

DAYBREAK SERIES

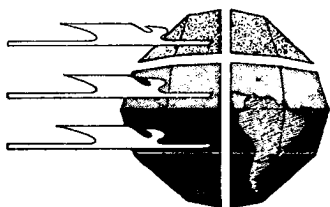


OCT - DEC. /1976

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

Worship—A Bible Doctrine





SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION

Dear Fellow Sabbath School Members.

Pope Paul VI, in a historical meeting with Latin-American bishops held in Medellin, Colombia, listened to an important document prepared by a group of delegates. Among other things, the document said: "Youth represent the most numerous group of society in Latin-America, a new and extraordinary pressure group." Facing this declaration, the Pope added: "For us, they constitute the most important theme, worthy of our principal interest."

Are we unaware as a church of this "new and extraordinary pressure group"? Are we giving this new awakening generation priority treatment?

To say that the future belongs to this young generation seems to be a truism destitute of major importance. However, for us in South America, this declaration has a tremendous significance because of the result of a galloping demographic growth, 55% of the population is under 21 years of age.

As a church, we are conscious of our rights and responsibilities in front of this new generation. For this reason, we are dedicating the 13th Sabbath overflow of this quarter to two educational institutions: Northeast Brazil College, administered by the East Brazil Union and to a new academy in the territory of the South Chile Conference.

During more than three decades, Northeast Brazil College has prepared pastors and evangelists who, with great fevor and extraordinary dedication, are proclaiming the redeeming power of Christ in different areas of the country. However, in spite of their good contribution to the mission field, this institution needs an appropriate theology department to function even better. One half of the overflow of this quarter will be applied towards the construction of a building for the Theology Department.

The other half will be destined to building a secondary school in South Chile, a dream held by our Chilean brethren who desire to see their children protected in an authentic "city of refuge," guided by the Adventist educational philosophy.

We are certain that the members of the Sabbath School in all the world will contribute in an exceptional way to help us lead our youth, this "new and extraordinary pressure group," placing them in the service of God and humanity.

Yours in His service,

Enoch de Oliveira
Enoch de Oliveira
- Presidente



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SABBATH SCHOOL MEMO

Use to check off for daily study, reminder for Mission
Spotlight, etc. Jot memos above week-day dates.

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I pledge myself to the prayerful study of part of
the Sabbath School lesson each day.

(Signed)

WORSHIP—A BIBLE DOCTRINE

Introduction

Ordinarily, when we think of doctrines, we think of such Biblical teachings as the atonement, salvation by faith, the sanctuary, the grace of God, the second coming of Christ, and the law of God. The worship of God has not always been included among the doctrines of the church. But, according to the Bible, it deserves such recognition.

From Genesis to Revelation worship is one of the great themes. It was one of the issues in the great controversy between good and evil. It was the basis of the first table of the law. It was central to the life-style of both the Old and the New Testaments. It was the subject of much of the poetry of the Bible. It was a prominent theme of the prophets. It was one of the concerns of Christ. It was part of the experience of the early Christian church.

For the Seventh-day Adventist, worship is included in his unique charter, the three angels' messages. His life is centered in his church; but sometimes he thinks of his church as organization, people, activity, or dogma rather than as a group of worshipers. His Sabbath may be only a day of rest (man-centered) rather than a day of reverence (God-centered).

The purpose of this series of lessons is to explore what the Bible has to say about worship. Six lessons are from the Old Testament, six from the New, and one (lesson eleven) is of a general nature. Some lessons are basically historical, some are theological, some deal with practical issues. All are intended to enhance the worship relationship between the Christian and his God.

It is hoped that a study of this subject will make all types of worship more meaningful. Nothing will contribute more to the spiritual health of the church than for its members to worship God as individuals, for its families to worship Him in family prayers, for groups of all kinds to join in worship, and for the Sabbath service to be the climax of the worship experience.

Worship at the Dawn of History

"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. . . .

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18, 22).

This passage of Scripture suggests several ideas that are important to the theme of worship: (1) God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; therefore He merits the worship of His creatures; (2) God's purpose in creation of the heavens and the earth was to bring into existence a race of intelligent beings, made in His image, with whom He could establish a relationship; and (3) this relationship was to be marked by love, dependence, respect, and reverence on the part of His creatures.

The plan of this lesson is to study certain incidents connected with the dawn of human history that illustrate the worship relationship that man was to have with his Creator.

It will be observed that the relationship between God and man in the book of Genesis is very personal. Man relates to God either as an individual or as part of a family. Public worship was in its infancy. One of the most striking phenomena of this period of man's history was the *theophany*, the personal appearance of God to man. This intimate relationship produced an attitude toward God that needs to be recaptured by those who love and worship God in these times.

"The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. . . . God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, 'the balancings of the clouds,' the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. . . . They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.

"So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would



continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unending love of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 50, 51.

It was this type of life-style that was intended by God to keep ever fresh and alive the spirit of reverence and worship on the part of His creatures.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The First Great Worship Symbol (Gen. 2:2, 3)**
2. **Two Brothers and an Altar (Gen. 4:3-5)**
3. **The Beginning of Public Worship (Gen. 4:26)**
4. **The Altar Beside the Ark (Gen. 8:20-22)**
5. **Abraham, the Altar Builder (Gen. 12:7)**
6. **Jacob Meets His Lord (Gen. 28:16-19)**



Part 1
THE FIRST GREAT
WORSHIP SYMBOL

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:2, 3).

What is the purpose of the Sabbath?

The book of Genesis opens by presenting the basic reason for worship—God is the Creator, and we are His creatures. God evidently intended that this relationship should be memorialized, for He established the Sabbath as a weekly reminder of His creatorship. In blessing and sanctifying a day, He recognized *time* as a fundamental symbol of worship. The first worship symbol He gave to man was not a tree, a building, or an animal, but *twenty-four hours* recurring every seven days. Could anything be more basic, more universal than time? This symbol could not be changed by geography, by culture, or by the passing of the years. To man, time is basic. And when God set apart a period of time, He thereby made it possible for man to have the opportunity and the leisure to worship Him.

"After resting upon the seventh day, God sanctified it, or set it apart, as a day of rest for man. Following the example of the Creator, man was to rest upon this sacred day, that as he should look upon the heavens and the earth, he might reflect upon God's great work of creation; and that as he should behold the evidences of God's wisdom and goodness, his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker.

"In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family. Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 47, 48.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the relationship between divine worship and God's act as Creator? (See Ex. 20:8-11.)

"The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten."—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27."—Quoted in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 436-438.

Part 2
TWO BROTHERS
AND AN ALTAR

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell” (Gen. 4:3-5).

Why did Cain and Abel bring offerings to God?

“The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

This was a part of man's worship after his expulsion from Eden.

This incident teaches us that worship has a theological basis. Man is not free to worship in any way he sees best. There are theological reasons for the manner in which God is worshiped, and these reasons must not be ignored. Worship is acceptable only when it is carried out according to God's direction.

Why was Cain's worship not acceptable?

“Cain came before God with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised sacrifice and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings. His gift expressed no penitence for sin. He felt, as many now feel, that it would be an acknowledgment of weakness to follow the exact plan marked out by God, of trusting his salvation wholly to the atonement of the promised Saviour. He chose the course of self-dependence. He would come in his own merits. He would not bring the lamb, and mingle its blood with his offering, but would present *his* fruits, the products of *his* labor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 72.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should worshipers learn today from the experience of Cain and Abel? (See Jude 11.)

“The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 73.

True worship, then, must maintain those attitudes and employ those symbols that are in harmony with the correct theology of salvation.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Two Worshipers,” pp. 150-152.

Part 3
THE BEGINNING
OF PUBLIC
WORSHIP

“And to Seth, to him also there was born a son: and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26).

What does this text reveal about the worship of God?

“In his [Enos] time a more formal worship was begun. Man had of course called upon the Lord before Enos' birth, but as time went on a more pronounced distinction arose between those who worshiped the Lord and those who defied Him. The expression 'to call upon the name of the Lord' is used frequently in the OT to indicate, as it does here, public worship (Ps. 79:6; 116:17; Jer. 10:25; Zeph. 3:9).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Gen. 4:26.

Early worship was generally personal. God talked with Adam and Eve in the garden. But when mankind became divided between those who worshiped God and those who did not, the worshipers of God united and bore their witness of their allegiance to their Creator in a public way. We can see in this development the seeds of what later became the church—in both its Old Testament and its New Testament form.

“‘To Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.’ The faithful had worshiped God before; but as men increased, the distinction between the two classes became more marked. There was an open profession of loyalty to God on the part of one, as there was of contempt and disobedience on the part of the other.

“‘Before the Fall our first parents had kept the Sabbath, which was instituted in Eden; and after their expulsion from Paradise they continued its observance. They had tasted the bitter fruits of disobedience, and had learned what every one that tramples upon God's commandments will sooner or later learn—that the divine precepts are sacred and immutable, and that the penalty of transgression will surely be inflicted. The Sabbath was honored by all the children of Adam that remained loyal to God. But Cain and his descendants did not respect the day upon which God had rested. They chose their own time for labor and for rest, regardless of Jehovah's express command.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 80, 81.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does this story of the beginning of public worship tell us today? (See Heb. 10:25.)

A close personal relationship between the individual and God is as essential today as in the times of Adam and Abel and Seth. But the witness of group worship is also essential in order to keep alive the worship of God in the world.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 80-84.

Part 4
THE ALTAR
BESIDE THE ARK

“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:20-22).

What was the relation between Noah’s worship and God’s covenant?

“In the joy of their release Noah did not forget Him by whose gracious care they had been preserved. His first act after leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer from every kind of clean beast and fowl a sacrifice, thus manifesting his gratitude to God for deliverance and his faith in Christ, the great sacrifice. This offering was pleasing to the Lord; and a blessing resulted, not only to the patriarch and his family, but to all who should live upon the earth. . . . Here was a lesson for all succeeding generations. Noah had come forth upon a desolate earth, but before preparing a house for himself he built an altar to God. His stock of cattle was small, and had been preserved at great expense; yet he cheerfully gave a part to the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His. In like manner it should be our first care to render our freewill offerings to God. Every manifestation of His mercy and love toward us should be gratefully acknowledged, both by acts of devotion and by gifts to His cause.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 105, 106.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does Noah’s experience tell us about worship?

1. Worship was an expression of gratitude to God. Worship has been defined as a redeemed man’s response to his Redeemer. Noah had been saved. He did not forget to thank his Saviour.

2. Worship was an expression of faith. Noah understood the symbolism of the slain beasts. So today our songs, our prayers, our gifts, our sermons are expressions of our faith in God.

3. God’s gracious covenant was His response to Noah’s worship. God’s promises today are fulfilled in the lives of those who worship Him.

4. Noah was willing to assume the cost of worship. He gave of his possessions, and in so doing he set an example of liberality.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 105-107.

Part 5
ABRAHAM, THE
ALTAR-BUILDER

“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him” (Gen. 12:7).

How did Abraham reveal his dedication by his worship?

Abraham had migrated from Ur to Haran, and in response to God's call he migrated again to Canaan. He was 75 years of age and had accumulated considerable property. His move not only involved inconvenience, but also danger, for “the Canaanite was then in the land.” But God did not forget His faithful servant. He appeared to him, made a promise to him, and Abraham responded by building an altar for worship.

The next verse of Genesis 12 tells us that he moved on to “a mountain on the east of Bethel,” and there he built another altar. Chapter 13 has him returning to the altar near Bethel after a trip to Egypt, “and there Abram called on the name of the Lord” (verse 4). Later in the same chapter, Abraham “removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord” (verse 18).

The altar on the plains of Mamre seemed to be his center of worship for a long time. One more altar was very significant in Abraham's life—the altar he built on one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. There he indicated his complete dedication to God, and there God's covenant with Abraham was repeated again.

“Abraham, ‘the friend of God,’ set us a worthy example. His was a life of prayer. Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 128.

THINK IT THROUGH

What message does Abraham, the altar builder, have for us?

“Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent. If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household Jesus will love to tarry.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 144.

Family worship is an important aspect of the worship of God. Are we as faithful in this respect as was Abraham? Do we gather our families together to read the Bible, to pray, and to praise God? (Compare Gen. 18:18, 19.)

FURTHER STUDY

Child Guidance, pp. 517-526.

Part 6
JACOB MEETS
HIS LORD

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel" (Gen. 28:16-19).

What was the background of this experience?

Jacob had incurred his brother Esau's wrath by obtaining the birthright by fraud. Fleeing from his brother's threats of violence, he made an overnight stop on his way to Haran. During that memorable night Jacob was given the vision of the ladder connecting earth and heaven. God appeared to Jacob and renewed the promise that had been made to Abraham.

Jacob had reason to feel alone when he arrived at his stopping place. But God assured him, "I am with thee, and will keep thee" (Gen. 28:15). Jacob responded to this revelation by setting up a pillar as a memorial and by naming the spot Bethel.

"In accordance with the custom of commemorating important events, Jacob set up a memorial of God's mercy, that whenever he should pass that way he might tarry at this sacred spot to worship the Lord. And he called the place Bethel, or the 'house of God.' With deep gratitude he repeated the promise that God's presence would be with him; and then he made the solemn vow, 'If God will be with me, . . . this stone . . . shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 187.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the lessons to be learned from this experience?

In this case, the worship of God was motivated by a deep sense of forgiveness. When we get ourselves into trouble—as Jacob did—knowing full well that our misfortunes have come as the result of our own wrongdoing, it is easy to feel that God has forsaken us. But when, in a circumstance like this, God takes the initiative and assures us of His love and forgiveness, we are overwhelmed with gratitude and appreciation.

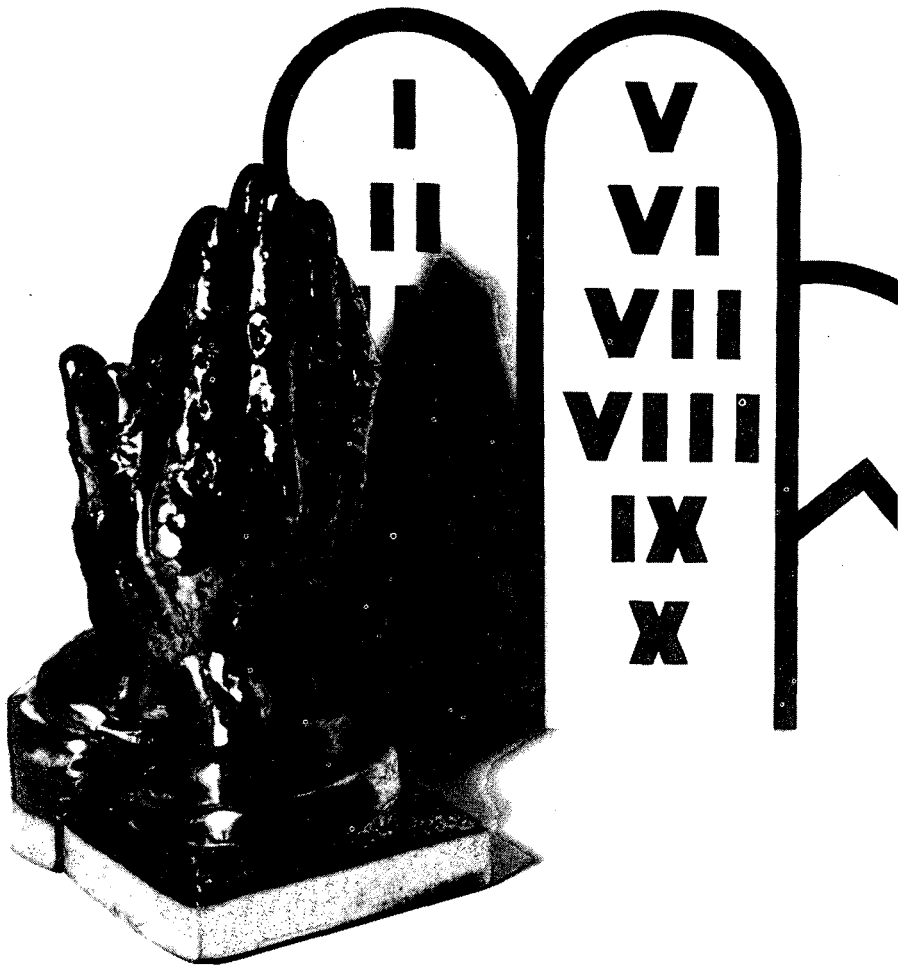
This sense of gratitude to a forgiving God is one of the greatest incentives to real, heartfelt worship.

"Jacob felt that God had claims upon him which he must acknowledge, and that the special tokens of divine favor granted him demanded a return. So does every blessing bestowed upon us call for a response to the Author of all our mercies."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 187.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Lord's Prayer," pp. 116-119.

Worship and the Exodus



“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the

desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword” (Ex. 5:1-3).

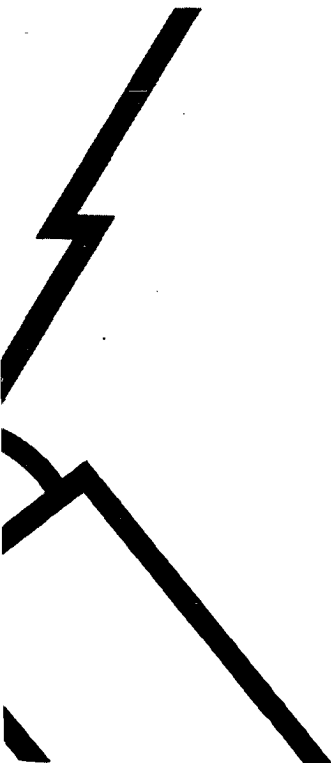
Moses and Aaron were not trying to mislead Pharaoh when they told him that Israel’s God wanted His people released so they could “hold a feast unto me” and “sacrifice unto the Lord our God.” Israel had been unable to worship God as they should under the rigors of slavery, and one reason for their deliverance from Egypt was that they might relearn the art of worshipping their God. They could never function effectively as God’s chosen people until they learned how to worship Him in the right way.

Referring to the Exodus, the psalmist says, “He brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness: and gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws” (Ps. 105:43-45). God’s laws and statutes regarding His worship were difficult to observe in slavery; therefore God removed His people from slavery so that they might worship Him. In fact, the entire Exodus project would have had no lasting significance if the Hebrews had merely secured their liberty from the Egyptians but had never relearned the worship of their God.

This lesson is dedicated to a story of how a nation of slaves learned, step by step, the meaning and beauty of a life of worship. From these incidents, we may learn better how to worship God in our day.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. The Restoration of the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29, 30)**
- 2. The First Table of the Law (Ex.20:3)**
- 3. The Portable Church (Ex. 25:8)**
- 4. The Daily Worship Services (Lev. 6:12, 13)**
- 5. The Yearly Celebrations (Lev. 16:16)**
- 6. The Worship Leaders (Ex. 29:4-9)**



Part 1
THE RESTORATION
OF THE SABBATH

"See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day" (Ex. 16:29, 30).

At what point in the Exodus experience was the Sabbath first stressed?

An interesting sequence of events occurred following the deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea:

First, there was the song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-19). This was a song of praise to God and was an act of worship on the part of a grateful people. "Like the voice of the great deep, rose from the vast hosts of Israel that sublime ascription. . . . Far over desert and sea rang the joyous refrain, and the mountains re-echoed the words of their praise—'Sing ye to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 288, 289.

Second, there was the sweetening of the bitter waters at Marah and the encampment by the wells of Elim. The people had to learn that their God wouldn't let them die of thirst.

Third, there was the food crisis and the giving of the manna in the Wilderness of Sin. Again, the people had to learn that their God wouldn't let them starve.

A certain degree of security having been attained, God restored the Sabbath. True, it had not been entirely forgotten in Egypt, but it had been observed with great difficulty. Every preparation day they were to gather a double portion of manna so that they would not need to labor on the Sabbath. For forty years the manna kept coming. It served as a reminder of God's care for His people; and every seventh day they were reminded of their obligation to celebrate a day of worship.

THINK IT THROUGH

What practical lessons come to us from God's provision for Sabbath manna? (See Neh. 9:19-21.)

"God requires that His holy day be as sacredly observed now as in the time of Israel. The command given to the Hebrews should be regarded by all Christians as an injunction from Jehovah to them. The day before the Sabbath should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. . . . Work that is neglected until the beginning of the Sabbath should remain undone until it is past. This course might help the memory of these thoughtless ones, and make them careful to do their own work on the six working days."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 353-356.

Part 2
THE FIRST TABLE
OF THE LAW

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

How do the first four commandments relate to worship?

The first four commandments of the Decalogue were intended to make secure the place of God in the hearts and lives of believers.

"Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

The second commandment is an extension of the first.

"The second commandment forbids the worship of the true God by images or similitudes. . . . The attempt to represent the Eternal One by material objects would lower man's conception of God. . . .

"In prohibiting the worship of false gods, the second commandment by implication enjoins the worship of the true God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306.

The third commandment of the first table is designed to guarantee reverence for God's name.

"All should meditate upon His majesty, His purity and holiness, that the heart may be impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name should be uttered with reverence and solemnity."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

And, finally, the day of rest and worship that had been observed with such difficulty in Egypt, and that had been restored in connection with the giving of the manna in the Wilderness of Sin—this was to be the most effective reminder of the worship of the true God.

"All who keep the seventh day signify by this act that they are worshipers of Jehovah."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the usual attitude to church worship in the modern world? Do I go to church for the right reasons?

To a great extent, worship is considered by today's churches as celebration—"celebration of life," as some put it. The idea of deep reverence for a God who is the Creator and Father of us all is often rejected by the modern mind. One of the challenges to God's church today is to teach men to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7). This calls for a reaffirmation of the first four commandments.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 639-641.

Part 3
THE PORTABLE
CHURCH

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).

What were some of the characteristics of this portable church that God instructed Israel to construct?

1. It was to be built by the offerings of Israel (Ex. 25:1-7).
2. It was to be built according to a plan revealed by God (Ex. 25:9).
3. The structure was to center in an ark which was to be highly revered as the point where God would communicate with man (Ex. 25:10-22).
4. The table of shewbread, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the curtains, the boards, the roof, the veils were all exquisitely beautiful, constructed of the most valuable materials (Ex. 25:23 through 26:37).
5. An altar was constructed in the court which was a center for the daily worship of the people (Ex. 27:1-21).

"No language can describe the glory of the scene presented within the sanctuary—the gold-plated walls reflecting the light from the golden candlestick, the brilliant hues of the richly embroidered curtains with their shining angels, the table, and the altar of incense, glittering with gold; beyond the second veil the sacred ark, with its mystic cherubim, and above it the holy Shekinah, the visible manifestation of Jehovah's presence; all but a dim reflection of the glories of the temple of God in heaven, the great center of the work for man's redemption."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 349.

What happened when the first worship service was held at this tabernacle? Ex. 40:34, 35.

Exodus 40 tells the dramatic story of the erecting of the tabernacle. The structure was to be set up, the furniture arranged, the laver filled with water, the implements anointed, the priests sanctified, the bread set in order, the candles lighted. Incense was burned for the first time in the first apartment, and a burnt offering was offered on the altar in the court.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much am I contributing to the support of my church?

"The murmurings of the Israelites and the visitations of God's judgments because of their sins are recorded as a warning to after-generations. And their devotion, their zeal and liberality, are an example worthy of imitation. All who love the worship of God and prize the blessing of His sacred presence will manifest the same spirit of sacrifice in preparing a house where he may meet with them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 344.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 343-350.

Part 4
THE DAILY
WORSHIP
SERVICES

“And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Lev. 6:12, 13).

There was a deep spiritual meaning in this ever-burning flame. “The Jews affirm that it burned continuously until the Babylonian captivity. Some even claim that it never went out until the final destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Lev. 6:13. God, the true object of Israel’s worship was not here today and gone tomorrow. Whatever sins they might commit, the flame still burned on their altar. Whatever dangers they might face, the fire never went out. There was a permanence in the worship of the eternal God.

What did the daily worship service include?

“The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. . . .

“Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation of Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ. . . .

“In the offering of incense the priest was brought more directly into the presence of God than in any other act of the daily ministration. . . . As in that typical service the priest looked by faith to the mercy seat which he could not see, so the people of God are now to direct their prayers to Christ, their great High Priest, who, unseen by human vision, is pleading in their behalf in the sanctuary above. . . .

“The most important part of the daily ministration was the service performed in behalf of individuals.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 352-354.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way did the daily worship service of Israel set an example for us? (See Ps. 5:3; 55:16, 17; 88:13.)

“The hours appointed for the morning and the evening sacrifice were regarded as sacred, and they came to be observed as the set time for worship throughout the Jewish nation. . . . In this custom Christians have an example for morning and evening prayer. While God condemns a mere round of ceremonies, without the spirit of worship, He looks with great pleasure upon those who love Him, bowing morning and evening to seek pardon for sins committed and to present their requests for needed blessings.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 353, 354.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 352-355.

Part 5
THE YEARLY
CELEBRATIONS

“And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Lev. 16:16).

The greatest of the yearly worship services was the Day of Atonement.

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration. . . .

“Every man was to afflict his soul while the work of atonement was going forward. All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 355.

“Thus in the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day the great truths relative to Christ’s death and ministration, and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 358.

In addition to the Day of Atonement and the weekly Sabbath, there were several other important worship events during the year. Among these were the new moons (Num. 28:11-15); the Passover (Exodus 12), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15-20), and the ceremony of the wave sheaf (Lev. 23:10-14); Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks) (Lev. 23:15-21); the blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23:24, 25); and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-43). See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 708-710.

These ancient religious celebrations are mentioned to illustrate how large a place public and private worship held in the lives of the people. A substantial part of the resources and time of the average Israelite was spent in activities related to the worship of his God. But this continual round of worship was not a means of appeasing deities, as in heathen religions. The Israelites’ worship, at its best, was a recognition of the goodness of God and an acceptance of the provisions made by God to solve the sin problem. So the worship was rational and ethical. It avoided religious frenzy and incantation.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much of our resources and time are spent in connection with our worship of God?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 355-358.

Part 6
THE WORSHIP
LEADERS

“You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water. And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod; and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown upon the turban. And you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him. Then you shall bring his sons, and put coats on them, and you shall gird them with girdles and bind caps on them; and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual statute. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons” (Ex. 29:4-9, RSV).

By whom did God plan that the worship services of Israel should be administered?

“By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the of the sanctuary. . . . The priesthood, however, was restricted to the family of Aaron. Aaron and his sons alone were permitted to minister before the Lord.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

Did ordination to the priesthood ensure faithfulness on the part of those ordained? Lev. 10:1, 2.

“**Strange fire.** Ordinary fire. It was not taken from the altar of burnt offering, whose fire God Himself had kindled and which was therefore sacred (ch. 16:12, 13). In the court of the congregation there were hearths where the priests prepared their food, and it may be that Nadab and Abihu took their common fire from thence.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Lev. 10:1.

Of whom was the high priest a type? Heb. 4:14.

THINK IT THROUGH

In the New Testament church, who assumes the responsibility of leading the congregation in worship? (See 1 Tim. 3:1-7.)

In the Christian church God ordained a *ministry* in place of a priesthood. While the ministry is a gift of the Spirit, the minister is ordained to his work by the church. His work is varied. He may be an evangelist, a pastor, a teacher, an administrator; or his work may be a combination of these functions. One of his responsibilities is worship leadership. He plans worship services and preaches to the worshippers. He conducts communion services and leads out in prayer meetings. In these functions he may be assisted by laymen; in fact the work of the elder and deacon is a function of the total ministry of the church.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 526-528.

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:11-13).

For generations, the major problem of Israel was a problem of worship. The worship of the gods of the Canaanites was appealing. The worshipers worked themselves up into a frenzy of excitement as they participated in the immoral rites of their cult. The worship of Jehovah, with its demands for personal purity of life, seemed rigid and uninteresting in comparison to the lascivious celebrations of the worshipers of Baal and Ashtaroth.

"Baal worship, universal throughout Syria and Palestine, seems to have held a great attraction for the Israelites. They repeatedly turned to it from the time they entered the land of Canaan until they were carried into exile."—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 99.

"When the tribes of Israel undertook the conquest of Canaan, they found there a worship of nature deities known as 'Baalim.' This worship was rather quickly absorbed into their worship of Jehovah. They took over the local sanctuaries known as 'high places,' identified their God with the local 'Baal,' and transferred to the worship of their God the rituals, ceremonies, and practices of the popular shrines. . . . The state of worship became more and more corrupt as the years went by. God was worshiped under the form of a metal bull. The Israelites borrowed other emblems from the heathenism about them, which they used beside the altar. Sacred prostitutes were in attendance at the sanctuaries. The practice of magic, necromancy, and other superstitious rites became common. The priests, the common people, the political leaders, and

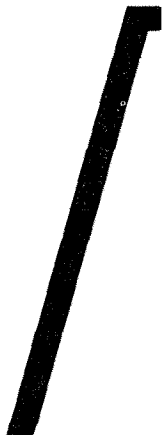
many of the prophets themselves, labeled 'false prophets' by the few sincere prophets, continued to think of Jehovah as a Semitic deity who was 'jealous' for the exactness of the worship ritual and the amount and number of the sacrifices offered."

—I. T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), pp. 17, 18. Used by permission.

The purpose of this lesson is to reconstruct some of the ancient confrontations between Jehovah worship and Baal worship, and to draw parallels relevant to the experience of the church today.

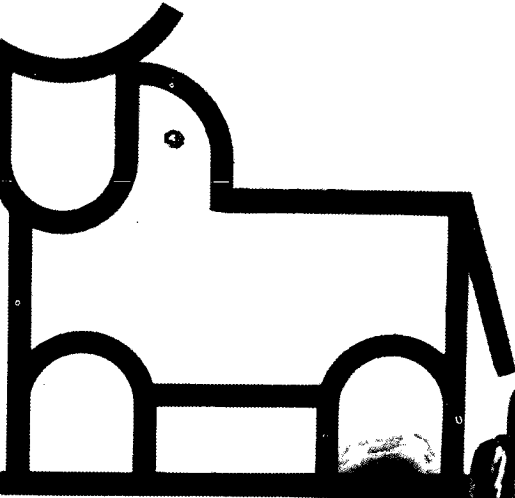
LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Apostasy at the Jordan**
(Num. 22:41)
2. **The Time of the Judges**
(Judges 2:11-13)
3. **Reformation in Worship**
(1 Sam. 7:3, 4)
4. **The Schools of the Prophets**
(1 Sam. 10:5, 6, 9)
5. **Elijah Meets a Crisis**
(1 Kings 18:21)
6. **The Results of Baal Worship**
(2 Kings 17:15, 16)



LESSON 3 October 10-16

The Battle With Baal



Part 1
APOSTASY AT
THE JORDAN

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people" (Num. 22:41).

Balak, the king of Moab, called upon Balaam, a free-lance prophet, to curse Israel who were camped on the plains of Moab. Balaam was torn between his loyalty to God and his desire for the honorarium promised him by Balak. The first location selected by Balak for Balaam to curse Israel was "the high places of Baal." The third site chosen by Balak in his unsuccessful effort to persuade Balaam to curse Israel was Mount Peor, "where was a temple devoted to the licentious worship of Baal, their god."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 449.

Failing in his efforts to curse Israel, Balaam suggested another approach to the destruction of Israel. "The plan proposed by Balaam was to separate them from God by enticing them into idolatry. If they could be led to engage in the licentious worship of Baal and Ashtaroth, their omnipotent Protector would become their enemy, and they would soon fall a prey to the fierce, warlike nations around them. This plan was readily accepted by the king, and Balaam himself remained to assist in carrying it into effect."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 451.

The plan nearly succeeded. The worship of Baal was all around the camp of Israel. Soon Midianitish women began to appear in the camp. "It was the object of these women, in their association with the Hebrews, to seduce them into transgression of the law of God, to draw their attention to heathen rites and customs, and lead them into idolatry."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 454. Israelites were induced to attend feasts of Baal, and soon "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor" (Num. 25:3). Thousands died as the result of this apostasy.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does Israel's tragic experience on the borders of the Promised Land have any message for us? (See 2 Peter 2:15.)

"As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul. It is not the ignorant and uncultured merely that need to be guarded; he will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their souls, he can through them destroy many. And he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 457, 458.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 453-461.

Part 2
THE TIME OF
THE JUDGES

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth” (Judges 2:11-13).

It should be noted that the term “Baalim” is the plural of “Baal.” The Canaanite worship had many gods. Also “Ashtoreth” was a goddess of the Canaanites.

Judges 2 summarizes a trend that plagued Israel for generations. Israel would apostatize into Baal worship. God would deliver them into the hands of their enemies. Israel would repent, and God would raise up a judge to deliver them. Then the cycle would begin again.

One fascinating story from this sequence is the story of Gideon (Judges 6 through 8). Israel had sinned, and the Midianites and Amalekites conquered them. “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.” God called Gideon to be the deliverer. His first act was to throw down his father’s altar of Baal, cut down the grove beside it, and replace the altar with an altar to Jehovah. Then followed the fascinating story of the reduction of the army to the faithful 300, of the breaking of the pitchers and the blowing of the trumpets, and of the routing of the Midianites. After 40 years of quiet, Gideon died. “And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god” (Judges 8:33).

After a while the enemies of Israel—the Ammonites and the Philistines—conquered again. “The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim” (Judges 10:10). This time it was Jephthah who delivered his people. And so the cycle continued with monotonous regularity. It seemed that Israel would never learn.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can we learn from the up-and-down experience of Israel during the time of the judges?

The final paragraph of the chapter, “The Earlier Judges,” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, contains the following statement:

“Like Israel, Christians too often yield to the influence of the world and conform to its principles and customs, in order to secure the friendship of the ungodly; but in the end it will be found that these professed friends are the most dangerous of foes. The Bible plainly teaches that there can be no harmony between the people of God and the world.”—Page 559.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 553-559.

Part 3
REFORMATION
IN WORSHIP

“And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only” (1 Sam. 7:3, 4).

Samuel was not only a competent judge, but a great spiritual leader. He “visited the cities and villages throughout the land, seeking to turn the hearts of the people to the God of their fathers; and his efforts were not without good results. After suffering the oppression of their enemies for twenty years, the Israelites ‘mourned after the Lord.’ Samuel counseled them, ‘If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only.’ Here we see that practical piety, heart religion, was taught in the days of Samuel as taught by Christ when He was upon the earth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 590.

How did Samuel follow up this new reformation? 1 Sam. 7:5.

He issued a call for all Israel to come together at Mizpeh, and he said, “I will pray for you unto the Lord.” Here is an indication of Samuel’s deeply spiritual leadership which began a reformation that kept the worship of Baal in check for many years. The meeting at Mizpeh included fasting, repentance, and offerings. It also included prayer for deliverance from the Philistines who were threatening to attack. God intervened and turned the Philistines back with a storm, and the Israelites pursued them.

Samuel recognized the importance of memorials to help Israel remember to worship their God. “Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12). At his home “he built an altar unto the Lord” (verse 17).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between wholehearted and half-hearted worship?

“With all your heart.” It was with this expression that Samuel addressed Israel both at Mizpeh and at Gilgal. (1 Samuel 12:20). This was the secret of Israel’s success. When their hearts were divided between Baal and Jehovah, they could not be blessed. When their commitment to God was complete, He could lead and protect them.

FURTHER STUDY

1 Samuel 7 and 12.

Part 4
THE SCHOOLS OF
THE PROPHETS

In the coronation of King Saul, what part was played by a company of prophets?

"And after that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."

"And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day" (1 Sam. 10:5, 6, 9).

One of the greatest factors in the battle against Baal was the influence of the prophets of God. This great institution of divine prophecy was kept alive by "the schools of the prophets," mentioned so often in the writings of Ellen White.

"The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God and studied His word and His works, wisdom from above was added to their natural endowments."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 593.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we be led to shun false worship and worship God aright?

"Let the youth be led to understand the object of their creation, to honor God and bless their fellow men; let them see the tender love which the Father in heaven has manifested toward them, and the high destiny for which the discipline of this life is to prepare them, the dignity and honor to which they are called, even to become the sons of God, and thousands would turn with contempt and loathing from the low and selfish aims and the frivolous pleasures that have hitherto engrossed them. They would learn to hate sin and to shun it, not merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, but from a sense of its inherent baseness, because it would be a degrading of their God-given powers, a stain upon their Godlike manhood."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 601, 602.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 45-50.

Part 5
ELIJAH MEETS
A CRISIS

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word” (1 Kings 18:21).

What was the condition of Israel at the time of Elijah?

King Ahab and his heathen wife, Jezebel, brought Israel to an all-time low, spiritually. “The dark shadow of apostasy covered the whole land. Images of Baalim and Ashtoreth were everywhere to be seen. Idolatrous temples and consecrated groves, wherein were worshiped the works of men’s hands, were multiplied. The air was polluted with the smoke of the sacrifices offered to false gods. Hill and vale resounded with the drunken cries of a heathen priesthood who sacrificed to the sun, moon, and stars.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 115.

How did Elijah bring this worship conflict to a point of decision? 1 Kings 17:1.

The followers of Baal believed that “the treasures of heaven, the dew and the rain, came not from Jehovah, but from the ruling forces of nature.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 120. Elijah challenged the power of Baal by announcing to the king that there would be a long famine. For three years and a half no rain fell, and finally in the confrontation on Mount Carmel it was made clear that the prophets of Baal were helpless. The heathen worship that had so completely engulfed Israel was proved false. The prophets of Baal were slain, and the way was opened for a new era in the history of Israel.

But the work of Elijah was not done. A brief detour of discouragement and a rendezvous with God in the wilderness prepared him for the remainder of his mission.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can you tell whether a worship service glorifies God or not? (See Matt. 15:9.)

“In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal. . . .

“Yet this apostasy, widespread as it has come to be, is not universal. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 170, 171.

“If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” is a relevant challenge in the 1970s.

FURTHER STUDY

1 Kings 18 and 19.

Part 6
THE RESULTS OF
BAAL WORSHIP

Why was Israel finally taken into captivity?

“And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal” (2 Kings 17:15, 16).

What part did heathen practices of worship play in the final downfall of Israel? 2 Kings 17:18.

“The iniquity in Israel during the last half century before the Assyrian captivity was like that of the days of Noah, and of every other age when men have rejected God and have given themselves wholly to evil-doing. The exaltation of nature above the God of nature, the worship of the creature instead of the Creator, has always resulted in the grossest of evils. Thus when the people of Israel, in their worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, paid supreme homage to the forces of nature, they severed their connection with all that is uplifting and ennobling, and fell an easy prey to temptation. With the defenses of the soul broken down, the misguided worshipers had no barrier against sin and yielded themselves to the evil passions of the human heart. . . .

“Such were some of the results that had followed the setting up of the two calves of gold by Jeroboam. The first departure from established forms of worship had led to the introduction of grosser forms of idolatry, until finally nearly all the inhabitants of the land had given themselves over to the alluring practices of nature worship.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 281, 282.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do God's people sometimes suffer calamities? (See Hosea 4:6.)

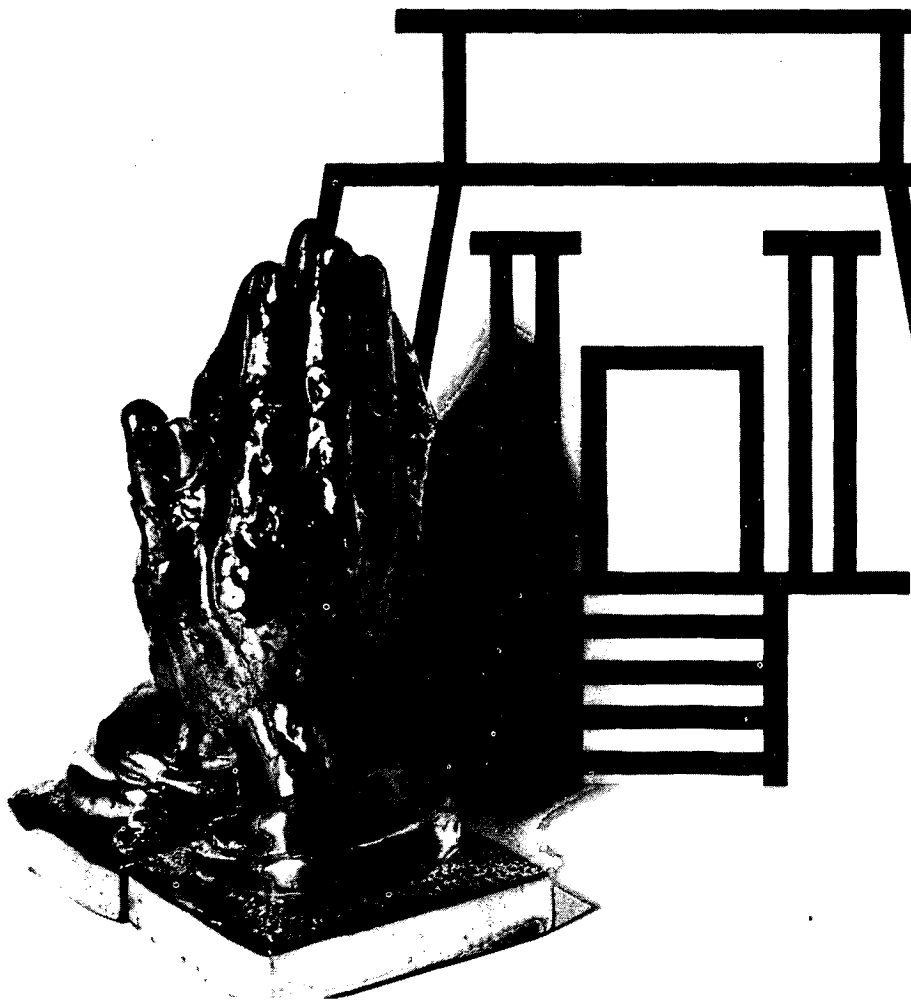
It was the worship of Baal rather than God that sealed the fate of Israel. “Moses traced the evils that would result from a departure from the statutes of Jehovah. Calling heaven and earth to witness, he declared that if, after having dwelt long in the Land of Promise, the people should introduce corrupt forms of worship and bow down to graven images and should refuse to return to the worship of the true God, the anger of the Lord would be aroused, and they would be carried away captive and scattered among the heathen.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 295.

It is important how and whom we worship.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 293-300.

The Temple and Its Dedication



"Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?" (2 Chron. 2:4-6).

These words were written in a letter from King Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre. In this statement Solomon revealed a deep understanding of the nature of the worship of God.

1. Solomon understood the reason for a house of worship. It was not to glorify its builder or to nourish the pride of the worshippers. It was to be a place where sacrifices were to be made, Sabbaths to be observed, and feasts to be celebrated. The purpose of the structure was to glorify God, not man.

2. Solomon was not satisfied to erect a mediocre place of worship. "The house which I build is great." God's house was worthy of the very best that could be provided.

3. Solomon understood that God could not be limited by any house man might build. God was always to be greater than His temple.

The purpose of this lesson is to review some of the significant events related to the building and dedication of Solomon's temple and from this study to learn more about the worship of God.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. The Temple Demanded the Best (1 Kings 6:21, 22)**
- 2. The Temple Conserved the Past (2 Chron. 5:2, 5, 10)**
- 3. God's Promises Regarding the Temple (1 Kings 6:11-13)**
- 4. Solomon's Prayer for Forgiveness (2 Chron. 6:21)**
- 5. Solomon's Prayer for the Worshipping Stranger (2 Chron. 6:32, 33)**
- 6. God Heard Solomon's Prayer (2 Chron. 7:1-3)**

Part 1
THE TEMPLE
DEMANDED
THE BEST

“So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold” (1 Kings 6:21, 22).

This passage is merely a sample indicating the quality of materials and workmanship that went into the temple.

“Of surpassing beauty and unrivaled splendor was the palatial building which Solomon and his associates erected for God and His worship. Garnished with precious stones, surrounded by spacious courts with magnificent approaches, and lined with carved cedar and burnished gold, the temple structure, with its brodered hangings and rich furnishings, was a fit emblem for the living church of God on earth, which through the ages has been building in accordance with the divine pattern, with materials that have been likened to ‘gold, silver, precious stones,’ ‘polished after the similitude of a palace.’ 1 Corinthians 3:12; Psalm 144:12. Of this spiritual temple Christ is ‘the chief Cornerstone.’”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 36.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible to spend too much in the building of God’s house?

If such an output of energy and wealth was appropriate in Solomon’s day in erecting a national temple for the worship of God, should not we provide the best we can today for local buildings for His worship?

“Many act as though the Creator of the heavens and the earth, He who has made everything that is lovely and beautiful in our world, would be pleased to see a house erected for Him without order or beauty. Some build large, convenient houses for themselves, but cannot afford to spend much upon a house which they are to dedicate to God. Every dollar of the means in their hands is the Lord’s. He has lent it to them for a little while, to use to His glory; yet they hand out this means for the advancement of the cause of God as though every dollar thus expended were a total loss.

“God would not have His people expend means extravagantly for show or ornament, but He would have them observe neatness, order, taste, and plain beauty in preparing a house for Him in which He is to meet with His people. Those who build a house for God should manifest as much greater interest, care, and taste in its arrangement as the object for which it is prepared is higher and more holy than that for which common dwelling houses are prepared.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 257.

FURTHER STUDY

1 Kings 5-7; Haggai 1:4-6.

Part 2
THE TEMPLE
CONSERVED
THE PAST

“Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. . . .

“And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up. . . .

“There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt” (2 Chron. 5:2, 5, 10).

What was the purpose of this procedure?

God does not change. Centuries may come and go, nations may rise and fall, cultures may appear and disappear, but God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This being true, there needs to be continuity in His worship. This does not mean that customs and forms may not change; but it does mean that the realities of the past will not be lightly laid aside.

Nearly five hundred years had passed since God gave Moses the tables of stone, since the ark of the covenant had been constructed. But the passing of five centuries had not lessened the importance of these elements in Israel's worship.

“At the appointed time the hosts of Israel, with richly clad representatives from many foreign nations, assembled in the temple courts. The scene was one of unusual splendor. Solomon, with the elders of Israel and the most influential men among the people, had returned from another part of the city, whence they had brought the ark of the testament. From the sanctuary on the heights of Gibeon had been transferred the ancient ‘tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle’ (2 Chronicles 5:5); and these cherished reminders of the earlier experiences of the children of Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness and their conquest of Canaan, now found a permanent home in the splendid building that had been erected to take the place of the portable structure.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 38.

These objects from the past were more than antiques. They preserved the content of the worship of God in a day when books were scarce and the past might have been easily forgotten. Let us beware of a “now” religion that ignores the heritage of the past. As Seventh-day Adventists, we have often repeated: “We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 31.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a church be modern in structure and yet retain important elements for worship?

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 38, 39.

Part 3
GOD'S PROMISES
REGARDING
THE TEMPLE

"And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying, Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments, to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel" (1 Kings 6:11-13).

What relation does this promise have to worship?

"In the midst of the architectural description is inserted a brief notice of the Lord's promise concerning the Temple. . . .

"One of the reasons the Lord sent His word at this time was that Solomon needed to be kept in constant remembrance of his solemn responsibilities to Heaven. Even when a man is engaged in working for the Lord, and is acting upon His command and in fulfillment of His design, it is possible to forget the necessity of continued rededication of purpose. The danger is always present that he will take steps that will forfeit the divine blessing. Again and again the Lord sends to His people messages destined to remind them of the vital importance of holding to basic principles which alone will ensure continued prosperity, peace, and blessing."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Kings 6:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what circumstances can God bless a project to set up a church building?

It was as if God had said to Solomon: Solomon, you are building Me a great temple at the cost of much labor and wealth. But remember, Solomon, this temple and its services will not take the place of obedience to My will. In order for the services of the temple to be significant, they must be performed by a priesthood and a people who are dedicated to Me and who are sensitive to My guidance. And remember, Solomon, I desire earnestly to fulfill My promises and to have a close relationship with Israel. I will not forsake Israel, but they may forsake Me.

True worship can never exist apart from a close relationship with God. It becomes mechanical and meaningless without the obedience prompted by love, but it is one of life's greatest experiences when its sacred rites are performed in the fear of God. Every time a church is dedicated to the worship of God, it would be appropriate to remember God's word to Solomon. God says to His people today: If you will follow Me, if you will dedicate your lives to Me, if you will become involved in unselfish service, if you will witness for Me to the world, I will be with your church, and I will bless your services, your worship, your activities, and your witness.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, pp. 1029, 1030.

Part 4
SOLOMON'S PRAYER
FOR FORGIVENESS

"Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive" (2 Chron. 6:21).

How did Solomon's prayer reveal that Solomon understood that God's promises were conditional?

Solomon did not presume upon the goodness of God merely because he had built Him a magnificent temple. Solomon's prayer, as the king knelt in the presence of the multitude, was primarily a prayer for forgiveness. Worship was more than an expression of emotion, it was an acceptance of responsibility.

Solomon asked that Israel might be forgiven whenever their sins against God got them into trouble and they repented. "If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, . . . if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be: then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers" (2 Chron. 6:28-31).

THINK IT THROUGH

What part do confession and forgiveness play in our life and worship? (See Ps. 51:17.)

As Solomon prayed, he was standing in the shadow of the temple that contained the mercy seat, the emblem of God's forgiveness. He was deeply involved in sacrifices, the Old Testament symbol for mediating the forgiveness of God. The worship of God is always involved in asking and receiving God's forgiveness. Confession is a basic element in worship, and the true worshiper may have every reason to believe that his sins are forgiven. The Old Testament emphasis on confession and forgiveness in worship prefigured the New Testament gospel which revolves around the same theme.

"The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 37.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Lord's Prayer" pp. 113-116.

Part 5
SOLOMON'S PRAYER FOR
THE WORSHIPING
STRANGER

"Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house; then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know . . . that this house which I have built is called by thy name" (2 Chron. 6:32, 33).

"One of the most touching portions of Solomon's dedicatory prayer was his plea to God for the strangers that should come from countries afar to learn more of Him whose fame had been spread abroad among the nations."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 66. This part of the prayer is sandwiched between the eloquent pleas for forgiveness that precede and follow it.

Why did Solomon include this request in his prayer? Isa. 56:7.

The temple was intended not only as a center of worship for Israel, but as a lighthouse for all nations. The temple worship was to have a missionary dimension. Solomon apparently recognized that this phase of the worship of God might be lost. And it was. "When the Temple was first established, Solomon remembered the strangers of other lands, that they too might hear of God's covenant of grace and come to the Temple to worship Him. Israel was to be a light that was to enlighten the world. Had they been faithful to their divine mission, the nation would not have perished, but would have continued to grow till it embraced all the nations of earth, till Jerusalem would have become the world's metropolis, and its Temple would have become the source of a river of life to bring health and healing to all."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Kings 8:43.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does the worship of God still have a missionary dimension?

"We spend millions of dollars on evangelism, and rightly so; but the results of our evangelistic efforts will be dissipated if our new converts are driven away by an irreverent, unsatisfying Sabbath service. We engage in lay activities that take us up and down the streets of our cities with literature and with invitations to enroll in Bible courses. This is good; but are we deterred from the finest possible missionary activity—bringing our non-Adventist friends to our churches—by failure to provide worshipful Sabbath services? . . .

"These questions demand an answer."—Norval F. Pease, *And Worship Him* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn., 1967), p. 7.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 66-68.

Part 6
GOD HEARD
SOLOMON'S PRAYER

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever" (2 Chron. 7:1-3).

"The king had done everything within his power to encourage the people to give themselves wholly to God and His service, and to magnify His holy name. And now once more, as at Gibeon early in his reign, Israel's ruler was given evidence of divine acceptance and blessing. In a night vision the Lord appeared to him with the message: 'I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to Myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people; if My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever: and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually.' Verses [2 Chron. 7:] 12-16."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 45, 46.

What happened to prevent the fulfillment of God's promises in the reign of Solomon? 1 Kings 11:4, 5.

"Almost imperceptibly he [Solomon] began to trust less and less in divine guidance and blessing, and to put confidence in his own strength. . . . Yielding to the temptations incident to his success and his honored position, he forgot the Source of his prosperity."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 55.

The worship of God gave way to the worship of man.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we in danger of forgetting our great experiences of communion with God?

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). The fact that we have worshipped God, and that He has answered our prayers, does not excuse us from vigilance.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 45-50.

Isaiah's Concern About Worship

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day:

" 'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations, proclaim that his name is exalted.

" 'Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;

let this be known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel' " (Isa. 12:3-6, RSV).

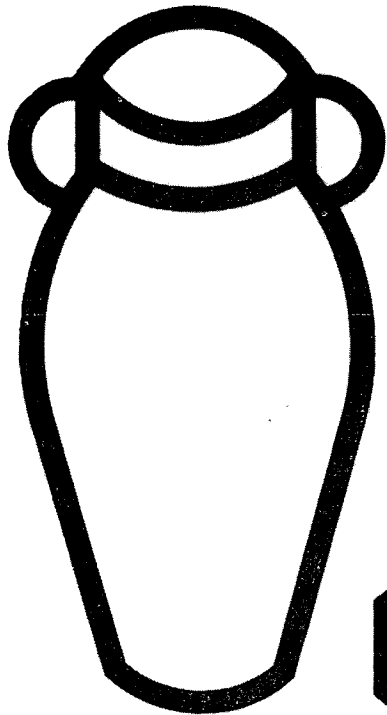
There was much in Isaiah's day to bring discouragement to the sensitive soul of the prophet.

"The times in which Isaiah was to labor were fraught with peculiar peril to the people of God. The prophet was to witness the invasion of Judah by the combined armies of northern Israel and of Syria; he was to behold the Assyrian hosts encamped before the chief cities of the kingdom. . . .

"But the dangers from without, overwhelming though they seemed, were not so serious as the dangers from within. It was the perversity of his people that brought to the Lord's servant the greatest perplexity and the deepest depression. . . .

"The outlook was particularly discouraging as regards the social conditions of the people. . . . Justice was perverted, and no pity was shown the poor. . . .

"With oppression and wealth came pride and love of display, gross drunkenness, and a spirit of revelry. . . . And in Isaiah's day idolatry itself no longer provoked surprise. . . .



Iniquitous practices had become so prevalent among all classes that the few who remained true to God were often tempted to lose heart and to give way to discouragement and despair. It seemed as if God's purpose for Israel were about to fail and that the rebellious nation was to suffer a fate similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 305, 306.

Yet for sixty years Isaiah was a prophet of hope to Israel, and with great sensitivity he called Israel to the worship of God.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. A Warning Against Hypocritical Worship (Isa. 1:12, 13)
2. A Warning Against Idol Worship (Isa. 2:8)
3. Isaiah's Vision of God (Isa. 6:1-4)
4. Isaiah's Humility in God's Presence (Isa. 6:5)
5. Isaiah Receives God's Blessing (Isa. 6:6, 7)
6. Isaiah Accepts God's Commission (Isa. 6:8)



Part 1
A WARNING AGAINST
HYPOCRITICAL
WORSHIP

**"When you come to appear before me,
who requires of you
this trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly" (Isa. 1:12,
13, RSV).**

In the Old Testament prophets there is a continual struggle between religious formality and spiritual experience. Isaiah is joined by Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others in warning against the danger of going through the motions of religion without understanding the real nature of service for God.

"Judah was still, outwardly, a very religious nation. Great numbers of sacrifices were offered at the Temple, but there was little true religion. While maintaining the external forms of religion the professed people of God had forgotten what it was that God really wanted of them. They were willing to offer sacrifices, but not to give their hearts to the Lord. They knew the forms of religion, but they did not understand their need of a Saviour or the meaning of righteousness. Isaiah endeavored to bring the people to their senses. . . . By a series of pointed questions he hoped to bring home to them the fact that a religion consisting only of outward forms was an offense in the sight of God." *8SDA Bible Commentary*, on Isa. 1:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways may we substitute formalism for godliness?

"In every age, a majority of the professed followers of Christ have disregarded those precepts which enjoin self-denial and humility, which require modesty and simplicity of conversation, deportment, and apparel. The result has ever been the same,—departure from the teachings of the gospel leads to the adoption of the fashions, customs, and principles of the world. Vital godliness gives place to a dead formalism. The presence and power of God, withdrawn from those world-loving circles, are found with a class of humbler worshipers, who are willing to obey the teachings of the Sacred Word. Through successive generations, this course has been pursued. One after another, different denominations have risen and, yielding their simplicity, have lost, in a great measure, their early power."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 354.

FURTHER STUDY

Jer. 7:3-12; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8.

Part 2
A WARNING AGAINST
IDOL WORSHIP

**“Their land is filled with idols;
they bow down to the work of their hands,
to what their own fingers have made” (Isa. 2:8, RSV).**

One of the great problems of Isaiah's day was that of the worship of idols. It seemed a hopeless task to wean his people away from the gods of their neighbors. Isaiah resorted to sarcasm in his attempt to get his idea across. (Read Isaiah 44:12-21.)

“14. The rain. Men may plant the seed from which the tree sprouts, but only God can make it grow. Without the power of God there would be no tree from which to carve an idol!

“15. Yea, he maketh a god. It is a mere matter of chance which piece of wood is used for fuel and which for the idol!

“16. He burneth part. The folly of making a god out of something a man has the power to destroy!

“He roasteth roast. Dead Sea scroll IQIs^a reads, 'upon his charcoal he sits.'

“17. Deliver me. The wood could not have delivered itself from the fire had he chosen to burn it instead of worship it! How foolish of a man who has used most of his wood for fuel to shape one of the leftover sticks into an idol and expect it to have the strength and the intelligence to save his life!

“18. They have not known. Men who do worship images have little knowledge. Their foolish hearts are dark, and though they profess to be wise they are fools (Rom. 1:21-23). . . .

“19. The stock of a tree. Literally, 'the dry wood of a tree.' He who worships an idol merely pays reverence to a block of wood. He talks to it and bows down before it, little thinking that it would be as sensible to make his requests to a staff. . . .

“20. He feedeth on ashes. How foolish a man would be to make a meal of ashes, expecting nourishment from them. It is equally foolish to think that an idol can benefit man.

“21. Remember these. God calls Israel to heed what He has said about the folly of worshiping idols. Israel belongs to God; they are to serve Him.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Isa. 44:14-21.

THINK IT THROUGH

What experience was intended to save both the ancient and the modern church from idolatry? (See Ex. 31: 13-17.)

“The Lord designed that by a faithful observance of the Sabbath command, Israel should continually be reminded of their accountability to Him as their Creator and their Redeemer. While they should keep the Sabbath in the proper spirit, idolatry could not exist.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 182.

FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 40:12-26.

Part 3
ISAIAH'S VISION
OF GOD**What experience came to the prophet in a year of calamity?**

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

"'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

"And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke" (Isa. 6:1-4, RSV).

"In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah was permitted in vision to look into the holy place, and into the holy of holies in the heavenly sanctuary. The curtains of the innermost sanctuary were drawn aside, and a throne high and lifted up, towering as it were to the very heavens, was revealed to his gaze. An indescribable glory emanated from a personage on the throne, and His train filled the temple, as His glory will finally fill the earth. Cherubim were on either side of the mercy-seat, as guards round the great king, and they glowed with the glory that enshrouded them from the presence of God. As their songs of praise resounded in deep, earnest notes of adoration, the pillars of the gate trembled, as if shaken by an earthquake. These holy beings sang forth the praise and glory of God with lips unpolluted with sin. The contrast between the feeble praise which he had been accustomed to bestow upon the Creator and the fervid praises of the seraphim, astonished and humiliated the prophet. He had for the time being the sublime privilege of appreciating the spotless purity of Jehovah's exalted character."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1139, 1140.

THINK IT THROUGH**What does Isaiah's experience tell us about worship?**

Parts 4-6 of this lesson continue to answer this question. The first lesson is that the worshiper must "see the Lord." He may not receive a vision of the temple in heaven, as Isaiah did, nevertheless he will become conscious of the presence of God. This consciousness will shut out the world, and make him sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This realization of the presence of God comes only to the person who has prepared himself for it by dedication and commitment. Only the pure in heart will see God. (See Matt. 5:8.)

FURTHER STUDY*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Isa. 6:1-4.

Part 4
ISAIAH'S HUMILITY
IN GOD'S PRESENCE

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).

Did Isaiah really mean that he was in need of personal forgiveness and transformation?

"Isaiah had denounced the sin of others; but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation he had pronounced upon them. He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless ceremony in his worship of God. He had not known this until the vision was given him of the Lord. How little now appeared his wisdom and talents as he looked upon the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary. How unworthy he was! how unfitted for sacred service! His view of himself might be expressed in the language of the apostle Paul, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1139.

THINK IT THROUGH

After we have had a glimpse of God, what is the next step in worship and Christian experience?

"It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.' 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

What does a deep feeling of spiritual need have to do with the worship of God? Here, again, worship and salvation are closely related. A glimpse of God makes us feel our need of Him. Feeling our need puts us in the attitude where God can help us. God's action in forgiving our sins and transforming our lives causes us to come to Him in grateful adoration and worship. In fact, a real experience of conversion and regeneration cannot be separated from the experience of worship. The closer our relation to God, the more anxious we will be to worship Him, and the more we worship Him, the closer will be our relationship to God.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Sinner's Need of Christ," pp. 17-22.

Part 5
ISAIAH RECEIVES
GOD'S BLESSING

What effect does a genuine worship experience have on the personal life?

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isa. 6:6, 7).

When we really see God, respond to Him, and recognize our need, He responds by forgiving our sins and transforming our lives. One of the primary purposes of worship is to keep us in touch with the One whose transforming friendship can make us what we ought to be. This cleansing and converting power can only be experienced if our worship is sincere. Mere formalities will leave our lives empty and unchanged.

“As they [God's people in the last days] look by faith into the holy of holies, and see the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, they perceive that they are a people of unclean lips,—a people whose lips have often spoken vanity, and whose talents have not been sanctified and employed to the glory of God. Well may they despair as they contrast their own weakness and unworthiness with the purity and loveliness of the glorious character of Christ. But if they, like Isaiah, will receive the impression the Lord designs shall be made upon the heart, if they will humble their souls before God, there is hope for them. The bow of promise is above the throne, and the work done for Isaiah will be performed in them. God will respond to the petitions coming from the contrite heart.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1139.

THINK IT THROUGH

When we go to the church to worship, what can ensure that we experience God's transforming grace?

“Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His service should be made interesting and attractive and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form. We must live for Christ minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day; then Christ will dwell in us, and when we meet together, His love will be in our hearts, welling up like a spring in the desert, refreshing all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the waters of life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 609.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “Faith and Acceptance,” pp. 49-55.

Part 6
ISAIAH ACCEPTS
GOD'S COMMISSION

What is the relation between worship and a sense of mission?

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).

"As he [Isaiah] stood in the portico of the temple, the Lord revealed Himself to him. The veil of the temple was withdrawn, the door lifted, and he had a view of the holy of holies within the veil. He saw the God of Israel before the throne high and lifted up, and the train of His glory filled the temple. As Isaiah senses his own sinfulness, he cries out, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' And there was seen the hand that took the live coal from off the altar, and touched his lips, and bade him be clean. Then he was ready to go with the message, and he said, 'Send me'; for he knew that the Spirit of God would be with the message.

"To those who are engaged in the work of God, in the conversion of souls, it would seem as though it was impossible to reach the obdurate heart. This is how Isaiah felt, but when he saw that there was a God above the cherubim, and that they were ready to work with God, he was ready to carry the message."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1141.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we summarize Isaiah's contribution toward a clearer understanding of the worship of God?

Isaiah was tremendously concerned about his people. They had lost sight of the real meaning of worship, and many of them were worshiping idols. To help him meet this great need, God gave him a vision. When he saw God, he felt his own need. When he felt his own need, God met that need. When God met his need, Isaiah was equipped to go on God's mission. *This is the model of the authentic worship of God in every age.* Every service of worship, be it personal, family, or church, should have these ingredients—a glimpse of God, a feeling of humility, an experience of transformation, and a dedication to mission.

"To everyone who becomes a partaker of His grace the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot and place, saying, 'Here am I; send me.' Isaiah 6:8. Upon the minister of the word, the missionary nurse, the Christian physician, the individual Christian, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic—the responsibility rests upon all. It is our work to reveal to men the gospel of their salvation. Every enterprise in which we engage should be a means to this end."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 148.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 148-151.

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (Psalm 95:6, 7, first part).

According to the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 625, twenty-three of the 150 psalms deal with “Prayer, Praise, and Adoration.” These are Psalms 16, 55, 65, 86, 89, 90, 95-100, 103, 104, 107, 142, 143, 145-150. These psalms contain some of the most widely known gems of sacred poetry. For example:

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11).

“As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Ps. 55:16, 17).

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee” (Ps. 86:5).

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Ps. 89:7).

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Ps. 90:1, 2).

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth” (Ps. 96:9).

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Ps. 100:4).

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Ps. 103:1, 2).

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Ps. 107:1).

Among the songs of praise are Psalms 145 to 150. In this lesson we will study these six, each of them

attributed to David. They reveal in a unique way the response to his heavenly Father of one who knows God.

“There are psalms for every mood, for every need: psalms for the discouraged, for the aged, for the despairing, for the sick, for the sinner; and psalms for the youthful, for the vigorous, for the hopeful, for the faithful, believing child of God, for the triumphant saint. . . . There are psalms in which the sinner carries ‘in the secret’ of God’s ‘presence’ ‘under the shadow’ of His ‘wings’ and pours out his soul alone; and there are psalms in which the saint of God joins the vast assembly of worshipers in the great congregation, and, to the accompaniment of all manner of instruments, shouts aloud the praise of God. And throughout the whole collection, God is exalted as the



solution to all man’s problems, the ultimate All in all: our hope, our confidence, our strength, our triumph—incarnate in the Messiah, whose coming brings redemption and ushers in the universal and eternal reign of righteousness.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, pp. 620, 621.

Worship in the Psalms

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Praise for the Lord's Goodness and Power (Ps. 145:1-3)
2. Praise for the Lord's Righteous Acts (Ps. 146:7-9)
3. Praise for the Lord's Favor to Jerusalem (Ps. 147:1, 2)
4. All Creation Exhorted to Praise the Lord (Ps. 148:1-4)
5. Israel Exhorted to Praise the Lord (Ps. 149:1, 2)
6. A Call to Praise God With Music (Ps. 150:1-6)



Part 1
PRAISE FOR THE
LORD'S GOODNESS
AND POWER

How often did the psalmist say he would bless the Lord?

"I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable" (Ps. 145:1-3).

"Every day. David's praise was not intermittent—not one day in seven, but every day; not for a brief span, but for all time. Our love to God and our praise to Him should be a daily matter. Every day God sends unnumbered blessings to His children, and there is every reason why we should praise Him daily."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Ps. 145:2.

What specific reasons for praising God are listed in this psalm?

God's greatness (verse 3); God's works (verses 4-6); God's goodness (verses 7-9); God's kingly power (verses 10-13); God's ability to restore (verse 14); God's liberality (verses 15, 16); God's nearness (verses 18, 19).

Praise for the goodness and power of God will change our attitude toward life. "Then let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love. Let us educate our souls to be hopeful and to abide in the light shining from the cross of Calvary."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.

In both *The Ministry of Healing*, (p. 435) and *Testimonies* (vol. 8, p. 283), Ellen White quotes Psalm 145:3-21, and comments, "As we learn more and more of what God is, and of what we ourselves are in His sight, we shall fear and tremble before Him."

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent do I lack this sense of the greatness, goodness, and power of God that would make me reverent and worshipful?

In describing the final scenes of the great controversy, Ellen White says, "God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. 'All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee.'"—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 670, 671.

Is my reverence for God and my knowledge of Him great enough today so that it will be the natural thing for me to join in His praise at the end of the drama of the ages?

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Psalm 145.

Part 2
PRaise FOR THE
RD'S RIGHTEOUS ACTS

"The Lord looseth the prisoners: the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous: the Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down" (Ps. 146:7-9).

What similar Old Testament text did Jesus quote at the synagogue at Nazareth?

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61:1). (Note that when Jesus referred to this text in Luke 4:18, He added the phrase, "and recovering of sight to the blind.")

What other reasons for worshiping God are listed in Psalm 146?

1. God is Creator (verse 6).
2. God "keepeth truth for ever" (RSV; "keeps faith") (verse 6).
3. God is the judge (verse 7).
4. God feeds the hungry (verse 7).
5. God will reign forever (verse 10).

THINK IT THROUGH

What do passages like these tell us about the privilege of worshiping God?

Every one of us, every day, is the recipient of multiplied blessings from God. As Paul said, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). These blessings include provision for our temporal needs, forgiveness for sins, ability to overcome sin, security in an insecure world, divine companionship, the fellowship of the church, and hope of eternal life. Surely these blessings are reason enough for praise and worship.

"Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. Then let us not cast away our confidence, but have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. . . . Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us,—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed,—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 125.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Psalm 146.

Part 3
PRAISE FOR THE
LORD'S FAVOR
TO JERUSALEM

"Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel" (Ps. 147:1, 2).

What does this statement about "Jerusalem" mean to us?

To the Israelites, Jerusalem was the center of national and spiritual life, a symbol of their relationship to their God. The nearest parallel we have today is the church. It is appropriate to apply the statements of Psalm 147 to the church.

What does God do for His people that should inspire their praise and worship?

1. He gathers the outcasts (verse 2).
2. He heals the brokenhearted (verse 3).
3. He has infinite power and understanding (verse 5).
4. He lifts up the meek (verse 6).
5. He subdues the wicked (verse 6).
6. He provides food (verses 8, 9, 14).
7. He provides security (verse 13).
8. He blesses their children (verse 13).
9. He provides peace (verse 14).
10. He provides water for the land (verses 16-18).
11. He reveals His laws (verse 19).

"How precious are the lessons of this psalm. We might well devote study to the last four psalms of David."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 371.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do these promises to the church mean to me personally?

"Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer.

"Circumstances may separate friends; the restless waters of the wide sea may roll between us and them. But no circumstances, no distance, can separate us from the Saviour. Wherever we may be, He is at our right hand, to support, maintain, uphold, and cheer."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p.72.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Psalm 147; Psalm 135.

Part 4
ALL CREATION
EXHORTED TO
PRAYSE THE LORD

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens" (Ps. 148:1-4).

Psalm 148 is divided into two parts: the praise of God in heaven (verses 1-6), and the praise of God on earth (verses 7-14).

What is meant by praising God "from the heavens"?

The kingdom of God encompasses the entire universe. This psalm not only pictures all the beings of the universe praising God, but it also personifies the sun, moon, and stars, and other created things as returning praise to their Creator.

The same sentiment is found in Psalm 103: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments. . . . Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul" (verses 20-22).

Under what circumstances are the followers of God to offer their praises to Him? Ps. 146:2; 145:1, 2.

Praise for God is appropriate under many circumstances. In *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 108, 109, there is a section that connects singing of psalms of praise with churches and church schools:

"I saw in different places new companies of believers being raised up and meetinghouses being erected. . . . In the basement of the church, above ground, I was shown a room provided for a school where the children could be educated in the truths of God's word. . . .

"As the work was being pressed forward, I heard the voices of children and parents singing: . . .

'Praise ye the Lord from the heavens:

Praise Him in the heights.

Praise ye Him, all His angels:

Praise ye Him, all His hosts.

Praise ye Him, sun and moon:

Praise Him, all ye stars of light.' Psalm 148:1-3.

"The companies that are raised up need a place of worship. Schools are needed where Bible instruction may be given to the children."

THINK IT THROUGH

Since the above instruction was given, churches and schools have been multiplied around the world. Do the praises of God still reverberate in these buildings? It is this spirit of worship that makes them effective.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Psalm 148.

Part 5
ISRAEL EXHORTED
TO PRAISE
THE LORD

What place does joy have in the worship God?

"Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King" (Ps. 149:1, 2).

This brief psalm stresses the joy of worship. "Let Israel rejoice." "Let the children of Zion be joyful." "Let the saints be joyful in glory" (verse 5).

"The religious life is not one of gloom and of sadness but of peace and joy coupled with Christlike dignity and holy solemnity. We are not encouraged by our Saviour to cherish doubts and fears and distressing forebodings; these bring no relief to the soul and should be rebuked rather than praised. We may have joy unspeakable and full of glory."—*Evangelism*, p. 180.

"God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 290.

"Anciently the Lord bade Israel, when they met together for His service, 'Ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.' Deuteronomy 12:7. That which is done for the glory of God should be done with cheerfulness, with songs of praise and thanksgiving, not with sadness and gloom. . . .

"It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 103.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian maintain a spirit of happiness? (See Ps. 19:8.)

"Those who in everything make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 38.

"A meek and quiet spirit will not be ever looking out for happiness for itself, but will seek for self-forgetfulness and find sweet content and true satisfaction in making others happy."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 536.

"True happiness springs from a heart at peace with God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 942.

A happy Christian life tends to produce a worshipping Christian, because happiness must be expressed in praise and gratitude. If we were happier, might it be possible that our worship would be more spontaneous?

FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 16.

Part 6
A CALL TO PRAISE
GOD WITH MUSIC

What was the function of sacred music in ancient times?

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 150:1-6).

"The service of song was made a regular part of religious worship, and David composed psalms . . . to be sung by the people in their journeys to the national altar at the annual feasts. The influence thus exerted was far-reaching, and it resulted in freeing the nation from idolatry. Many of the surrounding peoples, beholding the prosperity of Israel, were led to think favorably of Israel's God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 711.

What is the function of sacred music in our day?

"As the children of Israel, journeying through the wilderness, cheered their way by the music of sacred song, so God bids His children today gladden their pilgrim life. There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such song has wonderful power. It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort.

"It is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth. How often to the soul hard-pressed and ready to despair, memory recalls some word of God's,—the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song,—and temptations lose their power, life takes on new meaning and new purpose, and courage and gladness are imparted to other souls!"—*Education*, pp. 167, 168.

"Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God. . . .

"Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. As we thus open the heart to the sunlight of the Saviour's presence, we shall have health and His blessing."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 254.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we utilizing this blessing of musical expression as we might?

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 159-163.

Jesus and Worship

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23, 24).

The woman at Jacob’s well had raised a question regarding the proper place to worship God—Jerusalem or Samaria? Jesus answered her question by describing the nature of true worship.

“Not by seeking a holy mountain or a sacred temple are men brought into communion with heaven. Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. . . . Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit’s working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 189.

This concept of worship appears again and again in the teachings of Jesus. He saw the futility of the formal worship of the day. He recognized that spiritual worship was fast disappearing. As a result, one important aspect of His work was “to establish an altogether different worship.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 157. The purpose of this lesson is to explore Jesus’ teaching regarding worship, to examine the respects in which it is “altogether different,” and to make applications to the life of the Christian today.

It is inevitable that Jesus should have had something to say about worship. One theologian has said, “Christian worship is the most momentous, the most urgent, the most glorious action that can take place in human life.” If



this be true, surely Jesus would not overlook such an important part of Christian experience.

Worship is a redeemed man's response to his Redeemer. It is what happens when a person really senses the grace of God. It is the sense of awe and gratitude that takes possession of us when we come to realize what God

has done for us. Worship, therefore, is closely related to Christ and His gospel. The Christian cannot help but express his gratitude, his adoration, and his love. This may be done in various ways. Worship is one of these ways.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Jesus Teaches Reverence**
(John 2:13-16)
2. **Jesus Relates Worship and Life** (Matt. 5:23, 24)
3. **Jesus Relates Worship and Obedience** (Matt. 15:8, 9)
4. **Jesus Teaches How Not to Pray** (Matt. 6:5, 7, 8)
5. **Jesus Teaches How to Pray** (Matt. 6:9-13)
6. **Jesus Teaches Worshipful Sabbath Observance** (Mark 2:27, 28)



Part 1
JESUS TEACHES
REVERENCE

How did Jesus show His concern for reverence for the place of worship and divine services?

“And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise” (John 2:13-16).

“He [Jesus] acted as He did because God’s house was being desecrated. In the Temple there was worship without reverence. . . . Worship without reverence can be a terrible thing. . . . It may be the use of the house of God for purposes and in a way where reverence and the true function of God’s house is forgotten. In that Temple court at Jerusalem there would be arguments about prices, disputes about coins that were worn and thin, the clatter of the market place in the court of the house of God. That particular way of irreverence may not be common now, but there are other ways of offering an irreverent worship to God.”—From *The Gospel of John*, translated and interpreted by William Barclay (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 98, 99. Used by permission.

“So great was the confusion that the worshipers were disturbed, and the words addressed to the Most High were drowned in the uproar that invaded the temple.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 155.

“The priests and rulers were called to be the representatives of God to the nation; they should have corrected the abuses of the temple court. They should have given to the people an example of integrity and compassion. Instead of studying their own profit, they should have considered the situation and needs of the worshipers, and should have been ready to assist those who were not able to buy the required sacrifices. But this they did not do. Avarice had hardened their hearts.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 156, 157.

THINK IT THROUGH

What lessons does Jesus’ cleansing of the temple have for us?

1. The church is a house for prayer, and not a place where we buy or sell.
2. The church is where our thoughts are turned to God and His goodness, and not to man and his wickedness.
3. The church is a place where we “tread softly” because we do not want to draw attention away from God and to ourselves.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 154-161.

Part 2
JESUS RELATES
WORSHIP AND LIFE

What prerequisite to effective worship did Jesus describe in the Sermon on the Mount?

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24).

What life situation does this text suggest?

Picture a sincere follower of God who had saved for many months to present a gift to God. He is on his way to the altar where this gift will be dedicated, when it occurs to him that his neighbor is angry with him as a result of a business deal. What should he do? Could he not make his peace with his neighbor after he returns home from the religious service? No. Jesus says, Leave your gift. Go all the way home. Find your neighbor and straighten up the dispute. Then come back to the altar and offer your gift.

What does this text tell us about worship?

"The act of offering a personal 'gift,' or sacrifice, was considered to be among the most holy and important of all religious acts, but even it must take second place under the circumstances set forth. It is possible that the 'gift' here mentioned was a sacrifice made to secure divine forgiveness and favor. Christ insists that men must make things right with their fellow men before they can be reconciled with God (see Matt. 6:15; 1 John 4:20). The more important obligation takes precedence over one of less importance. Reconciliation is more important than sacrifice."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Matt. 5:24.

"Many are zealous in religious services, while between them and their brethren are unhappy differences which they might reconcile. God requires them to do all in their power to restore harmony. Until they do this, He cannot accept their services."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

THINK IT THROUGH

Which is more important, to attend the church service, or to be at peace with one's brethren?

Just as a sin offering for a theft would be ineffective until the stolen goods were returned, so an endeavor to go through the forms of worshipping God is a mockery if we lack kindness, compassion, and forgiveness for our fellowman.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 309-311.

Part 3
JESUS RELATES
WORSHIP AND
OBEDIENCE

Under what conditions is worship meaningless?

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8, 9).

What is the background of this passage?

A delegation of scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem questioned Jesus because His disciples did not observe the ceremonial washings that were considered so important by the Jews. Jesus replied by pointing out the hypocrisy of one of their traditions that made it possible for them to evade their responsibility to look after the needs of their parents. He thus revealed the inconsistency of their religion which demanded meticulous observance of ceremonies but permitted neglect of the needs of aging parents. In order to reinforce His reproof Jesus paraphrased Isaiah 29:13. A study of this passage in Isaiah and the parallel Gospel passages in Matthew 15 and Mark 7 reveals a great truth: *God demands obedience as an evidence of the genuineness of worship.* The heart and the hands must support what the mouth proclaims.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can a person worship God acceptably when he has not yet put away a known sin?

"Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with them by His Spirit. But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 50.

Cain's worship was not acceptable because it was contrary to divine direction. Israel's many lapses into Baal worship were self destructive because Baal worship was immoral. The worship of Israel in the time of the prophets was unacceptable because the worshipers were violating the basic principles of human relations. Savonarola is quoted as saying, "True worship consists of holiness of life."

"It [the divine Spirit] will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 189.

FURTHER STUDY

Mark 7:1-23; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 395-398.

Part 4
JESUS TEACHES
HOW NOT
TO PRAY

What mistakes should the Christian avoid when he prays?

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matt. 6:5, 7, 8).

Why did Jesus warn against ostentation?

“The Jewish system of prayer made ostentation very easy. The Jew prayed standing, with hands stretched out, palms upwards, and with head bowed. Prayer had to be said at 9 am, 12 midday, and 3 pm. It had to be said wherever a man might be, and it was easy for a man to make sure that at these hours he was at a busy street corner, or in a crowded city square, so that all the world might see with what devotion he prayed. It was easy for a man to halt on the top step of the entrance to the synagogue, and there pray lengthily and demonstratively, so that all men might admire his exceptional piety. It was easy to put on an act of prayer which all the world might see.”—From *The Gospel of Matthew*, translated and interpreted by William Barclay (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), vol. 1, p. 196. Used by permission.

Why did Jesus warn against repetition?

“There was an attempt to pile up every possible title and adjective in the address of the prayer to God. . . . There is one Jewish prayer which actually begins with sixteen different adjectives attached to the name of God. There was a kind of intoxication with words. When a man begins to think more of how he is praying than of what he is praying, his prayer dies upon his lips.”—From *The Gospel of Matthew*, translated and interpreted by William Barclay, vol. 1, p. 196.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we be guilty of ostentation and repetition in prayer?

The whole point of prayer is communion with God. The person who prays the same prayer over and over again, with practically no variation, is as guilty of repetition as were the religionists of old.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “The True Motive in Service,” pp. 83-87.

Part 5
JESUS TEACHES
HOW TO PRAY

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

What does Jesus’ model prayer teach us about prayer?

Corporate prayer. Jesus counseled his followers to go alone into their “closet” to pray, yet His prayer used the first person plural—“Our” Father—Give “us” “our” daily bread—Forgive “us” “our” debts—Lead “us” not into temptation—Deliver “us” from evil. Jesus wished His praying followers to identify themselves with other people and to include them in their prayers.

Prayer should include praise. The first three petitions of the Lord’s prayer extol the name, the kingdom, and the will of God. All true prayer must recognize the greatness of God. The prayer, in Matthew’s record, also closes on this note.

Prayer may include petition. “The first half of the prayer Jesus has taught us is in regard to the name and kingdom and will of God—that His name may be honored, His kingdom established, His will performed. When you have thus made God’s service your first interest, you may ask with confidence that your own needs may be supplied. If you have renounced self and given yourself to Christ you are a member of the family of God, and everything in the Father’s house is for you.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 110.

What is the relation between prayer and worship?

Prayer includes worship. Prayer is also one of the most significant aspects of Christian experience. It is on our knees that we come to know and worship God; and it is on our knees that we find spiritual strength and fulfillment. The relationship between the worship of God and Christian living becomes real in the experience of prayer.

THINK IT THROUGH

How should we use the Lord’s Prayer in structuring our own prayer life?

Jesus said, “After this manner . . . pray ye.” He did not intend that Christians should limit themselves to repeating the Lord’s Prayer. He expected that our prayers would be characterized by the same simplicity, the same reverence, the same concerns that are found in the model prayer.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “The Lord’s Prayer,” pp. 102-109.

Part 6
JESUS TEACHES
WORSHIPFUL SABBATH
OBSERVANCE

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath” (Mark 2:27, 28).

There are seven recorded miracles of Jesus performed on the Sabbath:

1. The healing of the lame man at Bethesda (John 5:1-15).
2. The demoniac in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28).
3. Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31).
4. The man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6).
5. The man born blind (John 9:1-41).
6. The crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17).
7. The man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6).

Each miracle demonstrated proper Sabbath keeping.

What should be our attitude toward Sabbath keeping as part of our worship?

“The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to worship, and to holy deeds.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 207.

“No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,’ the Lord said also to them, ‘Ye shall be holy men unto Me.’ Ex. 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

THINK IT THROUGH

How should the Sabbath hours be spent? (See Matt. 12:12.)

“God has given man six days in which to do his own work and carry on the usual business of life; but He claims one day, which He has set apart and sanctified. He gives it to man as a day in which he may rest from labor and devote himself to worship and the improvement of his spiritual condition.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 249.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 281-289.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:23-25).

The format of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to be that of a sermon. In the above verses the preacher exhorts his congregation regarding some very important items relating to their Christian experience:

First, he urges, “Let us be firm and unwavering in the confession of our hope” (verse 23, NEB). He was encouraging Christians to share their faith, their experience, and their hope.

Second, he continued, “We ought to see how each of us may best arouse others to love and active goodness” (verse 24, NEB). He recognized the necessity of Christians helping each other find fulfillment in their Christian lives.

Finally, he concludes, “Not staying away from our meetings, as some do, but rather encouraging one another, all the more because you see the Day drawing near” (verse 25, NEB). One of the means of building a church of active, sharing Christians was the experience of meeting together. And this part of the life of the church was to become more and more important as the church approached the second coming of its Lord.

The New Testament church was continually meeting together. A congregation of 500 met with the Lord after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6), and another group of 120 met in an upper room after the resurrection (Acts 1:15). Part of the experience of the 3000 converts at Pentecost was “fellowship” (Acts 2:41, 42). When Peter and John were released from prison, “they went to their own company” (Acts 4:23). When Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch, “a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people”

(Acts 11:26). When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, they gathered the church together and “rehearsed all that God had done with them” (Acts 14:27). Paul’s letters were usually sent to churches to be read to congregations in public meetings.

The church of this time had no church buildings, so far as we know. They met in homes, often in secret to avoid persecution. Regardless of circumstances, the working, worshiping congregation was the basic unit of the early Christian church.

The purpose of this lesson will be to discover what these early Christians did when they met together.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. The Church Praises God (Acts 2:46, 47)**
- 2. The Church Prays for Help (Acts 4:29, 30)**
- 3. Prayer Results in Witness (Acts 4:31-33)**
- 4. The Church Prays for All Men (1 Tim. 2:1-4)**
- 5. The Church Sings (Col. 3:16)**
- 6. The Church Listens to the Word (1 Tim. 4:13, 14)**

The Early Christians and Worship



Part 1
THE CHURCH
PRAISES GOD

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people" (Acts 2:46, 47).

What are some of the examples of "praising God" found in the records of the life of the New Testament church?

1. Regarding the very first Christians, immediately following the ascension, it is said, "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:52, 53).

2. When Peter and John were released from prison (Acts 4), they returned to the church and recounted their experiences. "And when they [the church] heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 4:24).

3. Throughout the New Testament are statements of praise which very likely were used in the services of the church. A good example is Ephesians 3:20, 21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

THINK IT THROUGH

What are different ways of praising God in our worship services?

"The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church. Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints who on earth meet to worship God. In the inner court of heaven they listen to the testimony of the witnesses for Christ in the outer court on earth, and the praise and thanksgiving from the worshipers below is taken up in the heavenly anthem, and praise and rejoicing sound through the heavenly courts because Christ has not died in vain for the fallen sons of Adam. . . . Let us remember that our praises are supplemented by the choirs of the angelic host above.

"Then as you meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, sing praises to Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . .

"While we review, not the dark chapters in our experience, but the manifestations of God's great mercy and unfailing love, we shall praise far more than complain. . . . Praise, like clear-flowing streams, will come from God's truly believing ones."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 366, 367.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 360-368.

Part 2
THE CHURCH
PRAYS FOR HELP

When under severe pressure, for what did the early Christians pray?

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:29, 30).

Peter and John had healed a lame man in the temple. Peter followed the healing by preaching a powerful sermon in which he bore witness to his Lord. The authorities threw them in jail overnight, but the result of the day's work was many conversions (Acts 4:4). The next day Peter and John were called before the authorities and, again, Peter bore eloquent witness to Christ. Afraid to punish them further because of public sentiment, the rulers let them go with a solemn warning to quit preaching in the name of Jesus. Peter and John gave no assurances of compliance with these commands. As soon as they were released, they sought out a group of fellow believers and related their experiences. Then this group of Christians offered the prayer recorded in Acts 4:24-30. After ascribing praise and honor to God, they continued their worship by making the requests found in our text for today.

It is interesting to note that these persecuted believers did *not* ask for deliverance from trouble; they didn't pray for wisdom to avoid persecution; or for God to punish their enemies. They prayed for *boldness* to preach the gospel. They prayed that *more* people might be healed, even though the healing of the day before had been the cause of their trouble.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we go to God, not merely to receive blessings for ourselves, but to receive power to minister to the needs of the world?

Prayers for boldness to witness and clear manifestations of the power of God were an important part of worship for the apostles. Such prayers are no less important today.

"God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ's life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 101.

FURTHER STUDY

Acts 3 and 4.

Part 3
PRAYER RESULTS
IN WITNESS

What were the results of the prayer recorded in Acts 4: 24-30?

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:31-33).

Note that the tremendous achievements described in this passage came as the result of an act of worship—prayer. It was “when they had prayed” that the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

“By the grace of Christ the apostles were made what they were. It was sincere devotion and humble, earnest prayer that brought them into close communion with Him. They sat together with Him in heavenly places. They realized the greatness of their debt to Him. By earnest, persevering prayer they obtained the endowment of the Holy Spirit, and then they went forth, weighted with the burden of saving souls, filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross. And under their labors many souls were brought from darkness to light, and many churches were raised up.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 32.

THINK IT THROUGH

If the church is to be successful in accomplishing the great commission of preaching the gospel to all the world, what must be a vital part of their spiritual experience? (See Eph. 6:18.)

“Shall we be less earnest than were the apostles? Shall we not by living faith claim the promises that moved them to the depths of their being to call upon the Lord Jesus for the fulfillment of His word, ‘Ask, and ye shall receive’? John 16:24. Is not the Spirit of God to come today in answer to earnest, persevering prayer, and fill men with power? Is not God saying today to His praying, trusting, believing workers, who are opening the Scriptures to those ignorant of the precious truth they contain: ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world’? Matthew 28:20. Why, then, is the church so weak and spiritless?

“As the disciples, filled with the power of the Spirit, went forth to proclaim the gospel, so God’s servants are to go forth today.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 32.

As in the time of the apostles, fervent prayer will be followed by the infilling of the Spirit, unity, power, and grace. Those who worship God come to know God and go to serve God.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 19-23.

Part 4
THE CHURCH PRAYS
FOR ALL MEN

What special group did Paul single out that should be remembered in the worship of the church?

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Timothy was a young pastor and evangelist, and Paul was giving him counsel regarding the conduct of his ministry. No doubt Paul recognized the danger that the church would limit its prayers to things pertaining to themselves.

"The gospel embraces *Christian and non-Christian*. Prayer is to be made for *all men*. The Emperors and rulers and governors for whom this letter bids us to pray were not Christians; they were in fact hostile to the Church; and yet they were to be borne to the throne of grace by the prayers of the Church. For the true Christian there is no such thing as an enemy in all this world. None is outside his prayers, for none is outside the love of Christ, and none is outside the purpose of God, who wishes *all men to be saved*."—From *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, translated and interpreted by William Barclay (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 65. Used by permission.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we pray as earnestly for our rulers as we ought?

The following prayer was offered by an early church leader in the time of the persecuting Roman emperor, Domitian:

"You, Master, gave them [rulers] imperial power through your majestic and indescribable might, so that we, recognizing it was you who gave them the glory and honor, might submit to them, and in no way oppose your will. Grant them, Lord, health, peace, harmony, and stability, so that they may give no offense in administering the government you have given them. . . . Direct their plans, O Lord, in accord with 'what is good and pleasing to you,' so that they may administer the authority you have given them, with peace, considerateness, and reverence, and so win your mercy. . . . Amen."—Cyril C. Richardson, ed. *Early Christian Fathers*, (Volume 1 of *Library of Christian Classics*) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 72, "Clement's First Letter."

Should we not be more faithful in remembering our rulers in our services of worship? They need our prayers, and we need to think of them in the attitude of prayer.

FURTHER STUDY

Romans 13:1-7.

Part 5
THE CHURCH
SINGS

What part was music to play in the worship of the early Christian church?

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

“The curtain rises on the birth of Christ to singing by the heavenly choir. Luke records in poetic form the announcement of the angel to Zacharias that to him and his wife Elisabeth would be born the Forerunner of the Messiah. The annunciation to Mary is poetic; and when Mary realized that she was to be the mother of the Christ, her amazement, humility, and gladness found expression in pure poetry (Luke 1:32-35, 47-55). Later when John was born, the tongue of Zacharias was loosed and his joy poured forth in poetry (Luke 1:68-79). When the Holy Child was brought to the Temple in compliance with Jewish custom and Simeon realized that he was seeing the Lord’s Christ, he took the child in his arms and blessed God and broke into song (Luke 2:29-35). These poetic utterances were later set to music and became the precious hymns of the early churches.”—Gaines Dobbins, *The Church at Worship* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), p. 69. Used by permission.

What are some of the other references to music in the early Christian church?

Mark 14:26. “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” See also *Eph. 5:19; James 5:13; 1 Cor. 14:15.*

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the church today using the gift of music to the best advantage?

“Music can be a great power for good; yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. . . . Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.

“But it is sometimes more difficult to discipline the singers and keep them in working order, than to improve the habits of praying and exhorting. Many want to do things after their own style; they object to consultation, and are impatient under leadership. Well-matured plans are needed in the service of God. Common sense is an excellent thing in the worship of the Lord.”—*Evangelism*, p. 505.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 167, 168.

Part 6
THE CHURCH
LISTENS TO
THE WORD

What did Paul say to Timothy regarding Scripture reading, preaching, and teaching as a part of worship?

"Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you" (1 Tim. 4:13, 14, RSV).

Praise, prayer, and singing are important parts of worship, but they are not enough. The worshiper goes to church to praise God, but he also goes to learn more about God. This is the reason Scripture is read, lessons are taught, and sermons are preached. Ellen White says, "Much of the public worship of God consists of praise and prayer, and every follower of Christ should engage in this worship. There is also the preaching service, conducted by those whose work it is to instruct the congregation in the word of God."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1886.

"When man comes into spiritual contact with God, that is communion; *it is worship*. Preaching is spiritual worship of the highest order because by means of it God comes directly to the minds and hearts and consciences of men. Through the preacher he stimulates and challenges all the higher qualities of the soul. Hence preaching is indispensable to mature worship. It is preaching that primarily makes worship mature and keeps it so. As people leave church, they are often heard to remark that they *enjoyed* the service. This may mean only that they had pleasant sensations as they sat in a building that was artistically and architecturally satisfying, as they listened to the music. . . . The sermon if of the right quality forces them to be honest with themselves and with God as to whether they actually *are better* morally than when they entered. The sermon can do more than anything else to make and keep the worship a personal matter between the soul and God."—I. T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship*, pp. 260, 261.

THINK IT THROUGH

What power makes preaching effective? (See Acts 1:8.)

"It is the efficiency of the Holy Spirit that makes the ministry of the word effective. When Christ speaks through the minister, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the word. The Holy Spirit is not a servant, but a controlling power. He causes the truth to shine into minds, and speaks through every discourse where the minister surrenders himself to the divine working. It is the Spirit that surrounds the soul with a holy atmosphere, and speaks to the impenitent through words of warning, pointing them to Him who takes away the sin of the world."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 155.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 493.

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” (Rev. 4:1-3).

Never has mortal man enjoyed a greater privilege than that given to John. A door swung open in heaven and a trumpetlike voice called, “Come up here” (NEB). He saw a throne, and on the throne sat an indescribable Being. Around the throne was a rainbow.

“In the rainbow above the throne is an everlasting testimony that ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. . . .’ Whenever the law is presented before the people, let the teacher of truth point to the throne arched with the rainbow of promise, the righteousness of Christ. . . .”

“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world’s Redeemer, and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great.’”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133.

It is noteworthy that John’s vision of God included this symbol of the mercy and justice of God. And it is also significant that these verses introduce

the most glorious picture of divine worship in the Bible. Is it not reasonable to conclude that God’s mercy and justice are the attributes that call forth the worship of the heavenly beings? And may we not conclude that the value of our worship is proportional to our understanding of God’s mercy and justice?

This is both an Old and a New Testament concept. Ezekiel describes his vision of God in Ezekiel 1:26-28. The description is comparable to that given by John, especially in regard to the rainbow: “As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face” (verse 28).

Both the Old and New Testament prophets saw the same God, characterized by the same attributes of justice and mercy. And the response in each case was worship. This tells us something that we need to remember.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. The Living Creatures Worship God (Rev. 4:8)**
- 2. The 24 Elders Worship God (Rev. 4:11)**
- 3. Living Creatures and 24 Elders Worship (Rev. 5:8, 9)**
- 4. The Angels Worship God (Rev. 5:11, 12)**
- 5. Every Creature Worships God (Rev. 5:13, 14)**
- 6. The Redeemed Worship God (Rev. 7:9, 10)**

Worship in the Book of Revelation



Part 1
THE LIVING
CREATURES
WORSHIP GOD

“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing,
‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ ” (Rev. 4:8, RSV).

What is the meaning of the term, “living creatures”?

The KJV translates this word as “beasts.” The translation “living creatures” seems better, as the original word does not indicate to what order of beings these four belong. Apparently they were different from anything the prophet knew; therefore he referred to them merely as “living creatures.” “That the description of God’s throne and the scene about it in chs. 4 and 5 is to be understood symbolically, rather than literally, is clear, for instance, from ch. 5:6, where Christ is described as ‘a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes,’ yet alive and able to come and take the book from the hand of God. Inasmuch as this is obviously a highly symbolic figure, it follows that the whole prophetic incident is to be interpreted in the same way.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 4:1.

What was included in the worship of the four living creatures?

1. *Ascription of holiness to God.* The word *hagios*, translated “holy” is used in reference to things, places, and persons; but its highest application is to God. It is repeated three times for emphasis. It refers to the purity, majesty, and glory of God.

“Holy, holy, holy! Though darkness hide Thee,
Through the eye of man Thy great glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love and purity.”

2. *Ascription of eternal existence to God.* Men think of time in terms of past, present, and future; but with God there is no beginning and no end.

“Holy, holy, holy! Angels adore Thee,
Casting down their bright crowns around the glassy sea;
Thousands, and ten thousands worship low before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shall be.”—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 73.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we as reverent as we ought to be when we come into the presence of God?

“True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 48.

FURTHER STUDY

Ezekiel 1:4-28.

Part 2
THE 24 ELDERS
WORSHIP GOD

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

Who were the 24 elders? (See verse 10.)

The Scripture does not tell us directly. Some identify them as redeemed men in harmony with the reading “redeemed us” in the KJV, and assuming that they were among those who were raised from the dead at Christ’s resurrection. Others consider them heavenly beings because they minister the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8). Whether they are redeemed men or heavenly beings, they are pictured as “clothed in white raiment” symbolizing purity and wearing “crowns of gold” signifying victory.

What was distinctive about their song of worship?

“The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. ‘All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.’ Psalm 96:5. ‘To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.’ ‘Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else.’ Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: ‘Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’ ‘O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker,’ Psalm 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things.’ Revelation 4:11.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 436, 437.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we have a deep consciousness of the worthiness of God as the object of our worship? Do we revere Him as our Creator? Do we sing with a real sense of appreciation the following hymn?

“My Maker and my King, to Thee my all I owe;
Thy sovereign bounty is the spring whence all my blessings flow;

The creature of Thy hand, on Thee alone I live;
My God, Thy benefits demand more praise than I can give.”
—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 71.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 414-418.

Part 3
LIVING CREATURES
AND 24 ELDERS
WORSHIP

“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; and they sang a new song, saying,

‘Worthy are thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God,

from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth’” (Rev. 5:8, 9, RSV).

What was the setting of this act of worship?

The One who sat on the throne held in His right hand a scroll “sealed with seven seals.” An angel shouted, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” (Rev. 5:2, RSV). There was no answer. The prophet wept because no one seemed worthy to unseal the secrets contained in the scroll. Then one of the 24 elders spoke: “Weep not,” he exclaimed, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (verse 5). No doubt the prophet began to scan the celestial stage for the appearance of a lion; but prophetic vision often brings surprises. “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing” (verse 6). Not a lion, but a lamb. Not an ordinary lamb, but a lamb “as though it had been slain”—a bleeding lamb. And it was this Lamb, a symbol of Jesus, who took the scroll from the right hand of God. Twenty-seven times in *Revelation*, Jesus is spoken of as a Lamb.

What do we learn about the gospel as we listen to the heavenly beings worship the Lamb?

First, we learn that the saints on earth were not forgotten. Their prayers were symbolized by incense in bowls held by the living creatures and the elders. Second, we are reminded of the efficacy of the blood of the slain Lamb “for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God” (verse 9). Third, we learn of the extent of the work of the gospel, “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (verse 9). Fourth, we learn of the ultimate destiny of the redeemed. They will be both kings and priests.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the relation of worship to the gospel?

Worship in heaven was tied to the gospel. Worship on earth must likewise exist in the context of the gospel. Christ, His cross, the empty tomb, His ministry in our behalf, must always be the subject of our prayers, songs, and sermons.

Part 4
THE ANGELS
WORSHIP GOD

What specific reason caused the angels of heaven to sing the praises of the Lamb?

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:11, 12).

“Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour’s cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 764.

What is suggested by the seven-fold song of praise sung by the angelic hosts?

The One who hung helplessly on a cross, who had nowhere to lay His head, who was spat upon and beaten, and who wore a crown of thorns is now revealed as possessing power and riches and honor. The One who was put down so rudely by man is shown to be the Source of wisdom and blessing. The One who gave Himself so completely is now replete with glory and strength. The picture is one of dramatic contrast. On the one hand, a bleeding Lamb—on the other, the angels of God singing an anthem of worship and praise.

THINK IT THROUGH

When we worship, do we recognize as we should the power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing of Christ?

James Montgomery, a nineteenth century hymn writer, caught the spirit of the angels’ song:

“Come, let us sing the song of songs—
The angels first began the strain—
The homage which to Christ belongs:
‘Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain!’

Slain to redeem us by His blood,
To cleanse from every sinful stain,
And make us kings and priests to God:
‘Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain!’ ”

—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 153.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Revelation 5.

Part 5
EVERY CREATURE
WORSHIPS GOD

How does the heavenly worship reach its climax of praise?

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13, 14).

This magnificent scene portrays every created being joining in worship and praise to God and to the Lamb.

"To what point in the great controversy do the symbolic scenes portrayed in chs. 4 and 5 refer? According to DA 834 the song was sung by angels when Christ was installed at the right hand of God after His ascension. Also, according to AA 601, 602; GC 671, this song will be sung by the saints at the establishment of the new earth and by the redeemed and angels in eternity (8T 44; cf. PP 541; GC 545, 678). This varied setting suggests that the vision of chs. 4 and 5 is not to be thought of as representing any one specific occurrence in heaven, but as a timeless, highly symbolic portrayal of the victory of Christ and the resulting vindication of God. When so understood, this vision may be seen as representing the attitude of heaven toward the Son and His work since the cross, an attitude that rises to a crescendo as the great controversy comes to its victorious climax."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 5:13.

THINK IT THROUGH

May we some day join in this song? How may we qualify for that privilege?

"Stand on the threshold of eternity and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life have co-operated with Christ, regarding it as a privilege and an honor to suffer for His sake. With the angels, they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. . . . Honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Revelation 5:12, 13.

"There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven, as the redeemed stand around the throne of God. All take up the joyful strain, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain' and hath redeemed us to God."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 506, 507.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 674-678.

Part 6
THE REDEEMED
WORSHIP GOD

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9, 10).

How is Revelation 7:9, 10 related to Revelation 4 and 5?

Revelation 7 describes the same God, sitting upon the same throne, the same Lamb, the same angels, the same elders, the same living creatures. The one new element in the picture is the multitude of the redeemed. This passage makes John’s picture of worship in heaven relevant to *us*. We may identify with the heavenly worshippers.

What will the great occasion be like?

“Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the ‘great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, . . . before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.’ Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.

“The redeemed raise a song of praise that echoes and reechoes through the vaults of heaven: ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.’ Verse 10. And angel and seraph unite their voices in adoration. As the redeemed have beheld the power and malignity of Satan, they have seen, as never before, that no power but that of Christ could have made them conquerors. In all that shining throng there are none to ascribe salvation to themselves, as if they had prevailed by their own power and goodness. Nothing is said of what they have done or suffered; but the burden of every song, the keynote of every anthem, is: Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 665.

THINK IT THROUGH

What assurance do we have of being among those who will worship God and Christ in heaven? (See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26.)

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 267-269.

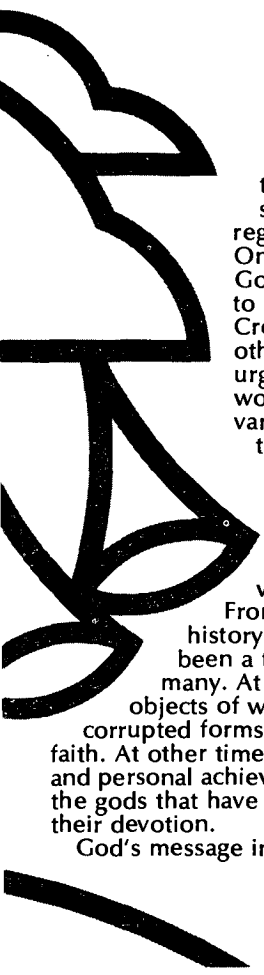
"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the

fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:6, 7).

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:9, 10, first part).



The Three Angels' Messages and Worship



The conflict of the ages is, in a sense, a conflict regarding worship. On the one hand, God calls upon man to worship his Creator. On the other hand, Satan urges man to worship him in his various manifestations in human history.

At one time it was Satan's purpose to draw Israel into the worship of Baal.

From the beginning of history false deities have been a temptation to many. At times the false objects of worship have been corrupted forms of the Christian faith. At other times material wealth and personal achievement have been the gods that have seduced men to their devotion.

God's message in Revelation 14, known as the "three angels' messages" is given just before the Son of man

comes to reap the harvest (verses 14-20). In view of the impending judgment God commands the worship of the Creator, and He forbids the worship of competing entities described as "the beast and his

image." The basic issue is, Whom shall we worship? This is the concern of God's church today.

"God has called his church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself.

The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God's messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the earth. Christ declares to His followers: 'Ye are the light of the world.' To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: 'Behold the worth of the soul. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." ' Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity.'—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 455, 456.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. The Crisis Over Worship of the Creator (Rev. 14:7)
2. The Crisis Over the Day of Worship (Rev. 14:9, 10)
3. Worship in the Setting of the Everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6)
4. Worship Under Difficulties (Rev. 14:12; 13:15)
5. The Ultimate Act of Worship (Rev. 14:14-16)
6. Worship in Eternity (Isa. 66:22, 23)

Part 1
THE CRISIS OVER
WORSHIP OF THE
CREATOR

What is the basis of the worship of God?

"And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7, last part).

"We are nearing the close of this earth's history. Satan is making desperate efforts to make himself god. . . . Under the jurisdiction of the man of sin, men have exalted a false standard in complete opposition to God's enactment. Each Sabbath institution bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark showing the authority of each. The first day of the week has not one particle of sanctity. It is the production of the man of sin, who strives in this way to counterwork God's purposes.

"God has designated the seventh day as His Sabbath. [Ex. 31:13, 17, 16 quoted.]

"Thus the distinction is drawn between the loyal and the disloyal. Those who desire to have the seal of God in their foreheads must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Thus they are distinguished from the disloyal, who have accepted a man-made institution in place of the true Sabbath."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 980, 981.

THINK IT THROUGH

What difference does the fact that God is the Creator make to us?

Only a small minority in the scientific and religious world today accept the Biblical teaching of God as Creator. In place of this basic Christian belief, the theory of evolution has been generally accepted.

"The theory of evolution, whether it be of the gradual or the emergent type, leads to two conclusions which are contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. The first conclusion is that man is evolving in the direction of perfection and needs no regeneration. The second conclusion is that Jesus, far from being perfect God and Man, was simply a steppingstone in the human advance, splendid for His own day but long since out-distanced, out-moded, and thus no 'Saviour' at all. Here the Christian disagrees sharply."—Lindsell and Woodbridge, *A Handbook of Christian Truth*, (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1953), p. 83. Used by permission.

"God created man in His own image. Here is no mystery. There is no ground for the supposition that man was evolved by slow degrees of development from the lower forms of animal or vegetable life. Such teaching lowers the great work of the Creator to the level of man's narrow, earthly conceptions."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 44-51.

Part 2
THE CRISIS OVER
THE DAY OF WORSHIP

What is the basic meaning and purpose of the third angel's message?

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:9, 10, first part).

"The truths of the third angel's message have been presented by some as a dry theory; but in this message is to be presented Christ the Living One. He is to be revealed as the first and the last, as the I AM, the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. Through this message the character of God in Christ is to be manifested to the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 20.

Which facet of the three angel's messages has particularly to do with worship? (verses 7, 9).

"In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' . . .

"In contrast to those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, the third angel points to another class, against whose errors a solemn and fearful warning is uttered: 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.' Revelation 14:9, 10. A correct interpretation of the symbols employed is necessary to an understanding of this message."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.

The chapter in *The Great Controversy* develops the meaning of these symbols, and then summarizes as follows:

"The keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast" (pp. 445, 446). The most pronounced issue is to be the day of worship.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do we realize how important the Sabbath is in the great controversy between Christ and Satan? Are we prepared to "preach the Sabbath more fully" so that it may accomplish its purpose in preparing a people for the coming of Jesus?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 433-450.

Part 3
WORSHIP IN THE
SETTING OF THE
EVERLASTING GOSPEL

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

What is the "everlasting gospel"?

"The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is the everlasting gospel, the same gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Gen. 3:15). Here was the first promise of a Saviour who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law; for His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel. The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings men to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 106.

"In the prophecy [Rev. 14:6, 7] this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ's second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 227, 228.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does true worship differ from the false?

The angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to all men calls upon mankind to "fear God," to "give glory to him," and to "worship him." Apparently this gospel of a saving Christ, soon to come again, is intended to inspire the spirit of worship. We stress the fact that worship is a redeemed man's response to his Redeemer. This should be true, whether a man brings the gospel to another man, or whether an angel brings the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

When there is a real acceptance of the saving gospel of the crucified, risen, and soon-coming Christ, there will be a revival of true worship. It cannot be otherwise. To know Him is to love Him and worship Him.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 104-107.

Part 4
WORSHIP UNDER
DIFFICULTIES

"Here is the patience of the saints (Rev. 14:12).

"And he [the lamblike beast] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:15).

What does history tell us about the high cost of the worship of God?

Daniel was thrown into a den of lions because he refused to obey a decree to worship the king (Dan. 6:4-28).

The three Hebrews were thrown into a furnace because they refused to worship a golden image (Dan. 3:1-30).

The apostles of Christ were imprisoned, beaten, stoned, crucified because they insisted on worshiping Jesus as Lord.

Many early Christians were punished because they refused to worship the emperor.

During the Middle Ages many dissenters were persecuted who could not accept the worship practice of the dominant church.

When Protestants became dominant, they sometimes persecuted dissenters from their faith. For example, the Puritans exiled Roger Williams of Rhode Island, although they had previously fled from England due to persecution.

Christians in recent decades have suffered for their faith and have been denied freedom of worship by some authoritarian regimes.

It is not hard to imagine that in the final crisis, with fear and disaster everywhere, those who insist on worshiping their Creator on the Sabbath day will suffer for their faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

What attitude should Christians take when their desire to worship God brings them into conflict with their enemies?

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:12).

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

"Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:16, 19).

"The prospect of being brought into personal danger and distress, need not cause despondency, but should quicken the vigor and hopes of God's people; for the time of their peril is the season for God to grant them clearer manifestations of His power."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 370.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 239-244.

Part 5
THE ULTIMATE
ACT OF WORSHIP

When the three angels have completed the proclamation of their messages, what great event will take place?

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Rev. 14:14-16).

What will be the saints' response to the second coming of Jesus? Isa. 25:9.

“To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.

“With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.’ Isa. 25:9.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 421.

THINK IT THROUGH

Will the second coming of Christ be a moment of worship?

Such an occasion of worship the world has never known! At last the redeemed see their Lord, the object of their faith, their love, their worship. Their adoration knows no bounds. Words cannot express their praise. All their hopes are now fulfilled and their joy is now overflowing.

“Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory. . . . Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise: ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.’ Revelation 1:5, 6.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 646.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 640-647.

Part 6
WORSHIP IN
ETERNITY

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:22, 23).

The Sabbath worship ties the ages together.

"The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.' So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. 'From one Sabbath to another' the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up 'to worship before Me, saith the Lord.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

"When there shall be a 'restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:21), the creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus lay at rest in Joseph's tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as 'from one Sabbath to another' (Isa. 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 769, 770.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the relationship between worship here and worship hereafter?

"God teaches that we should assemble in His house to cultivate the attributes of perfect love. This will fit the dwellers of earth for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for all who love Him. There they will assemble in the sanctuary from Sabbath to Sabbath, from one new moon to another, to unite in loftiest strains of song, in praise and thanksgiving to Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 368.

"As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

May we all be there!

**“Be still, and know that I am God”
(Ps. 46:10).**

Visitors at Westminster Abbey are handed an information sheet on which is printed the following request:

WE ASK YOU
as you walk around
to remember that you are on holy
ground
to behave with reverence
to speak quietly
and do not forget to look up very often
if you wish to see the glory of this
Church.

Would this not be a good request to make of every churchgoer whenever he enters the church?

“When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

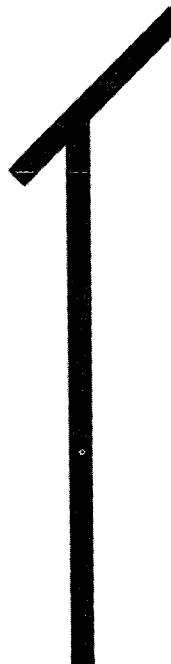
“If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 492.

In our lesson this week we shall study the characteristics of true worship. We shall note that worship is not dependent on impressive architecture, stained glass windows, and hushed regard for what the building stands for. True worship may be assisted by beauty of structure and an atmosphere of reverence, but more importantly, it lies deep down in the heart and life of the worshiper. It must be accompanied by intelligent understanding, faith and dedication, and a life of joy and happiness because the heart has been cleansed of all sin. It expresses itself in order, in reverence, and above all, in a sense of the presence of God.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. Worship Must Be Orderly**
(1 Cor. 14:40)
- 2. Worship Must Be Beautiful**
(1 Chron. 16:29)
- 3. Worship Must Be Reverent**
(Lev. 19:30)
- 4. Worship Must Be Intelligent**
(Acts 17:23)

- 5. Worship Must Be Accompanied by Faith and Dedication**
(Acts 24:14)
- 6. Worship Must Be Joyful** (Ps. 122:1)



Characteristics of True Worship



Part 1
WORSHIP MUST
BE ORDERLY

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

What is the background of this verse?

Problems had arisen in the worship services at Corinth. The Lord's Supper had degenerated into a meal where the rich enjoyed their delicacies and the poor had little or nothing. The worshipers had failed to discern the meaning of the service. Speaking in tongues had introduced confusion into the services. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (verse 33). It was to this situation that Paul addressed himself when he said, “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Why should the principle of order apply to the services of the church today?

“It is God's will that all parts of His service shall be managed in an orderly, becoming manner, which will impress those strangers who may attend, as well as the regular attendants, with the elevated, ennobling character of the truth and its power to cleanse the heart.”—*Evangelism*, p. 207.

“There should be rules in regard to the time, the place, and the manner of worshiping. Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 491.

“God gave rules of order, perfect and exact, to His ancient people. Has His character changed? Is He not the great and mighty God who rules in the heaven of heavens? Would it not be well for us often to read the directions given by God Himself to the Hebrews, that we who have the light of the glorious truth shining upon us may imitate their reverence for the house of God?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 496.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you implement the following suggestions?

1. Enter the sanctuary quietly and on time.
2. Sit quietly and thoughtfully while waiting for the service to begin.
3. Participate in the hymns and responsive readings.
4. Concentrate on the prayers.
5. Contribute to the offering as a part of worship.
6. Listen appreciatively to the musical numbers.
7. Give undivided attention to the sermon.
8. Avoid causing any distractions or disturbances that would break the reverent silence of the hour of worship.
9. Remember that God's presence is not on an altar or in a pulpit, but in the heart of each worshiper.
10. Leave the sanctuary quietly and reverently.

FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pp. 265-267.

Part 2
WORSHIP MUST
BE BEAUTIFUL

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chron. 16:29).

What do we understand by the phrase, “the beauty of holiness”?

“True worship is a matter of beauty as well as holiness. Clad in their holy vestments, the ancient priests engaged in a service of worship that was both beautiful and impressive. But beauty of form and symbol is not an adequate demonstration of the ‘beauty of holiness.’ The term may be regarded as including a spirit of quiet reverence, inward devotion and outward piety, devout earnestness and joyous gratitude. Neither heaven nor earth can know any greater beauty than the beauty of true holiness.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Chron. 16:29.

“Worship may be tested by the principle of beauty. . . . There is an inseparable relation between beauty and goodness, ugliness and evil. All that men call beautiful may not be good and all that men adjudge ugly may not be bad, but whatever is holy is beautiful and whatever is evil is ugly. Ugliness in worship is intuitively repulsive. No matter what its outward appearance, a house of worship may be made beautiful by the tender, loving care of its members. No matter how barren of aesthetic adornment, a service of worship may be made beautiful by the reverent spirit of leaders and congregation. Walls may be kept painted, windows may be cleaned, the interior of the sanctuary may be immaculate, the hymnbooks may be neatly bound, the atmosphere may be that of reverence. To the worshipers the place and the service of worship should always be beautiful.”—Gaines Dobbins, *The Church at Worship*, p. 135.

THINK IT THROUGH

About 1869 Ellen White wrote a letter to a man who was complaining about the expense of building a church. She said: “Many act as though the Creator of the heavens and the earth, He who has made everything that is lovely and beautiful in our world, would be pleased to see a house erected for Him without order or beauty. . . .

“Many of our people have become narrowed in their views. Order, neatness, taste, and convenience are termed pride and love of the world. A mistake is made here. Vain pride, which is exhibited in gaudy trappings and needless ornaments, is not pleasing to God. But He who created for man a beautiful world, and planted a lovely garden in Eden with every variety of trees for fruit and beauty, and who decorated the earth with most lovely flowers of every description and hue, has given tangible proofs that He is pleased with the beautiful.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 257, 258.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 499, 500.

Part 3
WORSHIP MUST
BE REVERENT

“Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord” (Lev. 19:30).

What lessons can we learn from the reverence that God expected for the ancient sanctuary?

“From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred, things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts, and are being brought down to the level of common things. The reverence which the people had anciently for the sanctuary where they met with God in sacred service has largely passed away. Nevertheless, God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 491.

The preceding quotation is the second paragraph of a ten-page chapter entitled “Behaviour in the House of God.” The chapter will be quoted often in this lesson, and should be read by each student and teacher. It reflects the condition of public worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church nearly a century ago.

It is significant that this was the very time in the history of the church when Ellen White was expressing great concern about neglect of the doctrine of salvation by faith. Can it be that there is a relationship between proper worship and a proper experience of salvation? The thesis of these lessons is that worship is a redeemed man’s response to his Redeemer. If a professed Christian lacks the *vital* experience of a relationship with Christ, the lack will reveal itself in his neglect of worship.

THINK IT THROUGH

What effect does this lack of reverence have on our families?

“Brethren, will you not devote a little thought to this subject and notice how you conduct yourselves in the house of God and what efforts you are making by precept and example to cultivate reverence in your children?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 494.

“The education and training of the youth should be of a character that would exalt sacred things and encourage pure devotion for God in His house. Many who profess to be children of the heavenly King have no true appreciation of the sacredness of eternal things. Nearly all need to be taught how to conduct themselves in the house of God. Parents should not only teach, but command, their children to enter the sanctuary with sobriety and reverence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 496.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 491, 492; Ps. 5:7; Heb. 12:28.

Part 4
WORSHIP MUST
BE INTELLIGENT

"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23).

What part does the mind play in the worship of God?

"God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept that Satan sowed his tares."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 493.

"If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 492.

"Because of the irreverence in attitude, dress, and deportment, and lack of a worshipful frame of mind, God has often turned His face away from those assembled for His worship. . . .

"God is to be the subject of thought, the object of worship; and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 499.

"When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through his delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most—the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths. Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life. Sometimes a little child may so attract the attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 493.

These quotations tell us that true worship involves thought, careful attention, alertness, freedom from distractions. Worship is not merely a feeling accompanying a liturgy. The hymns of worship should have meaning; prayers should not be mere repetitions of clichés; and sermons should present to listeners the claims and assurances of Christ.

Part 5
WORSHIP MUST
BE ACCOMPANIED
BY FAITH AND
DEDICATION

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:14).

What gives meaning to ceremonies of worship?

“The magnificence of the first temple, and the imposing rites of its religious services, had been a source of pride to Israel before their captivity; but their worship had oftentimes been lacking in those qualities which God regards as most essential. The glory of the first temple, the splendor of its service, could not recommend them to God; for that which is alone of value in His sight, they did not offer. They did not bring Him the sacrifice of a humble and contrite spirit.

“It is when the vital principles of the kingdom of God are lost sight of, that ceremonies become multitudinous and extravagant. It is when the character building is neglected, when the adornment of the soul is lacking, when the simplicity of godliness is despised, that pride and love of display demand magnificent church edifices, splendid adornings, and imposing ceremonials. But in all this God is not honored. He values His church, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of its members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ’s representatives.

“A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attractions of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 565, 566.

THINK IT THROUGH

How may we be certain that our worship is genuine?

Every Christian should ask himself certain questions as he enters the house of God: (1) Do I have faith? Do I really believe in God as my Father and Christ as my Saviour? (2) Am I humble and repentant? Do I come in the spirit of a suppliant, or am I filled with pride? (3) Am I allowing God to transform and perfect my character? (4) Do I enter God’s house with a deep desire to know Him better and to love Him more? (5) Do I bring to the worship of God a love for my fellow worshipers and for the world like that of the love of Christ? (6) Am I eager to worship God?

Worship and Christian experience cannot be separated.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 498, 499.

Part 6
WORSHIP MUST
BE JOYFUL

What spirit should characterize meetings for worship?

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 122:1).

Many people equate religious services with boredom. They fail to sense how exhilarating it can be to withdraw from the ordinary pursuits of life to give honor to God. Several years ago, the writer with his wife and daughter stood on a road corner in England and watched a carriage pass by in which were riding Queen Elizabeth, her husband, her sister, her mother, and other notables. The crowd gathered on that road corner were not bored. There was rapt attention as the carriage passed by. Some were so excited that they forgot to snap their cameras! Folk went home that day with a feeling of satisfaction that they had, for a brief moment, been in the presence of royalty. How much greater is the privilege of enjoying the fellowship of the God of heaven. Worship is a happy experience.

"Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. The Lord desires His children to take comfort in His service and to find more pleasure than hardship in His work. He desires that those who come to worship Him shall carry away with them precious thoughts of His care and love, that they may be cheered in all the employments of daily life, that they may have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 103.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I find the church service a joy and a pleasure? If not, why not?

"Worship is man's response to God's revelation of himself. . . . Two or three times a week the children of God should worship him in his house, publicly. Three times daily the members of every Christian family should give thanks to God before they eat together, and if possible they should tarry after both the morning and the evening meal to worship together, socially. Night and morning, as well as at other times of need or desire, every child of God should read the Bible and pray, secretly. Such is the Christian ideal of worship, public, social, and private."—A. W. Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Public Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1939), pp. 14, 15. Used by permission.

FURTHER STUDY • *Steps to Christ*, "Rejoicing in the Lord," pp. 115-126.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

“When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God. 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.

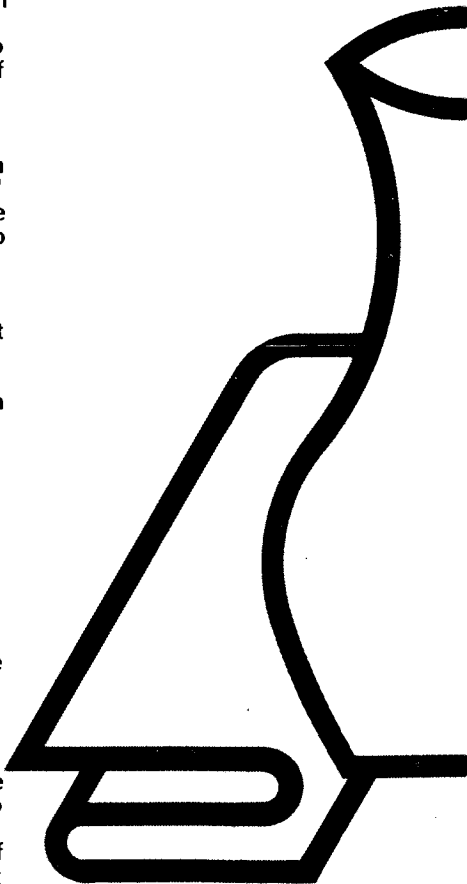
It is this humiliation of the Son of God that the Christian celebrates when he participates in the foot-washing service. He is not revealing how humble he himself is, but rather he is remembering how humble Christ was. This meaning of the ordinance of feet washing is made clear in the following quotations:

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

“As the Saviour’s humiliation for us

is remembered, thought links with thought; a chain of memories is called up.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 650, 651.

“The most eloquent commentary on the feet-washing occurs in the second chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians where the apostle tells us that as Christians we must have the mind of Christ ‘who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking



The Memorial of His Humiliation

the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.' If this act of humiliation, this lowly service which Jesus rendered to the disciples in the

Upper Room, symbolized his life from beginning to end, even more did it symbolize his impending death upon the Cross, and there is no doubt that Jesus intended it to have exactly that meaning."—Leonard Griffith, *The Eternal Legacy From an Upper Room*, (New York: Harper / Row, 1963), pp. 42, 43. Used by permission.

As we study this lesson, let us look

first at Jesus and His humiliation, then let us look at ourselves to determine whether we have caught His self-denying spirit.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:3-5)
2. Peter Objects (John 13:6-9)
3. Jesus Establishes the Memorial of His Humiliation (John 13:13-15)
4. "The Servant Is Not Greater Than His Lord" (John 13:16)
5. Happiness in Obedience (John 13:17)
6. Humiliation Gives Way to Glorification (Phil. 2:9-11)



Part 1
JESUS WASHES
THE DISCIPLES'
FEET

“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).

What unfortunate spirit existed among the disciples?

“There was 'strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.'”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 643.

It is a sad fact that human beings obtain much of their satisfaction out of rising above their fellowmen. Man is laboriously and agonizingly trying to climb a ladder. The competition is keen and the resentment runs deep. The disciples of Jesus were caught up in this struggle.

What particular situation increased the dissension?

“At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 644.

What was Jesus' problem under these circumstances?

“How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them?”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 644.

How did Jesus solve this problem?

He washed their feet. He revealed His humility in contrast to their pride.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do we show the same kind of pride that characterized the disciples?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 642-645.

Part 2
PETER OBJECTS

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:6-9).

What was Peter thinking as Jesus knelt to wash his feet?

It was Peter, months before, who had made the great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). The very fact that Peter recognized so clearly who it was that was going to wash his feet added to his astonishment. "Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 645. When Jesus insisted on washing his feet, "Peter surrendered his pride and self-will" (page 646). Something happened to Peter when he recognized the humility of his Lord. Along with his brethren, Peter was now able to "concede to another the highest place" (page 646).

THINK IT THROUGH

What lesson does Peter's experience hold for us?

"Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ, yet often through contact with evil the heart's purity is soiled. We must come to Christ for His cleansing grace. Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in contact with the hands of his Lord and Master; but how often we bring our sinful, polluted hearts in contact with the heart of Christ! How grievous to Him is our evil temper, our vanity and pride! Yet all our infirmity and defilement we must bring to Him. He alone can wash us clean. We are not prepared for communion with Him unless cleansed by His efficacy."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 646, 649.

Peter's experience teaches us an additional truth from the foot-washing service. Jesus was not only establishing a memorial of His humiliation; He was also giving a symbol of cleansing. Jesus saw His self-giving life, not as an end in itself, but as a means of salvation. So when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He was not only saying, I am willing to accept any humiliation, even the cross; but he was also saying, I want to wash you from your pride. These two meanings supplement each other. Jesus gave Himself for us. This is the gospel.

Peter never forgot this lesson. Years later he wrote, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

May we never forget this lesson!

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 645-649.

Part 3
JESUS
ESTABLISHES THE
MEMORIAL OF
HIS HUMILIATION

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15).

Was Jesus merely advising humble Christian service, or was He establishing an ordinance?

"Now, having washed the disciples' feet, He said, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

If Jesus intended this service to be observed, why was it not mentioned by the other Gospel writers?

The probability is that this service was practiced and taken for granted by the early believers. By the time John wrote his Gospel (AD 90-100) it may be that the service was being neglected. John's emphasis may have been an effort to reemphasize the importance of the foot-washing service.

Is it reasonable to believe that Christ intended that the foot-washing service should continue to be observed?

One author has observed that "the two realities of the Upper Room—on the one hand, bread and wine; on the other hand, a basin and towel—are equally sacramental and are a part of the one great Reality."—Leonard Griffith, *The Eternal Legacy From an Upper Room*, p. 44.

Another author says, "The feetwashing introduces an aspect of the Lord's Supper which surely must have been present in the mind of Christ but to which the bread and cup alone simply do not give adequate expression. With the bread and cup alone, the service concludes with the participants as mere recipients of the body of Jesus. The feetwashing makes them pledged and active members of the body of Christ."—Vernard Eller, *In Place of Sacraments* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 112. Used by permission.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can we do to give greater emphasis and meaning to the foot-washing service?

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on John 13:1-26.

Part 4
"THE SERVANT
IS NOT GREATER
THAN HIS LORD"

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16).

What practical application does this passage have to Christian living?

Just as Jesus emptied Himself for the sake of man, so His followers should be willing to be servants one to another. The Christian should participate in the foot-washing service and also be ready and willing to render loving service to Christians and non-Christians. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). The Christian has something to give beyond that of the public or private welfare agency. In addition to food, clothing, medical care, child care, employment, the Christian has a peculiar brand of love and concern that gives meaning and hope to those in need.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it hard to assume the role of a servant?

"I was pointed to the Majesty of heaven. When He whom angels worshiped, He who was rich in honor, splendor, and glory, came to the earth, and found Himself in fashion as a man, He did not plead His refined nature as an excuse to hold Himself aloof from the unfortunate. In His work He was found among the afflicted, the poor, distressed, and needy ones. Christ was the embodiment of refinement and purity; His was an exalted life and character; yet in His labor He was found not among men of high-sounding titles, not among the most honorable of this world, but with the despised and needy. 'I came,' says the divine Teacher, 'to save that which was lost.' Yes; the Majesty of heaven was ever found working to help those who most needed help. May the example of Christ put to shame the excuses of that class who are so attracted to their poor selves that they consider it beneath their refined taste and their high calling to help the most helpless. Such have taken a position higher than their Lord, and in the end will be astonished to find themselves lower than the lowest of that class whom their refined, sensitive natures were shocked to mingle with and work for. True, it may not always be agreeable to unite with the Master and become co-workers with Him in helping the very class who stand most in need of help; but this is the work which Christ humbled Himself to do. Is the servant greater than his Lord? He has given the example, and enjoins upon us to copy it. It may be disagreeable, yet duty demands that just such a work be performed."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 467.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 273-280.

Part 5
HAPPINESS IN
OBEDIENCE

What was Jesus' summary statement regarding the foot-washing service?

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

What does this tell us in respect to duty in the Christian life?

Many have been led to believe that recognizing Christian duty is equivalent to salvation by works. Duty is not an ugly word. "Love has a twin sister, which is duty."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 195. In fact, there is a close relationship between faith and duty. "No one can believe with the heart unto righteousness, and obtain justification by faith, while continuing the practice of those things which the Word of God forbids, or while neglecting any known duty."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 396.

"But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 366.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does this text teach us regarding Christian worship?

The expression, "these things," in John 13:17 seems to imply two things. Jesus is telling His followers that they will find happiness in fulfilling the role of a servant. He is making a tremendous appeal for Christian service to all people of all classes. But He is doing more than this. He is establishing an ordinance to become a part of Christian worship—an ordinance that will commemorate the humiliation of Jesus and that will teach the spirit of humility that makes Christian service possible. Every time we celebrate the foot-washing service we think (1) of Jesus who "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death" and (2) of our fellowmen who demand our love and service in the spirit of Jesus. Thus this act of worship at a Communion service becomes a perpetual reminder of our Lord and of our duty. And happiness is a by-product of loving our Lord and our fellowmen.

"The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but, 'What do ye more than others?' Matt. 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 272.

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 274-276.

Part 6
HUMILIATION GIVES
WAY TO
GLORIFICATION

What is the sequel to the "emptying" described in Philippians 2:5-8?

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Verses 5 to 8 of Philippians 2 describe Jesus giving up the form of God and becoming a slave in the likeness of men. This self-giving went so far as to include the most humiliating form of execution—the cross. But after reaching the bottom, so far as humiliation is concerned, Jesus is honored by His Father; He receives a "new name," symbolic of His new status in God's universe, and He receives the worship of the universe.

What added meaning does the glorification of Jesus give to the feet washing ordinance?

"Christ would have His disciples understand that although He had washed their feet, this did not in the least detract from His dignity. 'Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.' And being so infinitely superior, He imparted grace and significance to the service. No one was so exalted as Christ, and yet He stooped to the humblest duty. That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set the example of humility. He would not leave this great subject in man's charge. Of so much consequence did He regard it, that He Himself, One equal with God, acted as servant to His disciples. While they were contending for the highest place, He to whom every knee shall bow, He whom the angels of glory count it honor to serve, bowed down to wash the feet of those who called Him Lord."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 649.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do the humiliation and glorification of Jesus tell us about Christian worship?

Christ's humiliation gives us an added incentive to worship. He bowed low to cleanse us from sin; in grateful response, we bow low in reverent worship. And the glory of worship is compounded by the fact that we are recognizing the King of kings and Lord of lords. He came a long way to redeem us, and He returned a long way to reclaim His place by the side of His Father. Should not we be willing to give of our very best both in our personal and corporate worship of Him?

FURTHER STUDY

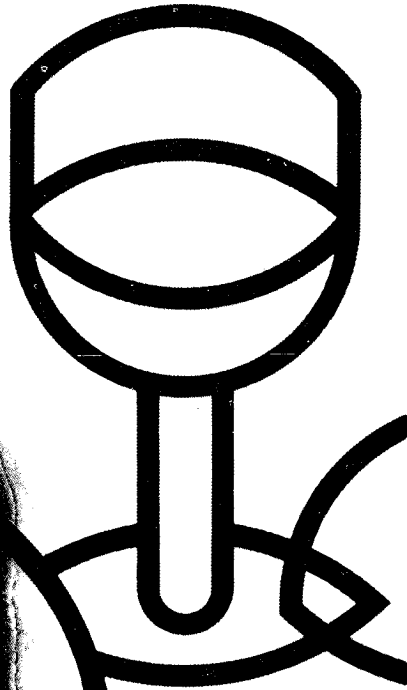
Col. 1:9-21.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

When Jesus was on earth with His disciples, it is likely that He asked Himself the question, What memorial can I establish that will keep my sacrifice always fresh in the minds of

my followers? What symbols can I select that will never lose their power and meaning? So He chose two simple everyday articles of food—symbols that would be understood by people in all ages, in every country, of all backgrounds, and of all cultures. As long as eating and drinking is a part of life, these symbols will not lose their meaning.

The key idea in the Lord’s supper is *remember*. The events of Calvary were



The Lord's Supper

too important to be forgotten. The following quotations emphasize this important truth:

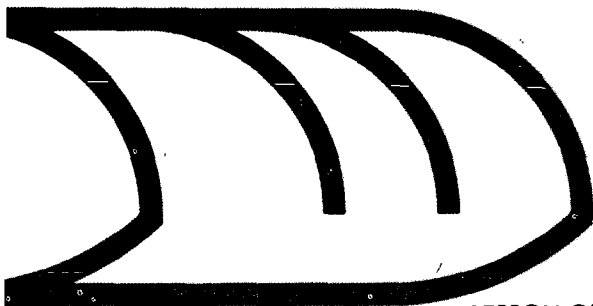
"Our Lord says, Under conviction of sin, remember that I died for you.

When oppressed and persecuted and afflicted for My sake and the gospel's, remember My love, so great that for you I gave My life. When your duties appear stern and severe, and your burdens too heavy to bear, remember that for your sake I endured the cross, despising the shame. When your heart shrinks from the trying ordeal, remember that your Redeemer liveth to make intercession for you."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 659.

"He gave this simple ordinance that it might be a special season when He

constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

It is appropriate that across the front of communion tables is often inscribed the words, *In Remembrance of Me*. God knows how easy it is for great spiritual truths to fade into the fringes of our consciousness. He knows how greatly and how often spiritual values need to be reinforced. This is why He directed that the Lord's Supper should be a part of the Christian's life and worship.



Himself would always be present, to lead all participating in it to feel the pulse of their own conscience, to awaken them to an understanding of the lessons symbolized, to revive their memory, to convict of sin, and to receive their penitential repentance."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139.

"These are the things we are never to forget. The love of Jesus, with its

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Echoes of a Great Sermon** (John 6:35, 53-55)
2. **The New Passover** (Luke 22:14-16)
3. **The Traitor at the Feast** (Matt. 26:20-25)
4. **The Giving of Thanks** (1 Cor. 11:24)
5. **The Bread and the Cup** (Matt. 26:26-28)
6. **Till He Come** (1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:29)

Part 1
ECHOES OF A
GREAT SERMON

What statements did Jesus make in one of His sermons that prepared the way for an understanding of the Lord's Supper?

"Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6:35, 53-55).

Under what circumstances did Jesus preach this sermon?

It was Passover time, just a year before the Lord's Supper was instituted. The Galilean ministry of Jesus was drawing to its close, and thousands were following Him. It was in this setting that Jesus fed the 5000 with the loaves and fishes.

This miracle inflamed the enthusiasm of the crowds, and they determined to crown Him king. Here, they thought, was the leader who could assure their national independence and security. After dismissing the crowd, Jesus went into a mountain by Himself. The disciples had headed their boat across the sea toward Capernaum. A storm came up, and Jesus appeared, walking on the sea. Soon they were safely on the shore.

The next day, many of the people who had been fed miraculously the day before found Jesus. They were still filled with enthusiasm to follow Him as their new leader. But Jesus cooled their zeal with His sermon on the bread of life.

What was the message of Jesus' sermon?

Jesus insisted that they believe on Him as the "bread of life." He talked to them about His Father, about faith, about everlasting life. He presented Himself as a personal Saviour, not as a national leader. This was not what the people wanted. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (verse 66). Surely the disciples must have thought back to this event when Jesus talked about His body and His blood at the Lord's Supper.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus?

"To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. . . . What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 389.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 389-394.

Part 2
THE NEW PASSOVER

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Luke 22:14-16).

What was the relationship between the ancient Passover Feast and the new Lord's Supper?

The Passover Feast was a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt by Moses. The Lord's Supper was to be a memorial of man's deliverance from sin by Christ.

“Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

“The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653.

THINK IT THROUGH

What practical application does the apostle Paul make of the fact that Christ is “our passover”? (See 1 Cor. 5:7.)

Paul is referring to a case of immorality in the Corinthian Church. He recalls that the Israelites were required on the day before the Passover to light a candle and search the house for leaven, a symbol of sin. Every bit of leaven must be cleaned out. So, Paul says, before Christ's sacrifice can be effective for us, sin must be cleaned out of our lives and out of the church. This, of course, is possible only through the power of God.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 388, 389.

Part 3
THE TRAITOR
AT THE FEAST

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said" (Matt. 26:20-25).

What event in the ministry of Jesus was the "turning point" in the experience of Judas?

"Christ's discourse in the synagogue concerning the bread of life was the turning point in the history of Judas. He heard the words, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' John 6:53. He saw that Christ was offering spiritual rather than worldly good. He regarded himself as farsighted, and thought he could see that Jesus would have no honor, and that He could bestow no high position upon His followers. He determined not to unite himself so closely to Christ but that he could draw away. He would watch. And he did watch."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 719.

It is of more than passing interest that Judas started on the downward road when Jesus proclaimed Himself as the Bread of Life. Later he walked out into the darkness to betray his Lord when Jesus instituted the symbols of His broken body and spilled blood. Judas revolted against a crucified Lord, a spiritual Saviour. He wanted a worldly leader, a political deliverer.

What was Judas's basic problem?

"He loved the Great Teacher, and desired to be with Him. He felt a desire to be changed in character and life, and he hoped to experience this through connecting himself with Jesus. . . . But Judas did not come to the point of surrendering himself fully to Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 717.

He never loved his Lord with *all* his heart.

How well had Judas concealed his treachery? John 13:29.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a modern disciple fall into the same type of apostasy that destroyed Judas?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 716-722.

Part 4
THE GIVING
OF THANKS

"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24).

Which other descriptions of the Lord's Supper make specific mention of giving of thanks? Luke 22:19; Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23.

The giving of thanks at the Lord's Supper was more than a mere form. We recall previous occasions when Jesus gave thanks before partaking of food—the feeding of the 5000 (John 6:11) and the feeding of the 4000 (Matt. 15:36; Mark 8:6). We do not know what the Master said on these occasions, but we can assume that He thanked His Father for the blessings of life. In the case of the Last Supper, the thanksgiving prayer no doubt included thankfulness for deliverance in harmony with the theme of the Passover. But the deliverance about to be wrought by Jesus was far greater than the deliverance from Egypt. The thanksgiving phase became so prominent that the Lord's Supper became known as the "Eucharist," a term meaning giving of thanks.

What can we learn from Jesus' thanksgiving prayer at the Lord's Supper?

"But the Communion service was not to be a season of sorrowing. This was not its purpose. As the Lord's disciples gather about His table, they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings. They are not to dwell upon their past religious experience, whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are not to recall the differences between them and their brethren. The preparatory service has embraced all this. The self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences, has all been done. Now they are come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 659.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do we mean when we speak of "celebrating" the ordinances?

This term reminds us of the joy, freedom, and victory that come through Christ whose sacrifice we memorialize. We must not succumb to the popular trend toward considering "celebration" an end in itself. When we assemble for the Lord's Supper, we do not celebrate "life" or "humanness" or some other vague object. We celebrate the life-giving sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary, and we thank God for His provision for our salvation. This means that the Communion service should be a joyous occasion, because it commemorates our Lord's victory over Satan. As His followers, we share His victory.

FURTHER STUDY

Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1132.

Part 5
THE BREAD AND
THE CUP

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:26-28).

What was the meaning of Jesus' words and actions?

“In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ. And the administration of the Sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 656, 659.

What was meant by “my blood of the new testament [covenant]”?

“Jesus spoke of His blood being the blood of the covenant. What did He mean by that? A covenant is a relationship between two people; when two people enter into a covenant, they enter into a relationship with each other. But the covenant of which Jesus spoke was not a covenant between man and man; it was a covenant between God and man. That is to say, it was a new relationship between God and man. What Jesus was saying at the Last Supper was this: ‘Because of my life, and above all because of my death, a new relationship has become possible between you and God.’ It is as if He said, ‘You have seen me; and in me you have seen God; I have told you, I have shown you, how much God loves you; He loves you even enough to suffer this that I am going through; that is what God is like.’ Because of what Jesus did for men, the way for men is open to all the loveliness of this new relationship with God.”—From *The Gospel of Matthew*, translated and interpreted by William Barclay, vol. 2, pp. 377, 378.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does the Lord's Supper have to do with Christian worship?

The Lord's Supper is the high point of Christian worship. It should be “earth's nearest approach to heaven.” The Sabbath on which the Lord's Supper is celebrated should be a special Sabbath with a special meaning for every worshiper.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 652-661.

Part 6 How did the apostle Paul relate the Lord's Supper and the
TILL HE COME second coming of Jesus?

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

In what words did Jesus refer to His coming when He instituted the Lord's Supper?

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29).

What is the relation between our Lord's death and His second coming?

"It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

"At the first feast He attended with His disciples [the wedding feast at Cana], Jesus gave them the cup that symbolized His work for their salvation. At the last supper He gave it again, in the institution of that sacred rite by which His death was to be shown forth 'till He come.' 1 Cor. 11:26. And the sorrow of the disciples at parting from their Lord was comforted with the promise of reunion, as He said, 'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 149.

"The salvation of men depends upon a continual application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. Therefore, the Lord's Supper was not to be observed only occasionally or yearly, but more frequently than the annual passover."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090.

THINK IT THROUGH

When Christians worship at a Communion service, they are looking two directions—backward to the cross and forward to the crown. It was at the same occasion where the Lord's Supper was instituted that Jesus said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). The Communion service should be especially meaningful to Adventists, because it anticipates the great Communion, "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9). All except one of those who were in the upper room will be there. Those with whom we have taken Communion on earth will, hopefully, be there. And, best of all, Jesus will be there. Then we will understand fully the meaning of His broken body and the shed blood.

FURTHER STUDY

Ephesians, chapters 1 and 2.

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Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1977 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Give Glory to God" and is a series of studies in Christian behavior.

First Lesson

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1. *Ethics and Morality (Micah 6:8).*
2. *Sources of Morality (Ps. 33:4, 5; 1 John 2:29).*
3. *Decision (Prov. 1:10; Gen. 39:9).*
4. *Need of Guidance (Ps. 32:8; 25:9)*
5. *Some Christian Virtues (2 Peter 1:5-7)*
6. *A Call to High Standards (Prov. 4:23-27).*

Second Lesson

GOD AND MAN. Memory verse, Isa. 55:8, 9.

1. *God Created Man (Ps. 8:5, 6).*
2. *God Came to Redeem Sinful Man (Rom. 5:8).*
3. *God Will Judge Man (2 Cor. 5:10).*
4. *God Is Ruler (Dan. 4:17).*
5. *Man's Need of God (Ps. 23:1-3).*
6. *Man's Response to God (Rom. 12:1; Ps. 95:6).*

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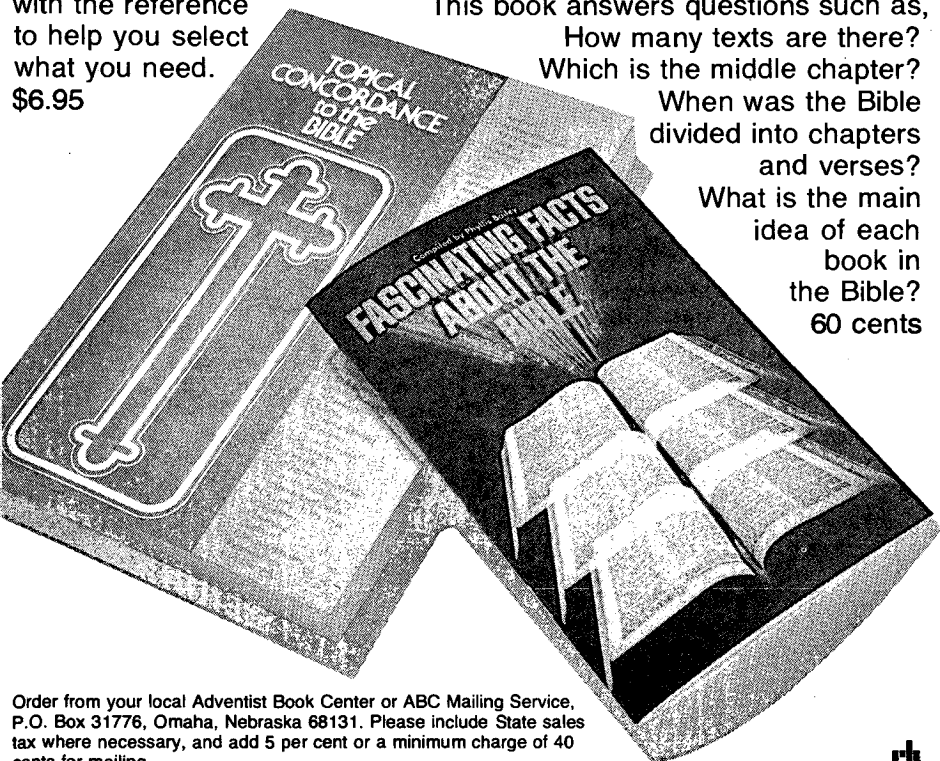
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our Lord overflowed for me
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about. He had been guilty
as a vain speculator as so
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pose of the law. He had tru
missed the spiritual intent d

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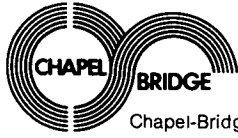
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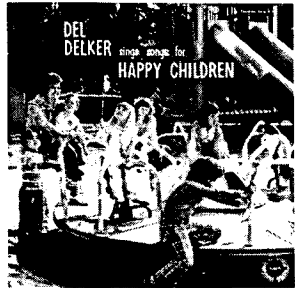
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