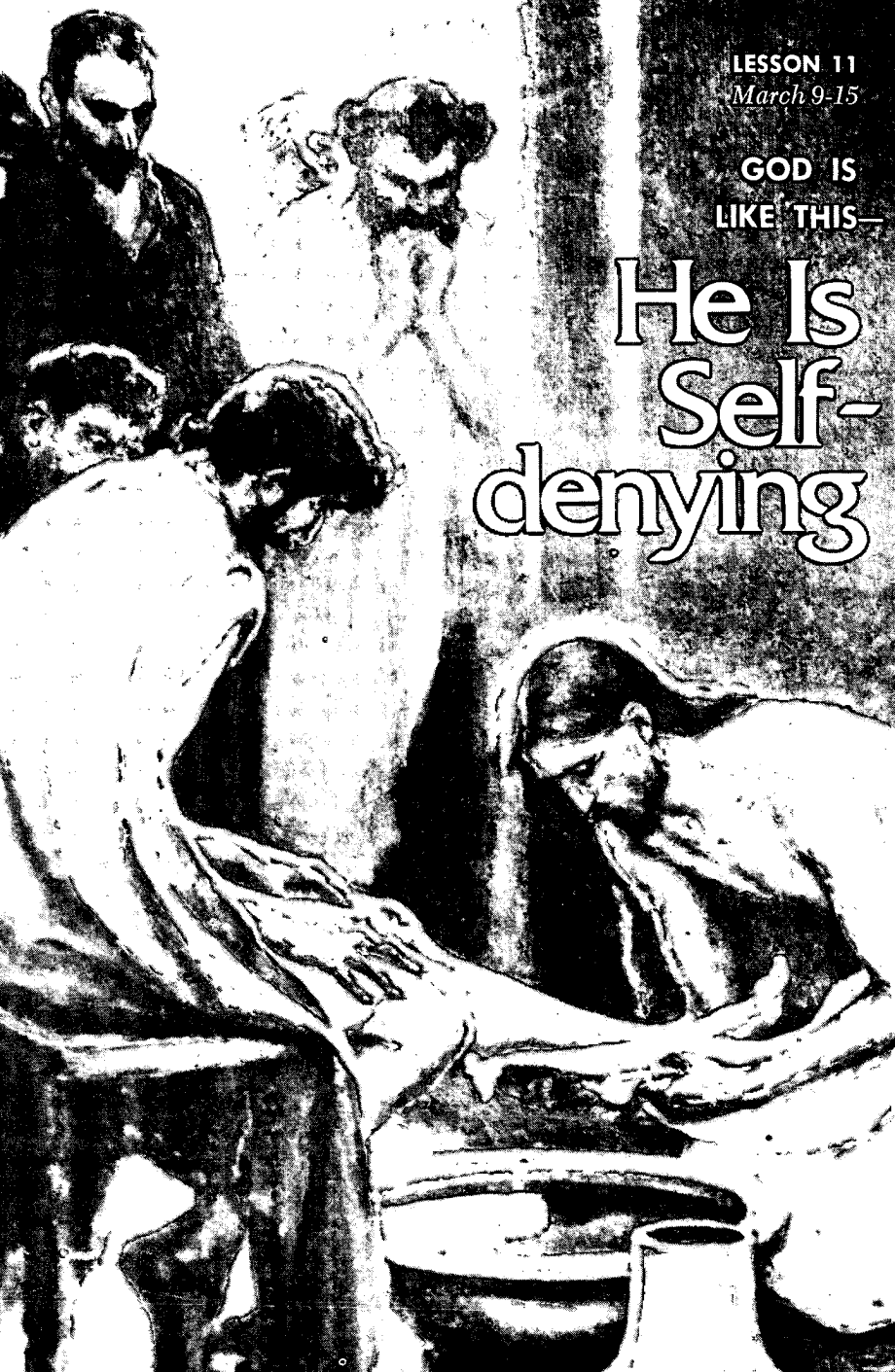
1. **Jesus Relinquished Equality With God, Phil. 2:6, 7**
2. **Jesus Came as a Servant, Mark 10:45**
3. **Jesus Served at Lord's Supper, John 13:3-5**
4. **Jesus Came to Die for Man, Heb. 10:7**
5. **Jesus' Death, Luke 23:46**
6. **God Was in Christ, 2 Cor. 5:18, 19**

LESSON 11

March 9-15

GOD IS
LIKE THIS—

He Is Self- denying



Part 1
JESUS RELIN-
QUISHED EQUALITY
WITH GOD

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:6, 7.

"God is love." 1 John 4:8. "Infinite love—how great it is! God made the world to enlarge heaven. He desires a larger family of created intelligences."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, p. 1081.

When His plan for man's happiness miscarried through Satan's deception and man's fall, God did not rest passively. The second Person in the Godhead decided to go in search of man.

To what depth of ignominy did He stoop to rescue man from his pit of degradation and misery and restore him to his pristine position? Phil. 2:8.

"Jesus' obedience was rendered to the extent of laying down His life. It was humiliation indeed for God to become man; and then, being man, to die a shameful death on the cross. . . .

"The emphasis is not only on the fact that Christ died but on the kind of death. It was a death that involved intense shame as well as intense suffering. Crucifixion was reserved for slaves, non-Romans, and the lowest criminals. It was a death upon which the law of Moses had pronounced a curse (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13), and even the Gentiles considered it the most foul and cruel of all punishments. The message of a crucified Christ was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23)."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Phil. 2:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent of self-denial am I willing to go to save a soul for God's kingdom?

"Laying aside his royal robe and kingly crown, Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that human beings might be raised from their degradation, and placed on vantage-ground. Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that he had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. He veiled His divinity with the garb of humanity, but he did not part with his divinity. A divine-human Saviour, he came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood. That human beings might be partakers of the divine nature, he came to this earth, and lived a life of perfect obedience."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 15, 1905.

FURTHER STUDY

The Story of Redemption, pages 42-45.

Part 2
JESUS CAME AS
A SERVANT

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45.

In heaven Jesus was the ruler of the heavenly host. All power and all majesty were His. It was the greatest joy of un-fallen angels to execute His every bidding and wish. Daily fellow-ship with His Father was His joy and delight.

In coming to this earth Jesus left all this. He came to work out man's salvation through arduous toil.

"Jesus was a silent and unselfish worker. He did not seek fame, riches, or applause; neither did he consult his own ease and pleasure. When the day's labor was done, and he had dismissed his disciples that they might seek needed rest, he often retired to the lonely mountain or the silent grove, and spent the night in prayer, offering up his petitions with strong crying and tears. Not for himself were those vigils kept, but for those he came to save. He was standing between the living and the dead."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Jan. 6, 1885.

How does Christ's pattern of greatness differ from that common in the world? Mark 10:42-44; cf. Luke 22:25-27.

"On earth, men in positions of authority tend to 'lord it over' those under them. But among the citizens of the heavenly kingdom, power, position, talent, and education are to be devoted exclusively to serving others, and may never be used as levers to lord it over others. . . .

"He who is greatest will serve others most unselfishly. Apparently, the approval of Jesus rests upon the desire to 'be great' in terms of serving instead of dominating."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Matt. 20:26.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my concept of greatness? Do I use the scale of the world or that of God when I think of it?

"If intellectual greatness, apart from any higher consideration, is worthy of honor, then our homage is due to Satan, whose intellectual power no man has ever equaled. But when perverted to self-serving, the greater the gift, the greater curse it becomes. It is moral worth that God values. Love and purity are the attributes He prizes most. John was great in the sight of the Lord, when, before the messengers from the Sanhedrin, before the people, and before his own disciples, he refrained from seeking honor for himself, but pointed all to Jesus as the Promised One. His unselfish joy in the ministry of Christ presents the highest type of nobility ever revealed in man."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 219.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 437.

Part 3
JESUS SERVED AT
LORD'S SUPPER

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." John 13:3-5.

At the Passover service Jesus aptly illustrated His teachings about true greatness. Prior to this Jesus had told them that He had come in among them as a servant rather than as a master. But this may have been difficult for the disciples to visualize. After all, He was still their Master, and they were obviously servants. It was they who had arranged the people at the feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand and had distributed the bread and fish to the crowds. But at the Passover meal Jesus verily assumed a servant's position by washing their feet. This menial act they all understood as a servant's part.

What was Peter's reaction to his Master's humble position as a servant among them? John 13:6, 8.

"As the disciples watched Christ's action, they were greatly moved. When Peter's turn came, he exclaimed with astonishment, 'Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?' Christ's condescension broke his heart. He was filled with shame to think that one of the disciples was not performing this service. 'What I do,' Christ said, 'thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant. His whole soul rose up against this humiliation. He did not realize that for this Christ came into the world. With great emphasis he exclaimed, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 645, 646.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I, as a follower of Jesus, willing to serve humbly in any capacity, or am I eagerly looking and campaigning for positions of authority where I can tell others what to do?

"In His life and lessons, Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering for others."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 649.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 646-649.

Part 4
JESUS CAME TO
DIE FOR MAN

"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." Heb. 10:7.

This was the ready response of Jesus, the second Person in the Godhead, to execute the plan of salvation. "Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, 'Lo, I come.' 'Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.' Heb. 10:5-7. In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 23.

What impelled Jesus to go on a mission that would ultimately demand His life? Isa. 53:11.

The thoughts and attention of Jesus as He undertook His descent to this earth were not focused on the arduous work and gruesome suffering He would have to endure. He looked beyond the immediate and visualized the reward of His labors at the fulfillment of the plan of salvation. In this way He endured with fortitude the adversities and the trials.

"What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 601.

Where is our attention generally focused—on the possible present trials or on the victory and glory at the end of life's sojourn?

"Christ can look upon the misery of the world without a shade of sorrow for having created man. In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery. In His infinite wisdom and love He sees man's possibilities, the height to which he may attain. He knows that, even though human beings have abused their mercies and destroyed their God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 269.

"If but one soul would have accepted the gospel of His grace, Christ would, to save that one, have chosen His life of toil and humiliation and His death of shame. If through our efforts one human being shall be uplifted and ennobled, fitted to shine in the courts of the Lord, have we not cause for rejoicing?"—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 135.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, page 504.

Part 5
JESUS' DEATH

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Luke 23:46.

Read also Matthew 27:46, 50.

Jesus had come to do His Father's will. It was God's will—the will of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—that Jesus die in man's stead. There was no escape. Someone had to die for the departure from God's will. For repentant man to be entitled to live, Jesus must take his place.

What did the Jewish priests and leaders mockingly say that Jesus was unable to do? Mark 15:31.

Jesus could not save Himself and us also. He could have saved Himself only at the cost of leaving us, or man, in the lurch. He could not save both. One must die. He chose to die that we might be saved. The priests were unwittingly proclaiming the truth about Jesus' situation.

"Save yourself, He cannot save himself—has great interest as being a judgment in the only terms these people knew, self-preservation. They could not conceive of any other than the selfish motive of saving oneself. The only test they knew of life was whether it worked out to the gain of self. They could not conceive the supreme success of losing it in sacrifice, of giving it as ransom, of being unable to save self just because others were being saved by that very inability. So on that basis they said, 'You see, the fool was wrong. He could not save himself.'

"People who have only one small yardstick with which to measure life are always scornful of the Christian gospel and the Christian faith. Weighed on the scale of 'miserable aims that end in self,' the teaching of Jesus is found wanting. It does not work for self-aggrandizement or self-saving. It brings a new measurement. God weighs life on a different scale."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7, p. 906.

THINK IT THROUGH

By what scale do I measure success?

"Jesus, suffering and dying, heard every word as the priests declared, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Christ could have come down from the cross. But it is because He would not save Himself that the sinner has hope of pardon and favor with God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 749.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 746-749.

**Part 6
GOD WAS
IN CHRIST**

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18, 19.

In the work of redeeming man, Jesus, the second Person in the Godhead, was not alone. The plan of salvation, or the work of atonement was a joint enterprise on the part of the three Persons in the Godhead. But in the divine economy Jesus was chosen to come to this earth as our Redeemer. Colossians 1:20-23, NEB, well expresses it in these words: "Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross—to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone. . . . This is the gospel which has been proclaimed in the whole creation under heaven."

"All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him."—*Education*, page 263.

How did the heavens express their shame and sorrow at the gruesome spectacle of seeing their Creator die? Matt. 27:45.

"With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 753.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I appreciate Christ's salvation as I ought, or do I fail to do so since I do not realize its costliness?

"Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' 2 Cor. 5:19."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 762.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 753-757, 761.

“As regards our responsibility and influence, we are amenable to God as deriving our life from Him. This we do not obtain from humanity, but from God only. We are His by creation and by redemption. . . . He is caring for us every moment; He keeps the living machinery in action; if we are left to run it for one moment, we should die. We are absolutely dependent upon God.”

—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 422, 423.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Jesus Is Life**, John 5:26; 1:4
2. **Jesus Restored Physical Life**, Luke 7:12-15; John 11:43, 44
3. **Jesus Came to Offer Us Life**, John 10:10
4. **Eternal Life, Ours in Christ**, John 10:27, 28
5. **We Accept Jesus Through His Word**, John 6:63
6. **Jesus and Father Are One**, John 10:30

GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Gives Life

"And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." John 12:50.

Both Jesus and the Father desire that man shall have eternal life. The Father, is not a hard-hearted judge who must be persuaded by Jesus to give eternal life to the believer. Rather, Jesus indicated in the above verse that the everlasting life of the believer was the commandment of the Father. The instances in which Jesus raised dead persons to life reflect to us the attitude of the heavenly Father toward the dead. He desires men to be alive and not dead, and He has promised eternal life to those who believe in Jesus. The fear of death is a symptom of a lack of faith. This lack of faith can be either a doubt of God's power to restore one to life, or a lack of faith in Jesus for the cleansing from sin by which eternal life is conferred.

Our faith in the heavenly Father can be strengthened by a correct understanding of the Bible and by grasping the significance of the teachings and acts of Jesus. "The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy intelligences, all waiting to do His will. Through channels which we cannot discern He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. But it is in this speck of a world, in the souls that He gave His only-begotten Son to save, that His interest and the interest of all heaven is centered. God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, 'Here am I.' He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver.

"Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Satan's hatred against God leads him to hate every object of the Saviour's care. He seeks to mar the handiwork of God, and he delights in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God's protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. 'Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.' "

—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 356, 357.

Part 1
JESUS IS LIFE **"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."**

"In him [Jesus] was life; and the life was the light of men." John 5:26; 1:4.

See also John 14:6; 11:25.

In speaking about man we may correctly say that he has life. There are dead men as well as living men. This signifies that a man may possess life, while another man may be dead or no longer possess life. In speaking about God and Jesus, it is more correct to say *They are life*. In the Old Testament, when Moses asked God at the time of the Exodus what His name was and how he might introduce Him to the Israelites, "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Ex. 3:14. This expresses the nature of His existence—He has life in and of Himself.

What words did Jesus use in His dispute with the Jews that hint that He did not merely possess life, as they did then, but was the source of life? John 8:58.

"The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.' Micah 5:2, margin."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 469, 470.

THINK IT THROUGH **How can I increase my faith in Jesus as the source of life?**

"The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 530.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. This life is what we must have, and we must have it *more abundantly*. God will breathe this life into every soul that dies to self and lives to Christ. But entire self-renunciation is required. Unless this takes place, we carry with us the evil that destroys our happiness. But when self is crucified, Christ lives in us, and the power of the Spirit attends our efforts."—*Our High Calling*, page 21.

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 469, 470.

Part 2
JESUS RESTORED
PHYSICAL LIFE

"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city [Nain], behold, there was a dead man carried out. . . . And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." Luke 7:12-15.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." John 11:43, 44.

Read also Luke 8:49-55.

On these occasions Jesus restored physical life. But Jesus would like us to envision more than life on this earth. The three persons raised from the dead by Jesus rose only to die again. It is His purpose that man shall live not only for time but for eternity.

Jesus was, or rather is, life. No death could enter where Jesus was present in person. "Had Christ been in the sick-room, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 528.

What did Jesus assure Martha that He is? John 11:25.

On another occasion what did Jesus also declare that He is? John 14:6.

As Christians we should aim to live for eternity and at the same time be a means of preservation of men's physical life. Daniel filled such a mission among the magicians of Babylon. See Dan. 2:24. Paul on board ship for Rome did likewise. See Acts 27:23, 24, 37, 44. But we should go beyond the preservation of physical life and become instrumental in saving men also for eternity.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I living so close to God that I may be instrumental in saving some from physical death as did Daniel and Paul? Remember that Jonah's presence among the mariners nearly caused their death. See Jonah 1:14-16.

"The cry of Christ to the thirsty soul is still going forth, and it appeals to us with even greater power than to those who heard it in the temple on that last day of the feast. The fountain is open for all. The weary and exhausted ones are offered the refreshing draught of eternal life."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 454.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, on Matt. 5:30, pages 60-63.

Part 3
JESUS CAME TO
OFFER US LIFE

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10.

Were Adam and Eve created mortal or immortal? Gen. 2:16, 17.

In the beginning God gave life to Adam and Eve. It was not immortal life, but conditional immortality.

How can sinful man regain the eternal life he forfeited? John 3:15, 16.

Our physical life is a gift of God. "His energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of His creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy that the pulse beats and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart, is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being.' Acts 17:28."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 115.

"'Life' includes the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Physical life is regarded as abundant in a body that is full of vigor and in perfect health. Jesus' miracles of physical healing gave an abundant physical life to those whose life forces were ebbing. But physical restoration was by no means the complete fulfillment of Jesus' mission. Man also has intellectual and spiritual life, which must also be made alive and abundant, for 'man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord' (Deut. 8:3). Important as the physical and the intellectual aspects of a well-rounded life are, no life is fully complete unless the spiritual nature is nurtured."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 10:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the Biblical distinction between being alive and having eternal life? See John 6:54.

"The sapless branch, ingrafted into the living vine, becomes a part of the vine. It lives while united to the vine. So the Christian lives by virtue of his union with Christ. The sinful and human is linked to the holy and divine. The believing soul abides in Christ, and becomes one with Him. When persons are closely united in the relations of this life, their tastes become similar, they come to love the same things. So those who abide in Christ will love the things which He loves. They will sacredly cherish and obey His commandments."—*Our High Calling*, page 145.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 786, 787.

Part 4
ETERNAL LIFE,
OURS IN CHRIST

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John 10:27, 28.

"Life. zōē, here used in its theological sense, equivalent to eternal life. When Adam and Eve were created they possessed zōē, but lost it when they sinned. True, their physical life was extended, but they were no longer conditionally immortal. . . . Jesus came to restore the zōē that Adam had forfeited."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 10:10.

Jesus came that we might have life and that we "might have it more abundantly"—life, not merely this present life, but the eternal life that God originally purposed that man should enjoy.

Eternal life is represented in the Bible as "being granted to the believer at the moment he accepts his Lord (1 John 3:14; 5:11, 12; cf. DA 388). This gift the overcomer never loses. Physical dissolution at death and the state of unconsciousness between death and the resurrection do not deprive him of the gift. His life continues to be 'hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3) to be translated into glorious immortality on the resurrection morn."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 8:51.

How only can this eternal life be obtained? John 3:3-7.

In commenting upon Jesus' words to Nicodemus that he "must be born again," E. G. White says: "Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 171.

THINK IT THROUGH

Most everyone is eager to preserve and sustain physical life, but how anxious am I to obtain eternal life?

"Like Israel of old, the wicked destroy themselves; they fall by their iniquity. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, their natures have become so debased with evil, that the manifestation of His glory is to them a consuming fire."—*The Great Controversy*, page 37.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 171, 172.

Part 5
WE ACCEPT JESUS
THROUGH HIS WORD

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

Basically, we learn to know Jesus through the Word, the Bible, as it is illuminated or made alive to us through the Holy Spirit. There is indeed a personal illumination or an existentialist experience, but the personal illumination must be constantly checked by the Written Word so that the personal illumination will be in harmony with the objective or historical revelation contained in the Bible. Only in this way can we be sure that our personal illumination is of divine origin. Satan is today vigilant in tearing down confidence in the Written Word and substituting for it belief in alleged personal revelations from God, which diverge from the teachings of the Bible.

On what occasions did Jesus manifest His confidence in the written revelation rather than relying on a personal revelation? Luke 16:31; cf. Matt. 4:4 and Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:7 and Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:10 and Deut. 6:13.

"The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.

"The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. 'By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4) shall man live."—*Education*, page 126.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I esteem it as great a privilege to commune with God and Jesus through the Bible as I would to speak to Them face to face?

"By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. . . . As they [God's people] feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 391.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pages 125-127.

Part 6
JESUS AND
FATHER ARE ONE

"I and my Father are one." John 10:30.

Many other languages, including the Greek in which this verse was originally written, make it plain that "one" in this verse does not denote one person, but rather one in substance, essence, or nature. God the Father and God the Son are one and the same in nature. Thus, as the Father has life in Himself, so the Son has life in Himself. "In Christ is life, original, un-borrowed, underived."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 530.

How was this oneness of Jesus with His Father reflected in His words and deeds? John 12:49; 5:19.

Jesus spoke and acted in complete harmony with His Father's will. In heaven they had been one "from the days of eternity."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 19. When He came to this earth as a man, He continued to speak and act in harmony with His Father's will.

From Christ's infancy to His death on the cross Satan repeatedly tried to shatter this divine oneness. But even as a man, Jesus was completely loyal to His Father by surrendering His will to His Father's will moment by moment.

"From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity. 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same' (Heb. 2:14). Only through Him can we become children of God. To all who believe on Him, He gives power to become the sons of God. Thus the heart becomes the temple of the living God. It is because Christ took human nature that men and women become partakers of the divine nature. He brings life and immortality to light through the gospel."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 228.

THINK IT THROUGH

In your concept of God the Father and God the Son, are they alike in character and attitude toward man, or do they differ?

"As the severed branch, leafless, and apparently lifeless, is ingrafted into the living stock, and, fiber by fiber, and vein by vein, drinks in the life and strength of the vine until it buds and blossoms and bears fruit, even so may the sinner, by repentance and faith, connect himself with Christ, become a partaker of the divine nature, and bring forth in words and deeds the fruit of a holy life."—*Our High Calling*, page 145.

FURTHER STUDY

Our High Calling, pages 144, 145.



GOD IS LIKE THIS—

He Desires People's Freedom

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

People often view God as a manipulator of the human will. But such manipulation is a characteristic of Satan, not of God. Sometimes God may appear as coercing people, but such appearances are not the reality. Jesus reflects the Father in this respect as He reflects Him in other characteristics. In the Gospels, Jesus' relationship to people can be seen to be requesting, pleading, and teaching. He forthrightly disavowed the use of force to deliver Himself from His persecutors. Concerning Christ's arrest, E. G. White wrote: "They [the disciples] were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his anger rashly drew his sword and tried to defend his Master; but he only cut off an ear of the high priest's servant. When Jesus saw what was done, He released His hands, though held firmly by the Roman soldiers, and saying, 'Suffer ye thus far,' He touched the wounded ear, and it was instantly made whole. He then said to Peter, 'Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?'—a legion in place of each one of the disciples."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 696.

Jesus did not overpower the wills of men. In this week's lesson we will study some of the instances in the life of Jesus that reveal the heavenly Father's desire for the freedom of His children.

This freedom, we will note, is of two kinds: (1) the freedom to choose between right and wrong, and (2) the spiritual freedom that results from acceptance of Jesus as Lord. Both aspects of freedom are noted in this week's lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus Respected Judas's Freedom, John 13:27
2. Prodigal as a Symbol of Man, Luke 15:11-13
3. Prodigal's True Freedom With Father, Luke 15:17
4. Jesus Came to Set Man Free, John 8:36
5. Man Created Free, Gen. 2:16, 17
6. Choice Between God and Mammon, Matt. 6:24

Part 1
JESUS RESPECTED
JUDAS'S FREEDOM

"And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." John 13:27.

Jesus honored man's right to choose freely. He recognized Judas's opportunity to follow the inducements of Satan and betray Him into the hands of His enemies if he so chose, or to do God's will and remain loyal to his Master. At the Last Supper Judas finally and conclusively chose to do despite to the Holy Spirit's pleading with him.

"John and Judas are representatives of those who profess to be Christ's followers. Both these disciples had the same opportunities to study and follow the divine Pattern. Both were closely associated with Jesus and were privileged to listen to His teaching. Each possessed serious defects of character; and each had access to the divine grace that transforms character. But while one in humility was learning of Jesus, the other revealed that he was not a doer of the word, but a hearer only. One, daily dying to self and overcoming sin, was sanctified through the truth; the other, resisting the transforming power of grace and indulging selfish desires, was brought into bondage to Satan."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 558.

What incident or experience confirmed Judas in his rejection of Jesus as his Master? Matt. 26:6-16; John 12:4-8.

The criticism of Mary's generous deed apparently began with Judas. "Mary's act was in marked contrast with that which Judas was about to do. What a sharp lesson Christ might have given him who had dropped the seed of criticism and evil thinking into the minds of the disciples! How justly the accuser might have been accused! . . . The Saviour reproached him not. . . .

"But the look which Jesus cast upon Judas convinced him that the Saviour penetrated his hypocrisy, and read his base, contemptible character. And in commending Mary's action, which had been so severely condemned, Christ had rebuked Judas. Prior to this, the Saviour had never given him a direct rebuke."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 563.

In what way did Judas's decision to betray his Master end? Matt. 27:3-5.

THINK IT THROUGH

I, too, possess freedom of choice. How do I use it when someone slights or insults me or possibly reprimands me? Do I choose to cherish a spirit of retaliation, or do I entertain a spirit of forgiveness?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 721, 722.

Part 2
PRODIGAL AS A
SYMBOL OF MAN

Read Luke 15:11-13.

The father in this parable represents God. The prodigal represents the sinner who walks away from God. The prodigal wanted freedom from his father's presence and surveillance. He also knew how to get it. He simply told his father he wanted to leave him, and the father did not seek to keep him by force.

How may we become sons of God? John 1:12, 13.

God wants us all as His children to abide within the house of His will. We are called to be His sons. But the decision whether or not we choose to live with Him and abide by His will as His sons is ours to make.

After a while what happened to the prodigal in the strange land? Luke 15:14-16.

"The lesson of the prodigal is given for the instruction of youth. In his life of pleasure and sinful indulgence, he expends his portion of the inheritance in riotous living. He is friendless, and in a strange country; clad in rags, hungry, longing even for the refuse fed to the swine. His last hope is to return, penitent and humbled, to his father's house, where he is welcomed, forgiven, and taken back to a father's heart. Many youth are doing as he did, living a careless, pleasure-loving, spendthrift life, forsaking the fountain of living waters, the fountain of true pleasure, and hewing out to themselves broken cisterns, which can hold no water."—*Messages to Young People*, page 408.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I occasionally walk away from God willfully as did the prodigal? Why?

"Christ has enjoined upon His disciples that they co-operate with Him in His work, that they love one another as He has loved them. The agony which He endured upon the cross testifies to the estimate He places upon the human soul. All who accept this great salvation pledge themselves to be co-workers with Him. None are to consider themselves special favorites of heaven and center their interest and attention upon self. All who have enlisted in the service of Christ are to work as He worked, and are to love those who are in ignorance and sin, even as He loved them."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 604.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Lost and Is Found," pages 198-200.

Part 3
PRODIGAL'S
TRUE FREEDOM
WITH FATHER

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Luke 15:17.

The prodigal, while still at home, had had his every need supplied. In the faraway country he had also lived lavishly until his pecuniary resources were depleted. With his wealth gone, necessity stared him in the face. He was now forced to do some thinking, and, through his volitional response to his father's love, his thoughts turned in the right direction—toward his father. "He came to himself," or realized his prior foolishness. He then exercised his willpower and chose to return to his father.

What shows that his change of heart was genuine? Luke 15:18, 19.

True repentance accepts the guilt of departure from the right. The repentant prodigal did not say, or think, that it was his father's fault—sternness, rigidity for the right, insufficient time for recreation or self-enjoyment—that had forced him to leave home. He simply said, "I have sinned."

How did the father receive his returning son? Luke 15:20, 22-24.

The prodigal found true freedom in his return to his father. In the far country he had been but a slave, eking out a meager living by herding swine. On his return he was instantly restored to sonship. The father gave him a ring and put shoes on his feet.

What is Jesus' attitude toward those who return to Him? John 6:37; Matt. 11:28-30.

All those of us who have been in the "strange land" and done yeoman's service for the enemy of our souls God gladly welcomes back to His house. Jesus sets us free. He purchased the right to do this by His death for us on the cross. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 745.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much do I appreciate Christ's deliverance from Satan's slavery?

"We are saved because God loves the purchase of the blood of Christ; and not only will He pardon the repentant sinner, not only will He permit him to enter heaven, but He, the Father of mercies, will wait at the very gates of heaven to welcome us, to give us an abundant entrance to the mansions of the blest."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 950.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Lost and Is Found," pages 205-207.

Part 4
JESUS CAME TO
SET MAN FREE

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

Freedom is found only in fellowship with God through Jesus. There is no freedom apart from God, since separated from God there is only death. In order to be free one must be alive, and life eternal is available to man only as he is grafted into the vine which is Jesus.

"To obey God is not to enter into servitude to God, but to enter into fellowship with God, and that fellowship is eternal life. . . . Even on the human level, the more explicitly we obey a person, the more we can enter into fellowship with him, and the more he can tell us about himself."—William Barclay, *Jesus as They Saw Him* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), page 286.

"Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul. 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' sets us 'free from the law of sin and death.' Rom. 8:2.

"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.

According to the words of Jesus, do many avail themselves of the freedom He offers? Matt. 22:14.

"It is a matter of the greatest wonder to the heavenly host that so few care to be freed from the bondage of evil influences, so few are willing to exercise all their powers in harmony with Christ in the great work of their deliverance."—*Our High Calling*, page 321.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I occasionally lingered before accepting God's freedom from sin? Why?

"The only freedom finite will can enjoy, consists in coming into harmony with the will of God, complying with the conditions that make man a partaker of the divine nature."—*Our High Calling*, page 138.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 466.

Part 5
MAN CREATED FREE

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:16, 17.

Implicit in God's command to Adam and Eve, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was their ability to act contrary to God's desire for them if they so chose. God created man with free moral choice.

It was God's hope that Adam and Eve and their descendants would abide by His will for them. By successfully overcoming the suggestions of the tempter and remaining loyal to God they would develop from innocence to virtue. Unfallen man "was placed in circumstances of probation. That is to say, the citadel of his nature was his will. It was for him to choose whether he would abide in that relation to God which would ensure his fullest realization of possibility, or whether he would by severance from God encompass his own ruin. It was a terrible and awful alternative. Yet unless it were offered to man, the highest fact of his being would be atrophied, for will power, having no choice, ceases to be of value."—G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crisis of the Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1903), page 31.

Despite Adam and Eve and their descendants' wrong use of free choice, what did God still grant to man? Deut. 30:19; Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21.

"The will is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or choice. Every human being possessed of reason has power to choose the right. In every experience of life, God's word to us is, 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve.' Joshua 24:15. Everyone may place his will on the side of the will of God, may choose to obey Him, and by thus linking himself with divine agencies, he may stand where nothing can force him to do evil."—*Education*, page 289.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I use this divine endowment of free moral agency—contrary to God's plan as did Adam and Eve, or in accordance with His will for me?

"O that every one might realize that he is the arbiter of his own destiny! Your happiness for this life, and for the future, immortal life lies with yourself."—*Messages to Young People*, page 31.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 53.

Part 6
**CHOICE BETWEEN
GOD AND MAMMON**

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
Matt. 6:24.

It is impossible to serve two masters whose characters and interests are different.

"Those who begin their Christian life by being half and half, will at last be found enlisted on the enemy's side, whatever may have been their first intentions. And to be an apostate, a traitor to the cause of God, is more serious than death; for it means the loss of eternal life."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1086.

How do we show whose servants we are? Rom. 6:16; cf. 2 Peter 2:19.

"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.

In the state of sin man is divided between two loyalties—loyalty to God and loyalty to Satan. But no man can retain mental and/or physical health while he is constantly drawn in two directions. If he does not make up his mind, he finally becomes a schizophrenic.

Some of us as youngsters were intrigued with absolute freedom. We neither wanted to be subject to God nor to the devil. We wanted to be a third entity as it were, but search for such a status is in vain. Absolute freedom does not exist. Man is either a servant of "sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Through individual choice every moral being places himself either on the side of Satan or on the side of God. There is no other alternative.

THINK IT THROUGH

On whose side do I usually place myself through my personal choice—on the side of Jesus or on the side of Satan?

"To every nation and to every individual of today God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being measured by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny."—*Education*, page 178.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 147, 148.

LESSONS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1975

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1975 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the lessons is "In the Image of God."

First lesson: "The Image of God." Memory verse, Gen. 1:27. Outline is as follows: (1) Man is a Creature, Acts 17:26, 28. (2) To Glorify God, Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. (3) The Divine Seal, Ezek. 20:12, 20. (4) Male and Female, Gen. 1:27; 5:1. (5) To Rule the Earth, Gen. 1:26. (6) And Subdue It, Gen. 1:28.

Second lesson: "Jesus, the Example of God's Image." Memory verse, Rom. 8:29. Outline is as follows: (1) The Son of God, Matt. 16:15, 16. (2) The Word Made Flesh, John 1:1, 3, 14. (3) He Was Without Sin, 2 Cor. 5:21. (4) He Humbled Himself, Phil. 2:5-8. (5) A Life of Service, Matt. 20:26-28. (6) Wind and Sea Obey Him, Matt. 8:26, 27.

Put This Quarter's Sabbath School Lessons in Perspective

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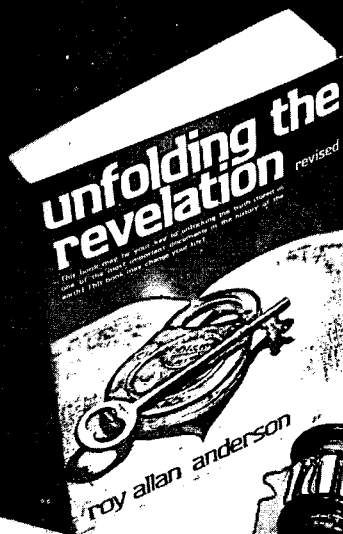
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Eric Syme

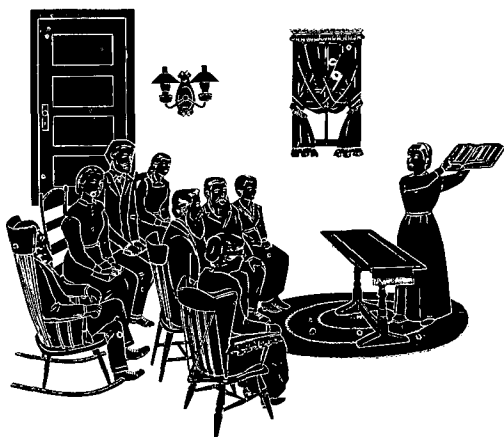
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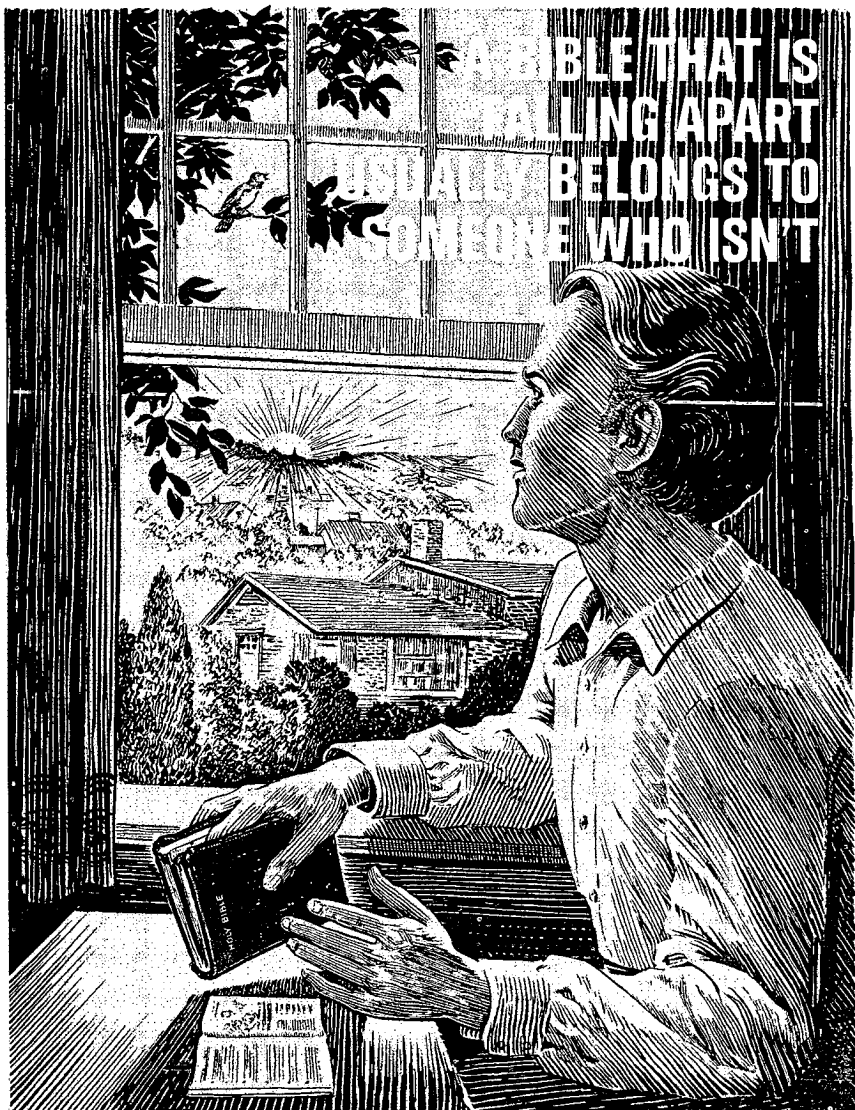


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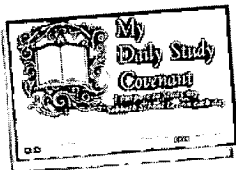
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**Put first things first.
Study your Bible and
your Sabbath school
lesson every day**



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1 What memorial of His creative power did God establish?

2 What signs given by the prophets identified Christ, at His first coming, as the Messiah?

3 How do the Scriptures show that the promised Saviour of the world must be both human and divine?

4 What will the world be doing when Christ returns?

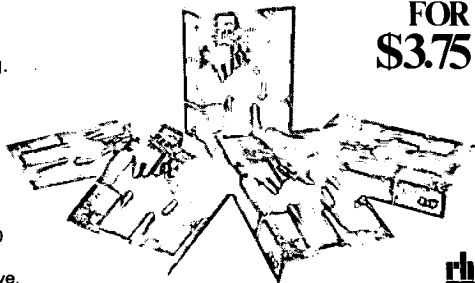
5 What prophecy was fulfilled in the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit in the time of the apostles?

6 How are all national and unjust distinctions among men swept away in Christ?

7 What tests should be applied in determining the validity of the claims of a prophet?

8 What becomes of a man's thoughts at death?

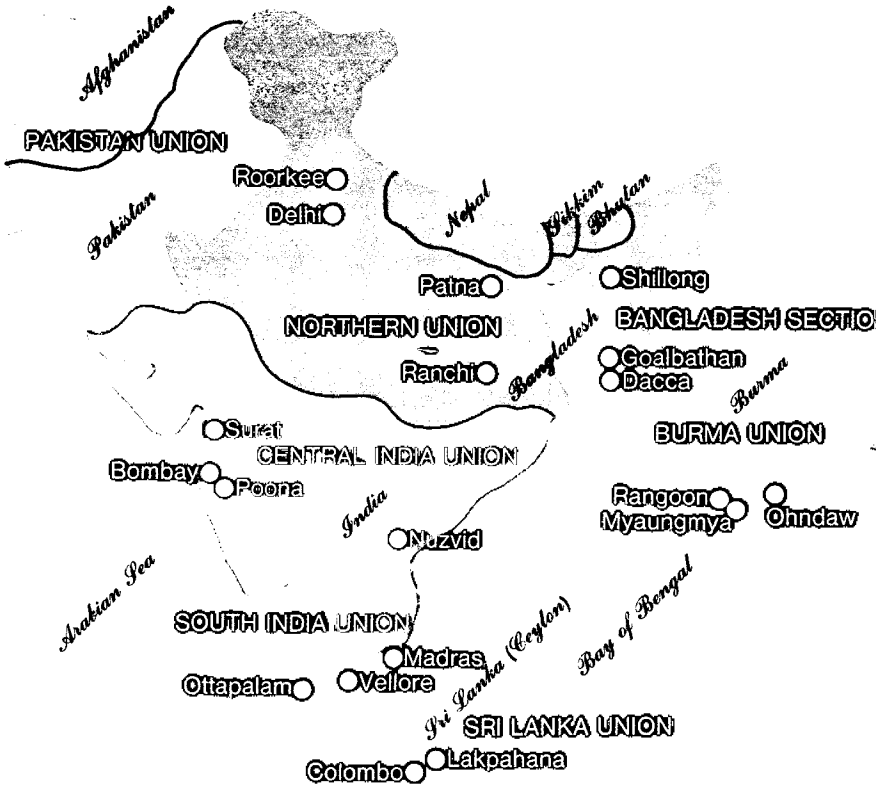
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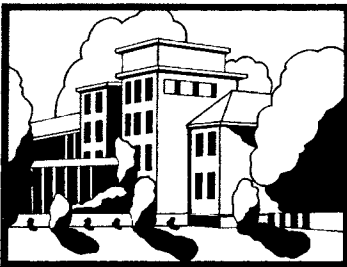
SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	S.S. Members
Burma	29,563,000	82	5,811	7,290
Central India	152,863,307	131	20,577	32,048
Northern	315,202,408	109	10,005	9,862
Pakistan	54,000,000	30	2,272	2,738
South India	95,206,845	197	27,413	25,997
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	13,000,000	20	1,472	1,313
Bangladesh Section	75,000,000	17	1,407	1,710
Division Totals	734,835,560	586	68,957	80,958

(Figures as of 3rd quarter 1973)



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