

DAYBREAK SERIES

OCT. — DEC. 1977

# Adult Sabbath School Lessons

## THE TIME OF THE END

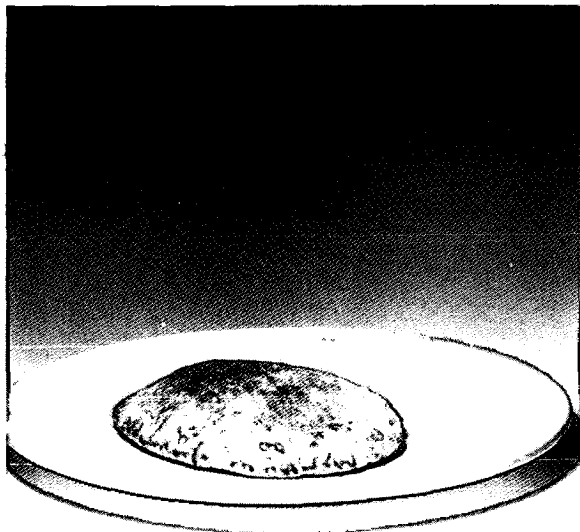


# The loaf that began a miracle.

The last loaf of bread. And the prophet had asked for it, calling on the woman to put God first and to trust the promise of God. She knew what God was like. So she poured out her last oil and meal for the Lord's work.

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# General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



## INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY CABLE "ADVENTIST" MIAMI

Dear Sabbath school members around the world:

*Saludos* from the Inter-American Division!

The Lord has marvelously blessed His work in Inter-America. In the last five years more than 210,000 new souls have been added to the church by baptism or profession of faith. The membership in the Division has soared to almost half a million members. This phenomenal growth has, of course, caused some problems--the need for more workers, more places of worship, more schools, more health facilities, et cetera.

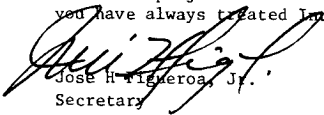
I can assure you that our workers and members are doing the utmost to face these tremendous needs. They are sacrificing in many ways to meet their portion of the church's needs at home and also in the world field.

During this quarter we will be looking to you again to assist us in two special projects which the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering Overflow will benefit:

1. *The completion of a hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.* Haiti is a country of great possibilities, but also of many needs. For the last eight years, an out-patient clinic has served the Port-au-Prince area, taking care of 1,450 patients per month. With the help of the organization and a group of members called "Missions International" a new hospital was begun in 1975; however, they certainly need all the help they can receive to finish it. Your contributions to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to achieve this goal.

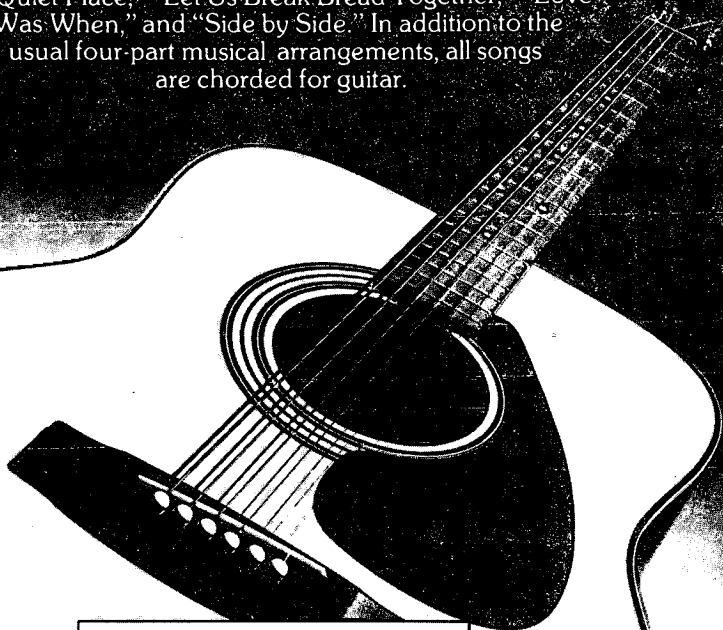
2. *The construction of the men's dormitory at the Central American Union College.* Seven countries which in themselves form seven local fields, compose the Central American Union. From Guatemala and Belice in the north, to Panama in the south, these seven fields look to CADES, as the union college is known among them, for their workers and as the place of refuge for their youth. The present men's dormitory is quite old and inadequate for the needs of today. It is imperative that a new dormitory be built to accommodate the young men who are attending this institution to become workers. Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for this quarter will also help to build this much needed men's dormitory at CADES.

We know that with the help of the Sabbath school members around the world these two projects will be a reality soon. For the liberality with which you have always treated Inter-America, again we say *MUCHAS, MUCHAS GRACIAS!*

  
Jose H. Figueroa, Jr.  
Secretary

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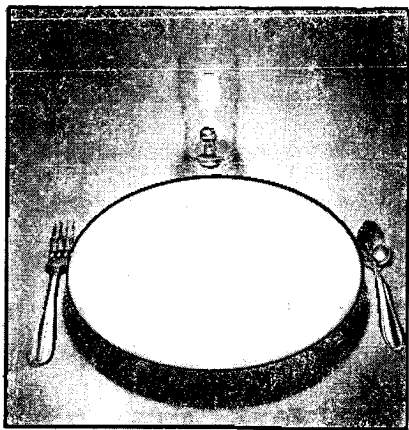
# Have You Ever Tried Living On One Meal A Week?

It's possible to survive on one meal a week. For a few weeks. But within a short time you'll discover you are suffering a loss of physical strength. Likewise, your spiritual strength depends on a regular consistent diet of spiritual food.

A Sabbath morning sermon and a Sabbath School class discussion once a week are not enough to provide the strength needed for a life of spiritual victory.

Daily Bible study is not an option to spiritual life; it is basic—not dessert but the main course. Regular Sabbath School lesson study is also essential spiritual food; it is your opportunity to follow an organized program, covering the broad scope of Biblical truth.

Why not decide that your spiritual diet deserves at least the attention you give the physical. God's table is the place to feast.



## Daily Feast

An invitation to dine at God's table

# The Time of the End

## Introduction

"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" (Isa. 21:11). This ancient cry from Edom echoes down the corridors of the centuries. The times were perplexing, and the Edomites desired to know when the morning would come. They longed for the dawn to roll away the mists of their dread and despair.

Edom's fearful inquiry is breathed again by many thoughtful persons today. Journalists speak of our world community as being in "a state of perpetual crisis." Modern communications and modes of travel have shrunk our world. Distant, unknown nations have become neighbors. What affects one part of the city affects the other parts. And in this generation it seems as though the world city staggers from one crisis to another. Men's hearts are fearful as they consider what disasters may be coming in the future.

But God has not left His people in doubt as to the meaning of our times. The prophecies of the Bible foretold the conditions which would develop in our world society just before Jesus' return. The troubles of an aging creation are described as the sharp pains and anguish of birth which in turn will issue forth the coming of Christ, the cessation of sin, and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

In the Bible the period preceding the advent is called "the time of the end." As we shall see, "the time of the end" is a specific period of time beginning at the close of the papal period in 1798 and extending to the return of Christ. During this period would occur the signs foretold in Scripture.

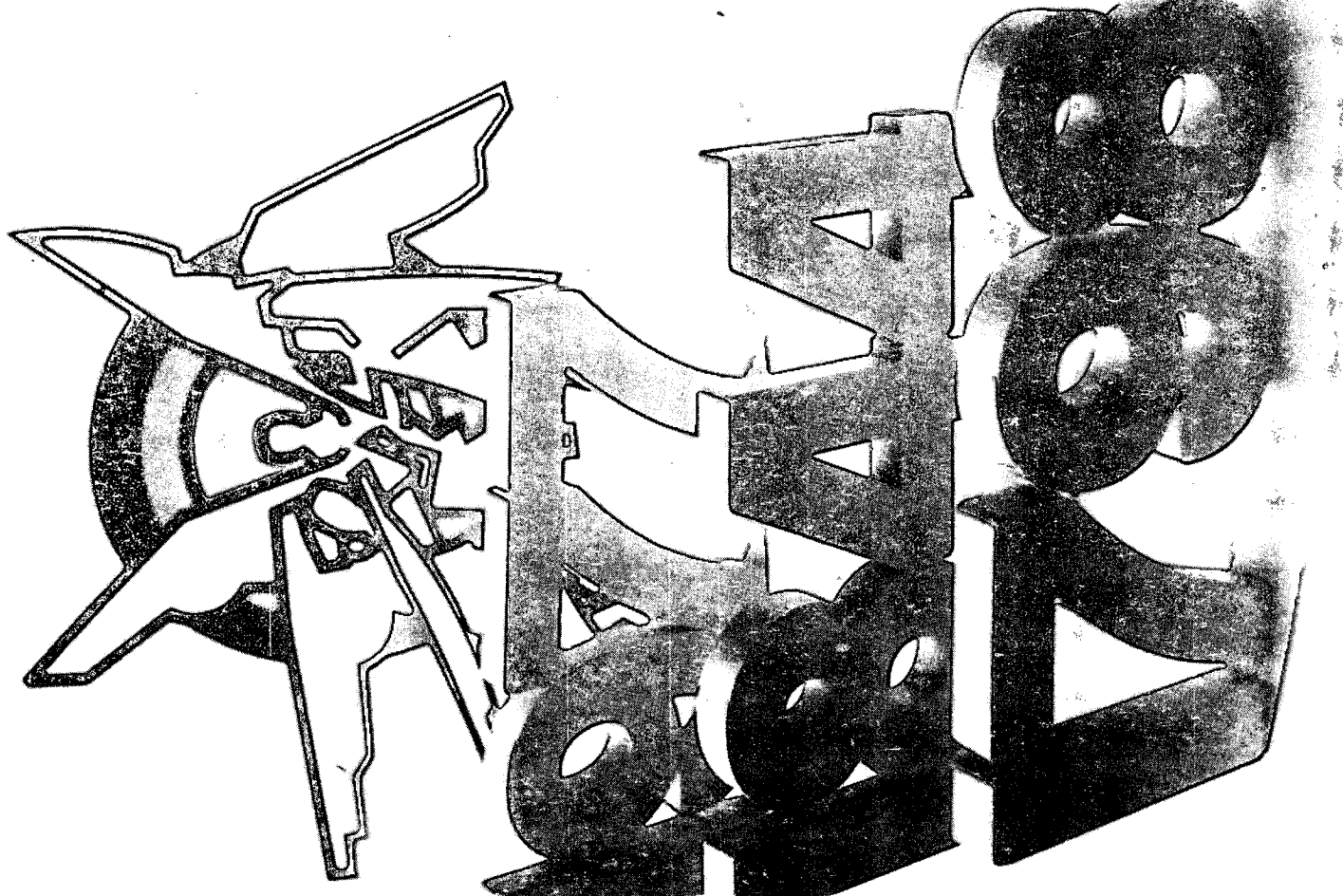
Jesus announced that celestial signs would signal His coming. Gabriel told the prophet Daniel that his book would be opened and understood in "the time of the end." And when the seal broke, earnest Bible students discovered that a great investigative, pre-advent judgment had begun in heaven and would continue during the time of the end, vindicating God and the subjects of His kingdom.

Prophecy also disclosed the rise of a vigorous religious movement that would give God's last invitation of mercy with a special "time of the end" emphasis.

But God's actions in heaven and through His last-day people would meet with many challenges on earth. Political, moral, social, and religious developments on earth would constitute not only signs of the nearing day of Christ, but would also pose problems to the advancement of God's work.

As we study the many signs of distress and declension, we cannot but realize that humanity is nearly bankrupt. Insurmountable problems seem poised to crush out human existence as we know it. Yet, while many despair, this can be the church's finest hour. Men at their wits end may now give pause to listen to what God's people have to say. By word and by life-style the church may lift up Jesus Christ, the only answer and hope of mankind. Daily the second advent becomes more relevant as the only remedy for earth's ills.

Like the ancient prophet, the church may answer the despairing cry of modern man with the hopeful, yet truthful words: "The morning cometh, and also the night." The eternal day of Christ's kingdom is about to dawn, and sin's day will be forever ended.





# 1. THE FINAL TIMES

**“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you” (1 Peter 1:10-12).**

When we think of biblical references to “times,” we first remember that the “times” and “seasons” under God’s control (Acts 1:7) have been revealed to His people through the prophets (Amos 3:7).

As the apostle Peter indicates, biblical prophecy centers around two important events in the plan of salvation—the first advent (“the sufferings of Christ”), and the second advent (“the glory that should follow”).

The Old Testament focused on the first advent of Christ. The Messiah’s coming lay in the distant future, at the end of a long era of waiting. Hence, the New Testament refers to the first coming of Christ as taking place “in

these last days” (Heb. 1:2), and the atoning death “in these last times” (1 Peter 1:18-20). So important is the incarnation and atonement in resolving the sin problem that it is stated that they have taken place “in the end of the world” (Heb. 9:26). The cross was the triumphant climax of the divine resolution of the sin problem. Since it settled basic issues in the controversy between good and evil, it could be said that Calvary marked the end of an era—the end of a long age of waiting.

In a sense, then, the first advent of Christ was the “beginning of the end.” The plan was fully confirmed in the life and death of Christ.

Now, in the New Testament, the focus can shift more forcefully to the end of the probationary time, to the second advent of Christ and the close of the drama of sin and rebellion.

Prophecy foretold that certain events would occur within the church and the world before the second advent takes place. Furthermore, there would be a period of time allotted near the close of human history to give everyone a final opportunity to accept the gospel of divine grace. It is these “final times” relating to the second advent that we wish to study this week.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Time’s Focus**  
(Heb. 9:28)
- 2. Time’s End**  
(Matt. 24:3)
- 3. Expected Time**  
(2 Thess. 2:1-4)
- 4. Prophetic Time**  
(Dan. 7:25)
- 5. Time of the End**  
(Dan. 11:33-35)
- 6. Prophecy and Time of the End**  
(Dan. 12:4, 9)

**Part 1**  
**TIME'S FOCUS**     **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).**

"One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in 'the region and shadow of death,' a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is 'the resurrection and the life,' to 'bring home again His banished.' The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 299

"The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Saviour's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, the 'appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' was the 'blessed hope.' "—*The Great Controversy*, p. 302.

**What promise did Jesus make which holy angels affirmed on the day of His ascension? John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11.**

"The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. . . . And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again. . . . Well might the disciples rejoice in the hope of their Lord's return."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

**What ordinance did Jesus institute to keep the hope of His return fresh in the minds of His people? 1 Cor. 11:26.**

"The Communion service points to Christ's second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 659.

For successful living a person needs to recognize a meaningful authority and have a worthy objective in life. The Christian centers his life on Christ. His hope is fixed upon the second coming of Christ. All the decisions of his life are made in reference to Jesus and that final event.

**THINK IT THROUGH**     **How does my personal belief in Christ's coming affect my everyday living?**

"I saw that the words, the dress, and actions should tell for God. Then a holy influence will be shed upon all. . . . Unbelievers will see that the truth we profess has a holy influence and that faith in Christ's coming affects the character of the man or woman."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 132.

**FURTHER STUDY**     *The Great Controversy*, pp. 299-302.

**Part 2**      **What important climactic event did the disciples associate**  
**TIME'S END**      **with the second coming of Christ?**

**“As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3).**

Some Christians believe that the second coming of Christ will usher in His personal reign over the nations of earth as *they now exist*, and peace and prosperity will ensue. This view sees a *continuation* of this present world under Christ's rule. But the Scriptures plainly portray that Christ's coming brings the *end* of this present world, not an extension. The coming of Christ brings deliverance to God's people, but a cataclysmic end to sinful human life.

**How will the impenitent react to the actual appearing of Christ? Matt. 24:30; Rev. 6:14-17.**

**What effect will the coming of Christ have upon the impenitent and the organized forces of apostasy? 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8.**

“At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His glory. Christ takes His people to the City of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

**What impact do the last plagues and the second coming have on the physical earth? Rev. 16:17-21; 2 Peter 3:10.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What spiritual preparation am I making for the end of time—the end of human probation?**

“The day of the Lord is approaching with stealthy tread; but the supposed great and wise men know not the signs of Christ's coming or of the end of the world. . . .

“There are thousands upon thousands, millions upon millions, who are now making their decision for eternal life or eternal death. The man who is wholly absorbed in his counting room, the man who finds pleasure at the gaming table, the man who loves to indulge perverted appetite, the amusement lover, the frequenters of the theater and the ballroom, put eternity out of their reckoning. . . . They are not in the procession that is moving heavenward. They are led by the great apostate, and with him will be destroyed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 406, 407.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636, 637, 640-642.

**Part 3**  
**EXPECTED TIME**      **According to the apostle Paul, Christians were not to expect the return of Christ until after the development of what apostasy in the Christian church?**

**“Now we beseech you, brethren, . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2:1-4).**

While the Christian must always live in daily reference to the coming of Christ, yet God foretold that certain events would take place in the earth before the actual advent.

“The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day. . . . Not till after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the ‘man of sin,’ can we look for the advent of our Lord. The ‘man of sin,’ which is also styled ‘the mystery of iniquity,’ ‘the son of perdition,’ and ‘that wicked,’ represents the papacy, which, as foretold in prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. The coming of Christ could not take place before that time. Paul covers with his caution the whole of the Christian dispensation down to the year 1798. It is this side of that time that the message of Christ’s second coming is to be proclaimed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 356.

**What era of human suffering did Christ indicate would take place before Christians could expect His return? Matt. 24:21, 22.**

“Between these two events [the destruction of Jerusalem and the second advent], there lay open to Christ’s view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. . . . For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ’s followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 630, 631.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **Why have Christians been told to “watch” for the return of Christ, when it is clear from the prophecies that certain events must first take place?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 264-266.

**Part 4  
PROPHETIC  
TIME**

**For what length of time did Daniel prophesy that the little horn (the Christian apostasy) would exercise supremacy over God's faithful followers?**

**"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25).**

The apostle Paul warned the Thessalonians not to expect the advent of Christ until *after* the development of "the man of sin" within the church. "He [Paul] proceeded to emphasize the fact that the papal power, so clearly described by the prophet Daniel, was yet to rise and wage war against God's people. Until this power should have performed its deadly and blasphemous work, it would be in vain for the church to look for the coming of their Lord."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 266.

An analysis of Daniel 7 provides the following data for identifying the little horn. (1) *Location* (verse 8): It would arise among the nations of Western Europe. (2) *Time of rise* (verse 24): It would arise after the establishment of the nations of Western Europe, that is, sometime subsequent to AD 476, the date assigned for the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West. (3) *Nature of the horn* (verses 8, 20, 24): The horn is noted as being, in some way different from the others. Comparison with the beast of Revelation 13 shows that it is a religiopolitical power. (4) *Actions of the horn* (verses 20, 21, 24, 25): This horn subdues three of the other horns, speaks great words against God, makes war upon His saints, and presumes to change His times and laws. (5) *A time period* (verse 25): The horn would exercise supremacy over God's people for "a time and times and the dividing of times." This symbolic period of Daniel 7:25 is 1260 prophetic days (Rev. 12:6, 14), and thus 1260 years. (Compare Eze. 4:6.)

These identifying marks point unerringly to only one power: a religiopolitical system which arose on the ruins of the Western Empire. Its leader legally recognized by law (Code of Justinian) as the head of Christendom, the papacy sought and often succeeded to rule over Europe with great power during the Middle Ages. Its special period of supremacy may be dated from AD 538 when freed from the last restricting Arian horn power (the Ostrogoths) until 1798 when the French government invaded Rome and declared the political rule of the papacy to be at an end. All that was predicted was fulfilled by the papacy during this extensive period.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why do you suppose God gave the church this detailed information about the coming Christian apostasy?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 50-52, 266.

**Part 5  
TIME OF  
THE END**

**According to Daniel, the close of what era of persecution would mark the beginning of "the time of the end"?**

**"They that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. . . . And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed" (Dan. 11:33-35).**

Note that "the time of the end" is *not* the end of time. Rather, it is an appointed *period of time* extending from the close of the era of papal supremacy (1798) until the end of human probation. Since 1798 momentous events have been taking place in both heaven and earth as the plan of salvation has moved into its final phases. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matt. 25:6).

**How should we be affected by the fact that we live in the "time of the end"? 1 Thess. 5:1-10.**

"We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures [Dan. 12:4, 10; Luke 21:31, 34, 36]. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand.

"The Jews misinterpreted and misapplied the word of God, and they knew not the time of their visitation. The years of the ministry of Christ and His apostles,—the precious last years of grace to the chosen people,—they spent in plotting the destruction of the Lord's messengers. Earthly ambitions absorbed them, and the offer of the spiritual kingdom came to them in vain. So today the kingdom of this world absorbs men's thoughts, and they take no note of the rapidly fulfilling prophecies and the tokens of the swift-coming kingdom of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 235.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why should events presently occurring both encourage as well as sober me?**

"The attention of the people should be called to the momentous event which is so near at hand. The signs of the times should be kept fresh before their minds. The prophetic visions of Daniel and John foretell a period of moral darkness and declension; but at the time of the end, the time in which we are now living, the vision was to speak and not lie. When the signs predicted begin to come to pass, the waiting, watching ones are bidden to look up and lift up their heads and rejoice because their redemption draweth nigh." —*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 9, 10.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 11-17.

**Part 6  
PROPHECY AND  
TIME OF  
THE END**

**What prophetic book was promised to be unsealed in the period known as "the time of the end"?**

**"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."**

**"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4, 9).**

"Soon the eyes of many on both sides of the Atlantic were fixed upon the next great designated event in the divine plan of the centuries—the master 2300-year period was soon to end. In fact, some 84 men in thirteen countries spread over four continents—of which William Miller was but one—thought that this fateful epoch would terminate about 1843, '44 or '47. . . .

"All felt that in some way it had to do with the prophesied 'end events,' judgment scenes, the close of the gospel age, the Second Advent, the end of the present world order. This was the basic belief, first of the general Old World Advent Awakening, and then of the distinctive New World Advent Movement of the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was an unprecedented concept and development in human thinking. It was revolutionary in scope—another turning point in history."—L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), p. 44.

**How was the apostle John shown the opening of the prophetic messages of Daniel and their promulgation to the world in the time of the end? Rev. 10:1-11.**

"The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. . . . The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 105.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How clear are the prophetic messages of Daniel and Revelation to me? Are they vitally affecting my experience?**

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. . . .

"Study Revelation in connection with Daniel. . . . We, with all our religious advantages, ought to know far more today than we do know."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 116.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 547, 548.





# 2. THE REMOVAL OF A SEAL

**“The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30, 31).**

We cannot escape the fact that we live in a moral universe. “There are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48. Due to the origin of the great controversy over the authority of God, there will come a day when every sinner must give an account to his Sovereign, a day of judgment.

This judgment involves all who have at one time rebelled against the moral authority of the Creator. It includes Satan and the host of disloyal angels. It involves the impenitent of the human race who have aligned themselves on the side of Satan. And it involves those penitent sinners who have responded to the saving grace of God. Every facet of this final judgment is of extreme

interest to the loyal beings in the universe, and all the issues will be clearly understood by disloyal angels, and by both the redeemed and impenitent of the human race.

While the Scriptures speak of ultimate judgment in general terms, it is in the prophecies of Daniel that new insights are revealed, particularly the investigative phase of final judgment which will take place in the heavenly sanctuary before the return of Jesus. The vision dealing with the time of this phase and some of the issues involved was sealed up until “the time of the end.” Then this prophetic portion of Daniel was to be opened (Revelation 10), and knowledge about the important events related to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the prophecies would be increased (Dan. 12:4).

As we have seen from our previous study, we are presently living in “the time of the end.” It is in this period that the 2300-year period ended, and the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) is to be accomplished. What is involved in this cleansing, and its solemn significance for us is the theme for our study this week. The seal has been removed. It is God’s will that the end-time generation shall now fully comprehend the issues involved.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **End-time Judgment**  
(Dan. 7:9, 10)
2. **Angel Explanations**  
(Dan. 8:16, 17)
3. **A Trampled Sanctuary**  
(Dan. 8:13, 14)
4. **Forecasts of Messianic Mediation**  
(Dan. 9:24)
5. **Issues in the Judgment—I**  
(Dan. 8:14)
6. **Issues in the Judgment—II**  
(Rev. 3:5)

**Part 1**  
**END-TIME**  
**JUDGMENT**

**What was Daniel shown would occur in heaven before Christ's second advent?**

**"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9, 10).**

The prophecy of Daniel 7 depicts the struggle for world dominion and control—first by a series of political powers, and then by a religiopolitical system. The climax is reached when God intervenes, and in heaven's court of judgment the dominion of this earth is awarded to Christ, the Son of man, and to His people (verses 13, 14, 27).

**After the careers of what five powers does this heavenly judgment take place? Dan. 7:1-8.**

Among Bible expositors there is general agreement that the four beasts of chapter 7 represent the same world powers depicted by the metal image of chapter 2: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Chapter 7, however, introduces *two new features*: (1) The little horn with the eyes and mouth of a man, and (2) a pre-advent judgment in the court of heaven.

**Recall Lesson 1, part 4. Since the pre-advent judgment is shown by the prophecy to come after the 1260-year reign of the little horn, it would take place after what date?**

At some point of time subsequent to 1798 (after the period of papal dominion in Europe), the heavenly court would convene. Investigation would be made. The power of the little horn power would be taken away (verse 26); Christ and the saints would take the rulership of the kingdom (verses 13, 14, 27). Thus chapter 7 foretold that a great and solemn judgment will take place in heaven during the "time of the end."

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Wickedness in all its unfairness appears to run rampant. What does the pre-advent judgment tell us about God?**

"There are limits even to the forbearance of God. The boundary of His long-suffering may be reached, and then He will surely punish. And when He does take up the case of the presumptuous sinner, He will not cease till He has made a full end."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1166.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 479, 480.

Part 2  
ANGEL  
EXPLANATIONS

**What prophecy was to have particular significance in the time of the end according to Gabriel?**

**"Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. . . . He said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision" (Dan. 8:16, 17).**

Two years after the vision of chapter 7 Daniel received another as recorded in chapter 8. Although the latter vision covers the same time period as in chapters 2 and 7, it especially elaborates on the two new features of chapter 7: the little horn and the pre-advent judgment. In the time of the end the meaning of this judgment would be clarified.

**What explanation did Gabriel give of the symbols of the ram, goat, its large horn, and the four horns which came from the stump of the former after its breaking? Dan. 8:3-8, 20-22.**

**The fourth beast and its little horn (Daniel 7) are symbolized in this vision (chapter 8) by a single horn. Describe its characteristics. Dan. 8:9-12, 23-25.**

Pagan and papal Rome have had so much in common that it is reasonable to see the papacy as the "continuation" of the pagan Roman Empire. In Daniel 8 this fact is represented by one horn symbolizing the careers of *both pagan and papal Rome*, though some aspects of the prophecy may apply more fully to one or the other.

Pagan Rome attacked the people of God, crucified the Messiah (Prince of princes), and eventually destroyed the earthly temple. Papal Rome has likewise persecuted the people of God (Dan. 7:21), and has drawn attention away from Christ by imposing a human priesthood upon the church. It has done this through the confessional and the sacrifice of the mass. Thus Rome has for centuries diverted the attention of the sinner from the significance of Christ's atoning death and His mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 7:25; 8:1, 2). In changing the divine law, in corrupting the prophetic voice of the Scriptures, and in exalting the traditions of men above the Word of God, Papal Rome has cast "truth" down to the ground. Pagan Rome was destroyed by force of arms; spiritual Rome, however, will be broken, not by human hands (Dan. 8:25), but by the divine investigation and action in the heavenly judgment (Dan. 7:26), and by the glory of the second advent of Christ (2 Thess. 2:3-8).

THINK IT THROUGH

**Although the Bible speaks against the system of the papacy, how should we regard individuals within the system?**

FURTHER STUDY

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 569, 570.

**Part 3**  
**A TRAMPLED**  
**SANCTUARY**

**How long did a holy personage indicate the sanctuary would be trampled upon?**

**“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:13, 14).**

**Who had trampled upon the people of God and the sanctuary? Dan. 8:9-12.**

Daniel's concern naturally centered on the ruined temple in Jerusalem. He became sick, overwhelmed with the foreboding that the vision indicated a long delay in its restoration and the end of the captivity.

But what sanctuary did the holy watcher have in mind? Daniel lived to see Cyrus order the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, but that temple lost its significance at Calvary and was obliterated in AD 70. Was Heaven's concern for an earthly temple-sanctuary the ministry of which was done in types and symbols? Or was God beginning to point His people to the heavenly sanctuary where the Messiah would minister to individuals the benefits of His atonement, and where He would finally resolve the issues in the great controversy? The fact that the "little horn" of chapter 8 also represents the papal phase of Rome (which functions in the Christian era) points us to the heavenly sanctuary of the Christian dispensation.

**At the close of what period of time did the holy one state the sanctuary would be cleansed? Dan. 8:14.**

In chapter 7 a court of judgment convening *in heaven* brought the dominion of the papal horn to an end. Christ and His people were awarded the kingdom. In chapter 8 the career of the little horn in its papal phase of trampling upon God's people and the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary are brought to an end by the cleansing of that sanctuary. Since both visions cover the same area, it is logical to conclude that the cleansing of the sanctuary (or, the restoration "to its rightful state," RSV) and the pre-advent judgment in heaven are the same event: the last phase of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the earthly temple with its symbolic service was not restored after AD 70.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 409-417.

**Part 4  
FORECASTS OF  
MESSIANIC  
MEDIATION**

**At a certain point in the 490 years allotted to the Jews after the reestablishment of Judah, what place was to be anointed?**

**“Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place” (Dan. 9:24, RSV).**

Although a period of twelve years elapsed between the visions of chapters 8 and 9 (550-538 BC), the two visions really formed one unit. In Daniel 8 Gabriel did not explain the time period of 2300 days and the cleansing of the sanctuary because Daniel sickened and fainted. At his return Gabriel began by explaining that a portion of the 2300 day-year period, namely 490 years, was to be allocated to the Jews during which time the Messiah would come.

“To put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness” are phrases that foretold the redemptive acts to be accomplished by the Messiah. His sinless life and the supreme sacrifice on Calvary made possible the final destruction of sin, instituted atonement for penitent sinners, and provided righteousness through His merits.

“To anoint a most holy place” refers to the inauguration of services in the heavenly sanctuary with Christ as its High Priest when He was enthroned at the right hand of God at the time of His ascension. (Compare Acts 2:33; 5:31; Rom. 8:34.) This is the subject of the book of Hebrews. (See Heb. 8:1, 2.) The divine spotlight thus shifts within the continuous vision of chapters 8 and 9 from an earthly typical sanctuary to the heavenly antitype. The 70-week vision thereby pointed the nation to the redemptive acts of Christ *on earth*, and to the beginning of His ministration *in heaven* as man’s High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, “the true tabernacle” (Heb. 8:2).

**Whereas Gabriel pointed to the opening of the heavenly sanctuary, what did David and Isaiah foretell about the Messiah’s priestly ministry? Ps. 110:1, 4. (Compare Matt. 22:42-45.)**

**Christ began His priestly mediation after His ascension into heaven. What event does the prophecy indicate would begin the 2300 days that would reach to Christ’s final phase of judgment ministry” Dan. 8:14; 9:25.**

Two thousand three hundred years traced from the fall of 457 BC (the time of the final decree) reaches to the fall of 1844.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 398, 399, 410.

**Part 5  
ISSUES IN THE  
JUDGMENT-I**

**What did Gabriel assure Daniel would take place at the close of the 2300-year period?**

**“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14).**

**“Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state” (RSV); “shall emerge victorious” (NEB).**

We have seen from our previous study that the end-time prophecies of Daniel, chapters seven through nine, point our attention to the heavenly sanctuary, the very center and throne of the divine government. The final ministry of Christ as Priest will result in vindicating both God and His people. The authority of God will be restored to its rightful place. Heaven will emerge victorious in the contest between good and evil.

**Daniel 8 depicts the “little horn” in its papal phase as attacking and defiling the heavenly sanctuary (verses 11-13). What action does the heavenly sanctuary court take against this power? Dan. 7:11, 26.**

**What is the significance of this sentence by the heavenly sanctuary court?**

The original controversy arose in the universe when Satan challenged God's authority. Satan questioned the necessity of the divine law which he desired to abolish. He questioned the divine character and motives in requiring the intelligent creation to keep His law. He asserted his “right” to be independent of God. He argued that God could not be both just and merciful, and he disputed the authority of Christ. All these issues and challenges Satan has continued to pursue and emphasize here on earth through paganism, and especially through apostate Christianity. The law of God has been both changed and trampled under foot. The character of God has been maligned, caricatured, and misunderstood. The life, teachings, and mediatorial work of Christ have been misinterpreted and His place usurped.

Since Satan is the instigator behind all human operations that are opposed to God, the judgment rendered by the heavenly sanctuary court against the “little horn,” is really the rendering of a verdict of guilt against Satan himself, and the clearing of the Godhead (with the assent of the loyal universe) from all the charges originally made by Satan. Thus the supreme objective is the vindication of God.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what way does knowing the outcome of the great controversy affect my Christian experience?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

**Part 6  
ISSUES IN THE  
JUDGMENT-II**

**What promise related to final judgment is made to those who fear God?**

**"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5).**

The prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 indicate that one aspect of cleansing the sanctuary and restoring it to its rightful state involves the condemning of the "little horn" and Satan and the vindication of God. Also involved are those whose names have been enrolled in the book of life. The books of Leviticus and Hebrews show that one phase of the final ministry of Christ is the blotting out of the records of the sins of all who have accepted Jesus Christ.

**What do the parables of the wheat and tares and of the net suggest as one reason for the pre-advent judgment of all who are recorded in the book of life? Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50.**

It must be kept in mind that all phases of final judgment (pre-advent investigative phase, review phase during the millennium, executive phase at the close of the millennium) are not for the sake of God who is omniscient. These are for the intelligent universe—the unfallen beings, the redeemed, and finally the impenitent—that all may fully understand the issues in the great controversy and be fully satisfied with the rightness of God and the wrongness of Satan and sin.

**According to the parable of the wedding garment, what question would be raised if sinners were taken into heaven? See Matt. 22:2, 10-13.**

The fact that books of record (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12) are used in the phases of judgment indicate that although sin may be confessed and forgiven, the records are retained. The records thus reveal the penitent's sins, but they also reveal that he has laid hold of the merits of Christ and is trusting in Him. Records can vindicate as well as condemn. Those found clothed in Christ's righteousness will have their names retained in the book of life, and the record of their sins will be blotted out. By the judgment both God and His people will be vindicated and freed from the accusations of Satan.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why do you think God has extended the final judgment through three phases? What does it tell us about God?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 483-485.

# 3. END-TIME CELESTIAL SIGNS

**“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26).**

The main thrust of our study this week relates to the signs Jesus said would occur in the heavens prior to His return. Displayed on the gigantic signboard of the sky, the signs in the sun, moon, and stars are important events in “the time of the end” period. These heralded and continue to herald the coming of Christ.

Jesus’ discussion of these celestial events is part of His conversation with the apostles on the Mount of Olives a few days before His death. Due to their concern to know more about the destruction of the temple and of His return, Christ mingled His description of the events leading up to each. In one sense, the fall of the nation was a type of the destruction of the world.

“The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God’s Holy Spirit may read their own condemnation.”

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 587.

To get the setting for the particular events to be studied this week, the reader will find it helpful to read the Master’s prophecy in its entirety as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21:5-38. The full chapter, “On the Mount of Olives,” in *The Desire of*

*Ages*, pp. 627-636, will also prove helpful. While the sign events of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world are similar, Matthew’s account follows a definite progression. Matthew 24:1-14 deals primarily with religious, political, and natural events which would occur before the destruction of the nation of Israel. These will be repeated before the second advent. Verses 15-20 touch on the fall of the nation, followed by a brief sweep of the era of persecution known as the Dark Ages (verses 21-23). A few words are said about the *manner* of His return (verses 23-28). Then Christ announces the celestial signs followed by the actual advent (verses 29-31). The remainder of the chapter deals with Christ’s appeal to His people to watch and to be ready for His return (verses 32-51).

Nearly a century and a half have elapsed since the last of the celestial signs, and the Lord has not yet returned. This has led some to question the validity of the celestial phenomena and to wonder about their relevancy for modern Christians. Others ask, Why does Christ delay His coming?

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Divine Design**  
(Gen. 1:14)
2. **Divine Forecast**  
(Matt. 24:3)
3. **Dark Valley**  
(Matt. 24:21, 22)
4. **Heralds of the Dawn—I**  
(Joel 2:30, 31)
5. **Heralds of the Dawn—II**  
(Rev. 6:13)
6. **A Delayed Morning**  
(Matt. 24:32-34)





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**Part 1** For what purposes did the Creator make the sun, moon, and stars?  
**DIVINE DESIGN**

**“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years” (Gen. 1:14).**

It was the Creator’s design to use the celestial orbs at times in such a manner as to arrest attention and to focus it upon His presence and mighty acts in the affairs of mankind.

**What is the first recorded instance of God’s use of the sun to show His power over creation? Joshua 10:12-14.**

“This mighty miracle testifies that the creation is under the control of the Creator. Satan seeks to conceal from men the divine agency in the physical world—to keep out of sight the unwearied working of the first great cause. In this miracle all who exalt nature above the God of nature stand rebuked.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.

**Through what sky wonder did God create an interest in His truth in ancient Babylon? 2 Kings 20:8-12; 2 Chron. 32:31.**

“Their king, Merodachbaladan, upon learning that this miracle had been wrought as a sign to the king of Judah that the God of heaven had granted him a new lease of life, sent ambassadors . . . to learn, if possible, more of the God who was able to perform so great a wonder.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 344.

**What supernatural event occurred during the last three hours of Christ’s life? Matt. 27:45.**

“There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**It is evident that God often creates favorable opportunities for witnessing. How may I respond effectively?**

“Those with whom we associate day by day need our help, our guidance. They may be in such a condition of mind that a word spoken in season will be as a nail in a sure place. Tomorrow some of these souls may be where we can never reach them again. What is our influence over these fellow travelers?”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 348.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 508, 509.

**Part 2** In response to Jesus' prediction that the temple would be  
**DIVINE FDRECAST** destroyed, what question did the disciples later ask?

**"As he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3).**

"Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two . . . crises, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves. When He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration. . . . This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth's history."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 628.

**List the events Jesus said would precede the fall of Jerusalem. Matt. 24:4-14.**

The activities of false messiahs and prophets, wars and strife, natural calamities, persecution, waning spiritual fervor, and at the same time the widespread advances of the gospel message occurred before the fall of the Jewish nation. Similar events will be repeated before the second advent of our Lord.

**What was to be the immediate signal that the city was about to be destroyed and the nation scattered? Luke 21:20-23.**

**What had Jesus foretold a few days earlier in tears about the city and the nation? Luke 19:41-44.**

"Jesus, looking down to the last generation, saw the world involved in a deception similar to that which caused the destruction of Jerusalem. The great sin of the Jews was their rejection of Christ; the great sin of the Christian world would be their rejection of the law of God, the foundation of His government in heaven and earth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 22.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What lesson may I learn from Israel's experience which would prevent me from presuming on God's mercies and trifling away my day of grace?**

"While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 491.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 627-630, 633.

**Part 3**      **After foretelling the fall of the nation of Israel, the Saviour**  
**DARK VALLEY**      **next referred to what long period of suffering?**

**"Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:21, 22).**

Because of its proximity to His remarks on the fall of Jerusalem, some commentators hold that the "great tribulation" refers to the distress the Jews suffered by the Roman conquest in AD 70. However, terrible as that siege was, it would not be correct to say that its tribulation was greater than any before it or after it. Nor did the war involve "the elect," that is, Christians, since they obeyed Christ's warning and saved their lives by fleeing. Rather, the prophetic glance of the Saviour rested briefly on that persecution which His people were to endure as Daniel had foretold.

"For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ's followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God's hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 631.

**What development among Christians prepared the way for this era of persecution? Acts 20:29, 30; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2: 1-4.**

"This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of 'the man of sin' foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 50.

**How long was the dark night of control by the Christian apostasy to last? Dan. 7:25. (Compare Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5.)**

"Popery had become the world's despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 60.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **How may I best prepare myself for the persecution foretold in Revelation 13?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Great Controversy*, pp. 621-623.

**Part 4  
HERALDS OF  
THE DAWN—1**

**What wonders in the heavens did the prophet Joel predict would occur before the ultimate day of the Lord comes?**

**"I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:30, 31).**

In its larger context (verses 28-32) Peter saw a fulfillment of this ancient prophecy on the day of Pentecost. (See Acts 2:16-21.) But Pentecost must be regarded as only a partial fulfillment, for the "great and notable day of the Lord" is yet future.

**In relationship to what period of time did Christ more precisely locate the occurrence of these signs? Matt. 24:29, 30. (Compare Mark 13:24, 25.)**

"The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th day of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 306.

"May 19, 1780, stands in history as 'The Dark Day.' Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 308

"It has long been pointed out that it is the *fact*, and not the *cause*, of the darkness that is significant . . . as also in the case of earthquakes, falling stars, and other events seen as signs of the times. When the Lord would open a path for his people through the sea, he did it by 'a strong east wind.' Ex. 14:21. Was it for this reason any less miraculous? In like manner, to account for the remarkable darkening of the sun and moon or of the falling stars as events in nature is not to discredit them as merciful signs of the approaching end of probationary time."—*SDA Source Book*, Editors' Note, Item 571, p. 317.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**A small cloud was sufficient evidence to Elijah that God would send rain, and he acted accordingly (1 Kings 18:42-46). How does the dark day event affect me? In order to motivate me to a better life, how much evidence must I have to inspire faith in the imminence of Christ's second advent.**

"He [Elijah] did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favor. And yet what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 157.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 306-308.

**Part 5**  
**HERALDS OF THE**  
**DAWN—II**

**How did John describe the falling of the stars as foretold by both Joel and Jesus?**

**“The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind” (Rev. 6:13).**

On November 13, 1833, there occurred what is still recorded as the most magnificent meteor shower ever witnessed. This great display of celestial fireworks was witnessed from Canada to Mexico, and from mid-Atlantic to the Pacific. Darting away from a single point in the sky—in the constellation of Leo—the meteors were thrown like the unripe figs of the prophetic description.

**What significance does this particular sign have? Mark 13:24-26.**

“Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation of the church under pagan and papal persecutions, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars. After this He spoke of His coming in His kingdom.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

“In 1833, . . . the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: ‘The stars shall fall from heaven.’ Matthew 24:29. . . .

“Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: ‘When ye shall see all these things, *know* that it is near, even at the doors.’ Matthew 24:33.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 333, 334.

**Nearly a century and a half has passed since the 1833 falling of the stars. What is the tendency of the human heart when delay in a cherished hope seems apparent? Eze. 12:22, 23.**

The inhabitants of Judah mocked the reliability of the prophetic predictions made regarding that nation in the sixth century BC. Their attitude reflects the common tendency of the human mind in its impatience.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I keep my hope bright in spite of delay in seeing the fulfillment of the promised return?**

“The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 333, 334.

**Part 6**  
**A DELAYED**  
**MORNING**

**As He concluded His portrayal of signs that would precede both the fall of Jerusalem and His advent, what did Jesus wish His followers to know?**

**“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Matt. 24:32-34).**

In His prophecy Christ intermingled two events: (1) the fall of Jerusalem, and (2) His second coming and the end of the world. The designation “this generation” was Christ’s description of His contemporaries (compare Matt. 11:16; 17:17). With reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, the phrase would denote the Jews then living—they would see that terrible tragedy. It occurred only 39 years later in AD 70.

The phrase “this generation” has had several interpretations. One is that it refers to those persons who have seen the completion of all the signs mentioned, including those on the earth. Another possible explanation is that in the providence of God, probationary time could have been concluded at some point after 1844 (the last prophetic date and the investigative phase of judgment in heaven), but within the lifetime of the generation witnessing the last of the celestial signs.

**What hints of probable delay in the advent are given by Christ in His prophecy? Matt. 24:48; 25:1, 5.**

“It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 67.

**What is Peter’s explanation to last-day scoffers for a delayed advent? 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 8-10.**

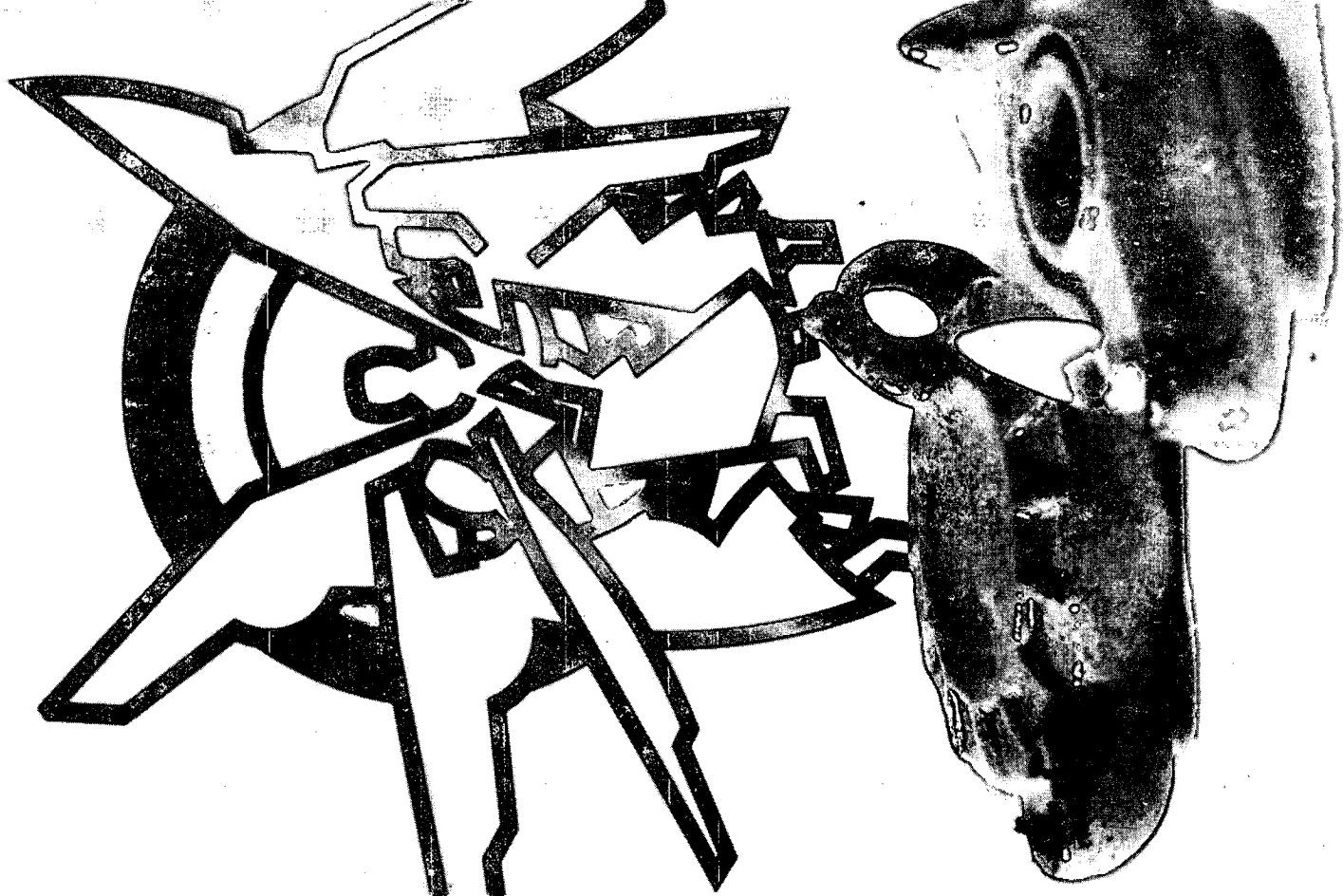
“It [the coming of the Lord] will not tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples. Shall we . . . forget that God’s forbearance to the wicked is a part of the vast and merciful plan by which He is seeking to compass the salvation of souls?”—*Evangelism*, p. 697.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Did the 40 years of wandering nullify God’s promise to settle Israel in Canaan? Why does the delay in the advent not nullify the certainty of Christ’s return and kingdom?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 66-69.





# 4. THE END-TIME CHURCH

**“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1, 2).**

This ringing appeal to the ancient Hebrews to prepare the world for the first advent of Christ is likewise applicable to God’s people living in the time of the end. (See *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 717, 718.) The moral darkness grows increasingly deeper as the end approaches. In such a condition the Christian may shine even more effectively.

The New Testament views the church in the time of the end from different angles. This week’s study will survey these perspectives. Jesus challenged the end-time church to be a watching church. He gave the parables of the ten virgins and the talents to show how the church should be prepared for His coming, and actively engaged in His service according to the several abilities of its members.

In His messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 Jesus appealed to His end-time church to repent of its sins and to arouse from its lethargy. Finally, John was shown in the visions on Patmos the worldwide movement of the end-time church as it would herald the everlasting gospel. John saw the earth lightened with spiritual glory as the church gave God’s last invitation of grace.

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s

plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.”

“Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. Not one cloud has fallen upon it that He has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork His work, that He has not foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted. He has not left His church forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and that which His Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell has been brought about. All His purposes will be fulfilled. His law is linked with His throne, and no power of evil can destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9, 11, 12.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **A Call to Vigilance**  
(Matt. 24:42, 44)
2. **Preparedness Illustrated—I**  
(Matt. 25:1)
3. **Preparedness Illustrated—II**  
(Matt. 25:4, 6, 10)
4. **A Call for Every-member Participation** (Matt. 25:14, 15)
5. **A Call to Repentance**  
(Rev. 3:14, 15, 19)
6. **The Church’s End-time Message**  
(Rev. 14:6-14)

**Part 1**  
**A CALL TO**  
**VIGILANCE**

**As Jesus concluded His predictions regarding His return, what appeal did He make to the disciples which is especially applicable to the church in "the time of the end"?**

**"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."**

**"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:42, 44).**

The Greek word translated "watch" literally means "be awake" or "keep awake." Figuratively, it means to "be on the alert," or "be vigilant." The apostle Paul commands, "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:6). By this he means, Be not spiritually sleepy, lazy, or indifferent, but rather be on the alert with regard to your personal salvation and that of others.

**What are some of the conditions which may cause a Christian to become sleepy and indifferent to his spiritual needs in the end-time? Luke 21:34-36; Matt. 24:48-51.**

"The evil servant says in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. . . . The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

**What garment may the Christian lose in this critical period if he fails to watch? Rev. 16:15. (Compare Matt. 22:11.)**

**How may the Christian best keep himself spiritually awake at all times? Eph. 6:14; 1 Peter 1:13; Matt. 26:41.**

"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Satan knows that his time is short (Rev. 12:12), and seeks my personal destruction (1 Peter 5:8). What am I doing to thwart his approaches?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 634-636.

**Part 2**  
**PREPAREDNESS**  
**ILLUSTRATED—I**

**"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Matt. 25:1).**

Read the full parable in verses 1 through 13.

"Chapter 25 opens with the words: 'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.' Here is brought to view the church living in the last days, the same that is pointed out in the close of chapter 24. In this parable their experience is illustrated by the incidents of an Eastern marriage." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

**List the aspects in which these ten young women are similar. What is represented by the lamps and oil? Ps. 119: 105. (Compare Isa. 60:1.)**

**What failure in preparation does Jesus note in the foolish virgins long before the crisis exposed their true condition? Matt. 25:3.**

"The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. . . . The foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 411.

**Why are the foolish virgins unable at the final crisis to obtain oil from their wiser companions? Matt. 25:8, 9. (Compare Eze. 14:20.)**

"In spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency. The grace of God has been freely offered to every soul. . . . But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. . . . No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 411, 412.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How do I regard my personal religious faith? Is it a belief to which I merely give assent, or is it a way of life which affects my thoughts and actions even in a crisis?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 405-413.

**Part 3**  
**PREPAREDNESS**  
**ILLUSTRATED—II**

**What did the foresight and preparedness of the wise virgins enable them to do when the bridegroom finally came?**

**"The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."  
"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."  
"And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25:4, 6, 10).**

**The darkness in the parable represents the moral darkness that envelops mankind. At what point in this moral gloom does the parable suggest Jesus will return? Verse 6.**

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415.

"The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 414.

**Through the deepening moral darkness until the Bridegroom arrives, the lamps of the wise continue to burn. What does their burning symbolize? See Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15.**

"Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching. It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom's honor. Shining out in the darkness, it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom, to the marriage feast. . . .

"Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 414-416.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**If the lamp of my Christian experience is flickering, growing dim because of a worldly life-style, who will guide lost souls of my acquaintance to the kingdom?**

"It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 414-421.

**Part 4  
A CALL FOR  
EVERY-MEMBER  
PARTICIPATION**

**What parable did Jesus tell to indicate how His church was to "watch" in the time of the end?**

**"The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matt. 25:14, 15).**

The "talents" in the parable are monies which have been entrusted to the servants, but they represent the gifts of the Spirit.

"Then He showed what it means to watch for His coming. The time is to be spent, not in idle waiting, but in diligent working. This lesson He taught in the parable of the talents. . . .

"Christ's followers have been redeemed for service. Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. . . . By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 325, 326.

**In a similar parable, what instruction is given the church while it awaits Christ's return? Luke 19:12, 13.**

**What divine obligation rests upon us as Christians whether our abilities be many or few? 1 Peter 4:10.**

"The Lord will not require from those who are poor that which they have not to give; He will not require from the sick the active energies which bodily weakness forbids. No one need mourn because he cannot glorify God with talents that were never entrusted to him. But if you have only one talent, use it well, and it will accumulate. If the talents are not buried, they will gain yet other talents."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1100.

**How does Paul illustrate God's design for cooperative, unselfish effort on the part of each Christian according to his ability? 1 Cor. 12:12-18, 26, 27.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**As I analyze my gifts, is there any way in which I could more effectively work for God in this end time?**

"Let a living faith run like threads of gold through the performance of even the smallest duties. . . . This is true sanctification."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 360.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "Talents," pp. 325-328.

**Part 5  
A CALL TO  
REPENTANCE**

**“Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; . . . I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.”**

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:14, 15, 19).**

It must never be forgotten that while the church in the time of the end is the object of Heaven’s interest and concern, it is also the object of Satan’s wrath (Rev. 12:17). This wrath will be seen not only in persecution, but also in more subtle ways. Satan will influence the church to be self-satisfied and complacent. Spiritual drowsiness will blind a complacent believer to his true need. To give up the faith under pressure or to lose it in a spiritual stupor—the result is the same, and Satan achieves his objective.

**What attitude of mind would permeate the church in the time of the end according to Jesus? Rev. 3:16, 17.**

“As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. . . . Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 253.

**What does the Heavenly Merchant offer to sell to the self-righteous in Laodicea that will truly enrich them? Rev. 3:18. What does He offer to do? Verse 20.**

**In reality, what do these items represent? Compare James 2:5 with Gal. 5:6. Compare Matt. 22:11 with Isa. 61:10.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What response ought the church to make to Jesus’ appeal as it faces the ultimate day of the Lord? Joel 2:12, 13.**

“Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and backsliding.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 408.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 252-256.

**Part 6  
THE CHURCH'S  
END-TIME  
MESSAGE**

**What special messages does prophecy indicate will be preached in the time of the end?**

**“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel. . . saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: . . . And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen. . . 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. . . And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man” (Rev. 14:6-14).**

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

**What aspect of the message has been preached by the church in all ages? Rev. 14:6, first part.**

**What particular aspects will be emphasized in the church’s final witness to the world? Rev. 14:7-11.**

**How extensively will the church promulgate these last messages? Rev. 14:6, last part.**

**At some point near the close of human probation, what added emphasis will be given to the preaching of the three messages? What final call will be made? Rev. 18:1-4.**

“As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel. . . .

“I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How may I personally prepare for the latter rain?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 603-612.

# 5. GLOBAL DISTRESS

**"The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev. 11:18).**

"I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other."—*Early Writings*, p. 36.

The "wrath of God" refers to the "seven last plagues" (Rev. 15:1). Since the mediatorial ministry of Christ ceases before the plagues fall (Rev. 15:5-8), "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" refers to the executive phase of the judgment at the close of the millennium. At that time the wicked will be resurrected and will stand at the judgment bar to receive their reward of eternal death (Rev. 20:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The focus of our lesson this week, however, is on the conditions among the nations of earth in "the time of the end" prior to the outpouring of the wrath of God in the last plagues. According to John's prophetic word, the nations in the end-time will be in a state of angry frustration. The picture suggests international distress from various causes, an unsettled, unstable situation.

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange and eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven—events which it was declared should shortly precede the great day of God. Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 221.

This week we shall see that prophecy has foretold that "the time of the end" would be a crisis-ridden era, but that the divine hand would restrain the nations from a final holocaust until God's last-day message has been given to all. We will also observe the prophetic insight that much of the world's final years of anguish are due to the frenzied operation of devils who seek to subvert the divine plan and to destroy mankind.

Finally, we will reexamine the Christian's relationship to civil authorities in these trying times of unrest, and how, in spite of global distress, he is invited to build a useful and unselfish life upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **A Crisis-ridden Era**  
(Rev. 7:1)
2. **Spiritual Concerns and Strife**  
(Rev. 7:2, 3)
3. **World Anguish**  
(Luke 21:25, 26)
4. **Devil-caused Distress**  
(Rev. 12:12)
5. **Christians and Governments**  
(Rom. 13:1, 2, 5)
6. **Floods and Foundations**  
(Matt. 7:24, 25)





**Part 1  
A CRISIS-  
RIDDEN ERA**

**What prophetic picture is drawn which depicts the ebb and flow of war and peace among the nations in the time of the end?**

**“After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree” (Rev. 7:1).**

Revelation 7 is a parenthetical interlude between the sixth and seventh seals. It provides the answer to the question, “Who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17). The sixth seal covers the events of a great earthquake, the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the destruction of the heavens as the earth convulses. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the events described in chapter 7 occupy the era between the last celestial sign (1833) and the second advent, “the time of the end,” and beyond.

Great wars were fought in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Soon after the opening of the twentieth came the devastating World War I. Peace ensued only to be broken again by World War II. From that time on wars have mushroomed for a time and then subsided.

“The time during which the winds are held could not from the nature of the case be a time of profound peace. This would not answer to the prophecy, for in order to make it manifest that the winds are being held, there must be disturbance, agitation, anger, and jealousy among the nations, with occasional outbursts of strife, like fitful gusts breaking away from the imprisoned and struggling tempest. . . . Such has been the aspect of our times.”—Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 463.

**What important truth does this prophecy of Revelation 7:1-3 confirm? Dan. 4:25, last part.**

“When it suits the plans and purposes of God to permit the winds of strife to blow, then human nature untouched by the grace of God is seen in unbridled display. But when He says, ‘It is enough,’ the angel cries, ‘Hold, Hold, Hold, Hold,’ and the strife ceases that the work of God may proceed.”—*Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 465.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**While efforts to ensure peace are laudatory, why can a Christian not have much confidence in human efforts to negotiate a lasting peace?**

“Soon great trouble will arise among the nations—trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1904.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 14-16.

**Part 2  
 SPIRITUAL  
 CONCERNS  
 AND STRIFE**

**According to the prophecy, why are the four angels instructed to prevent prolonged global strife?**

**“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Rev. 7:2, 3).**

“Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hastening greatly. But although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.”  
 —Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 968.

**What is the relationship between the work of the sealing angel and the work of the three angels in Revelation 14?**

The sealing angel and the three angels appear in the “time of the end,” particularly between 1844 and the second advent. The work of each results finally in a people totally obedient to God. In the case of the sealing angel they are designated the 144,000 (Rev. 7:4). In the case of the three angels, those obedient to God are referred to as the saints who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12), and it is implied that they are the 144,000 (Rev. 14:1-5). Since the angels of both chapters operate at the same time with the same results, we may conclude that they both represent the movement and message of God’s end-time church.

**What is the seal of the living God? (Compare Ex. 20:8-11 and 2 Tim. 2:19.)**

Seals were used in Bible times to show ownership and to give authority to legal documents. The fourth precept functions as God’s seal, because it alone identifies the authority behind the law—the Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth. The three angels’ messages call mankind back to the worship of the Creator and the keeping of His Sabbath, the seal of His law. It warns against a false worship. In the final crisis God’s loyal ones will be sealed as His children.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How can I make my observance of the Sabbath more rewarding?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 451-455.

**Part 3**  
**WORLD ANGUISH**      **How did Jesus describe the condition of national governments prior to His coming?**

**“Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25, 26).**

The stormy, heaving sea may be understood as a figure of speech describing the unsettled conditions of the nations in the end time. In addition to this word picture, three terms are used by Christ to describe last-day conditions among the nations: “distress,” “perplexity,” and “hearts failing” (“fainting,” NASB).

The Greek term rendered “distress” appears only here and in Second Corinthians 2:4 where Paul speaks of his “anguish of heart.” The words “distress” and “perplexity” aptly depict the world anguish of our times.

No governments in all human history have had to wrestle with such gigantic problems as face mankind today. Problems of finance and inflation are global. Uncertainties in the economies of nations breed social unrest and revolution, and often a crippling of national development and progress. National leaders are confronted with enormous problems in environmental pollution, population growth, vast droughts and resulting famines and disease among their peoples, not to speak of having to solve the difficulties created by energy shortages and pressures for military preparedness. The problems are endless, and humanly unsolvable. And yet national governments and leaders agonize to find the solutions.

**In Ezekiel’s time the complexities of earth’s political affairs were symbolized by a series of moving, intersecting wheels. Who controlled all these? Eze. 1:15-19, 26-28.**

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 537.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **How can I as a Christian keep a calm and hopeful frame of mind in times of national or international panic?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 535-537.

**Part 4  
 DEVIL-CAUSED  
 DISTRESS**

**What warning does a voice from heaven give to the inhabitants of earth?**

**"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12).**

"Evil spirits, in the beginning [were] created sinless. . . . But fallen through sin, they are leagued together for the dishonor of God and the destruction of men."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 513.

**What usurped position does Satan hold over this earth? See John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4.**

**Through whom in this world do Satan and his associate fallen angels work? Eph. 2:2.**

**In what worldwide activities did John see the devils engaged prior to the second advent? Rev. 16:13, 14.**

"Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another, for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God. . . .

". . . Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 589, 590.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why do good people sometimes receive the blame for physical calamities? Compare Elijah (1 Kings 18:17, 18) and the early Christians of the Roman Empire.**

"The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 590.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 516, 517.

Part 5  
CHRISTIANS AND  
GOVERNMENTS

**What counsel is given to Christians with reference to their relationship to civil governments?**

**“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”**

**“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Rom. 13:1, 2, 5).**

In a sense, the Christian holds a dual citizenship. He is a member of Christ's kingdom which is not of this world (John 18:36), at the same time he is a citizen of the nation in which he resides. As distress among the nations increases because of innumerable problems, modern Christians must seek to be cooperative in every right measure and to avoid if possible all misunderstandings.

**What may the Christian's law-abiding conduct and prudent speech silence? 1 Peter 2:13-15.**

“It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. . . .

“ . . . We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. There will come a time when, because of our advocacy of Bible truth, we shall be treated as traitors; but let not this time be hastened by unadvised movements that stir up animosity and strife.”— *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 394.

**For what class of men does the apostle Paul especially request Christians to pray? For what reasons? 1 Tim. 2:1-4. What will Christians eventually face? Rev. 13:15-17.**

“Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption.”— *The Great Controversy*, p. 592.

## THINK IT THROUGH

**What kind of record would my life and transactions reveal if I were investigated by my government? (See Dan. 6:4, 5.)**

## FURTHER STUDY

*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 394-403.

Part 6  
FLOODS AND  
FOUNDATIONS

**As the world moves from crisis to crisis and global distress becomes more acute, what alone will keep the Christian stable?**

**“Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matt. 7:24, 25).**

“The word of God is the only steadfast thing our world knows. It is the sure foundation. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ said Jesus, ‘but My words shall not pass away.’ Matthew 24:35.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 148.

In the parallel passage (Luke 6:48) the builder “dugged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock.” This is hearing and doing Christ’s word. The final issue in the controversy will be whether or not a person will do what Jesus has said.

**When at times governments become persecuting agencies in the hands of Satan, what sustains God’s people? Rom. 8:35-39.**

“Though enemies may thrust them [God’s people] into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

**What promise has God made to His people who may be called upon to pass through trying situations? Isa. 43:2.**

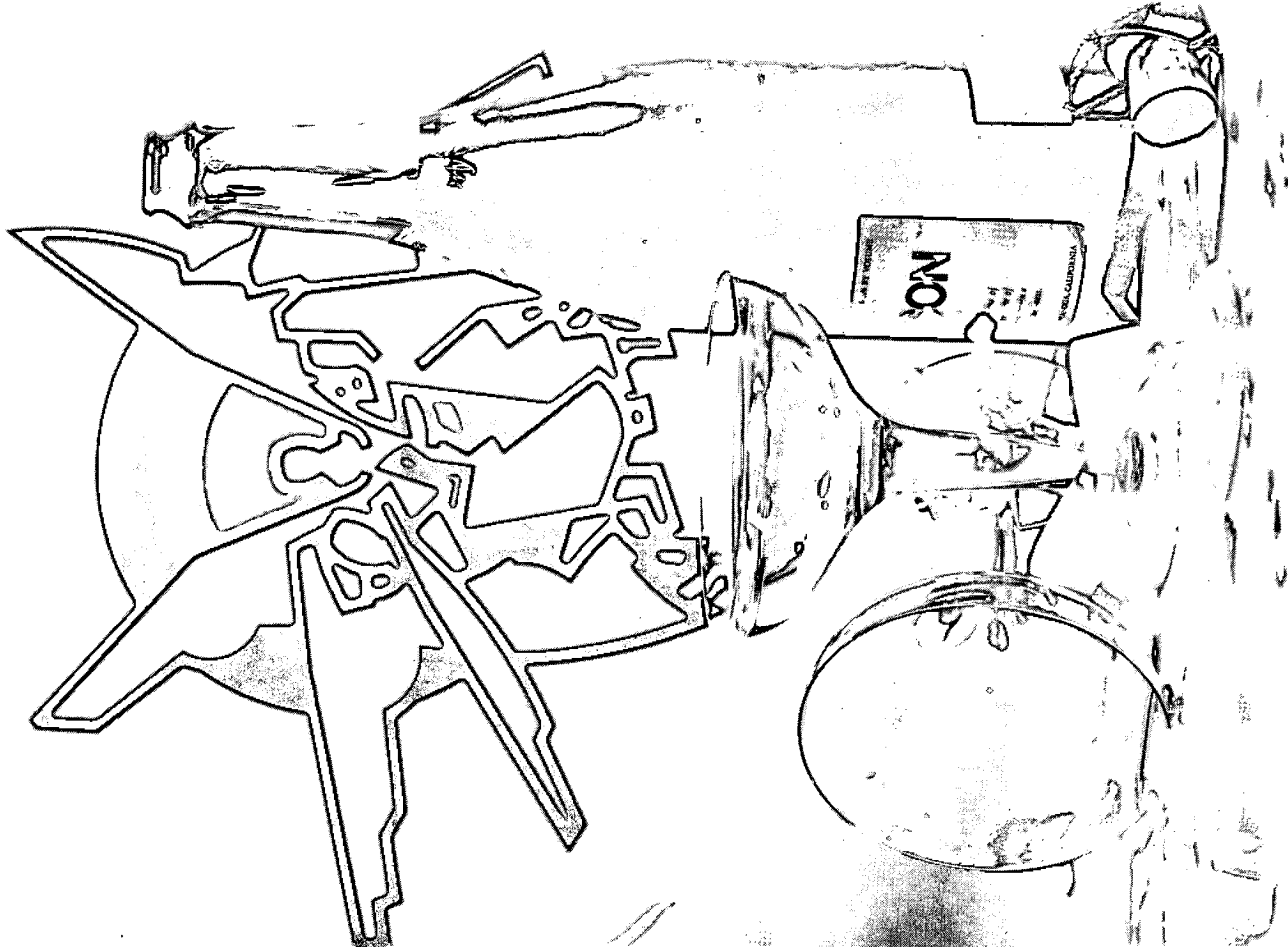
“The season of distress before God’s people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal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

## THINK IT THROUGH

**What can I do in my personal Christian experience to develop a deeper faith and confidence in God?**

## FURTHER STUDY

*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 123-125.





# 6. THE ANTEDILUVIANS AND THE SECOND ADVENT

**“As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).**

In Christ’s conversation with His disciples regarding the signs of His return, He stated that the people would be no more ready for His coming than the antediluvians were ready for the Flood. Thus we may expect in “the time of the end” that instead of preparation people will emphasize “life as usual.”

From a secondary application of these verses can come a study of the outstanding characteristics of the antediluvian age, and their counterparts in our own society. In this week’s lesson we will study this comparison. Noah’s age was noted for its intense worldliness. The pursuit of pleasure and the gratifying of the physical senses with abandonment were dominant symptoms in that morally sick generation.

Although they became depraved, the antediluvians did not begin as ignorant cavemen. This long-lived and highly intelligent people deliberately chose to throw off their allegiance and obligation to the Creator. They ruled Him out of their thought. With the fear of God lost from their thinking, inevitably their respect for one another ceased. Violence and inhuman treatment of one another

took the place of law and order and human sympathy. Noble beings became debased by ignoble thoughts and actions. Mankind came to live like animals, thinking only of self and the present moment. Eternal interests were of no importance.

In similar times how shall Christians live and prepare for the “blessed hope”? (See Titus 2:11-13.) How shall both affluent and poor Christians relate to the society around them? How are they to live in a time of much social violence, and escape the moral pollution that everywhere surrounds them? These are the areas we wish to explore in this week’s study.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Grasp for the Good Life**  
(Luke 17:26, 27)
2. **Righteous Use of Riches**  
(Luke 16:9)
3. **Demise of Deity**  
(Job 22:15-17)
4. **Social Violence**  
(Hosea 4:1, 2)
5. **Tainted Thoughts**  
(Gen. 6:5)
6. **Preachers of Righteousness**  
(2 Peter 2:5)

**Part 1**  
**THE GRASP FOR**  
**THE GOOD LIFE**

**Jesus cited attitudes of people in a former age as an illustration of end-time attitudes toward the second advent. What comparison did He make?**

**“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26, 27).**

In this particular instance Jesus does not stress the toil and accomplishments of the antediluvians, or their strife and violence. Rather, He emphasizes their indulgence in the enjoyment of themselves while neglecting to prepare for the Flood. Their times are characterized by a people grasping for pleasure—eating, drinking, and making love—an abandonment to the enjoyment of the bodily appetites, a feverish search for sensual experience. A similar obsession with the material and the sensual will be prominent in the world before Jesus comes.

“God bestowed upon these antediluvians many and rich gifts; but they used His bounties to glorify themselves, and turned them into a curse by fixing their affections upon the gifts instead of the Giver. They employed the gold and silver, the precious stones and the choice wood, in the construction of habitations for themselves, and endeavored to excel one another in beautifying their dwellings with the most skillful workmanship. They sought only to gratify the desires of their own proud hearts, and reveled in scenes of pleasure and wickedness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 90, 91.

**What conditions promoted sensualism and materialism in the days of Lot and of Ezekiel? Eze. 16:49. Is this true today also?**

“God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking. . . . Their sin consisted in taking these gifts without gratitude to the Giver, and debasing themselves by indulging appetite without restraint. It was lawful for them to marry. . . . But . . . marriage was perverted and made to minister to passion.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 101.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why is the world's emphasis on the enjoyment of self a dangerous temptation to end-time Christians? See Luke 21:34-36.**

“A similar condition of things exists now. That which is lawful in itself is carried to excess. Appetite is indulged without restraint. . . . Intemperance benumbs the moral and spiritual powers. . . . Men are living for the pleasures of sense.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 101, 102.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 633, 634.

**Part 2**      **Although many will misuse their material goods in the last**  
**RIGHTEOUS USE**      **days, what counsel does Jesus give to Christians?**  
**OF RICHES**

**“And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations” (Luke 16:9, RSV).**

In the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13) Jesus taught that people should be in earnest about preparation for the future world. Only by concern for the welfare of others could they themselves be blessed.

“The means over and above the actual necessities of life are entrusted to man to do good, to bless humanity.”

“Give yourself to God for this work, use His gifts for this purpose, and you enter into partnership with heavenly beings. Your heart will throb in sympathy with theirs. You will be assimilated to them in character. To you these dwellers in the eternal tabernacles will not be strangers. When earthly things shall have passed away, the watchers at heaven’s gates will bid you welcome.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 370, 373.

**Although eating, marrying, and buying and selling of material goods are not wrong in themselves, what perspective will characterize the genuine end-time Christian? 1 Cor. 7:29-31.**

These verses are not to be misunderstood as teaching that the Christian is to neglect his wife and family or to be negligent in secular matters. It is the Lord who entrusted him with these blessings. The point is that life’s cares, responsibilities, and pleasures must always be subordinate to preparation for the coming of Christ. We have only one short life in which to make that preparation.

**What lesson does Jesus intend to teach His followers in the parable of the rich farmer? Luke 12:16-21.**

“This man’s aims were no higher than those of the beasts that perish. He lived as if there were no God, no heaven, no future life; as if everything he possessed were his own, and he owed nothing to God or man.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 257, 258.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **How may I use my material goods to bless my neighbors more effectively and advance God’s last-day movement?**

It is the spirit of Christ to give, to sacrifice self for the good of others.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 259.

**FURTHER STUDY**      *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “Friends by the Mammon of Unrighteousness,” pp. 366-375.

**Part 3**  
**DEMISE OF**  
**DEITY**

**According to Eliphaz, how did the antediluvian people regard God?**

**“Will you keep to the old way  
which wicked men have trod?  
They were snatched away before their time;  
their foundation was washed away.  
They said to God, ‘Depart from us,’  
and ‘What can the Almighty do to us?’ ”**

**Job 22:15-17, RSV.**

The antediluvians ruled God out of their everyday living. To have acknowledged the Creator would have required their allegiance and moral obligation to His commands. But the wicked generation would have none of God. For all practical purposes He was “dead.”

**Since men cannot live without recognizing some authority, to what did the antediluvians turn? Rom. 1:21-25.**

“Not desiring to retain God in their knowledge, they soon came to deny His existence. They adored nature in place of the God of nature. They glorified human genius, worshiped the works of their own hands, and taught their children to bow down to graven images.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 91.

The publishing of books on evolution by Charles Darwin reflected a revolutionary change in human thought that was occurring in the period of “the time of the end” which we are studying. The evolutionary theory has affected not only scientific thought but also man’s religious perspectives. As a result God has been ruled out of His creation, discarded as an outworn myth. In modern times large portions of the populations of earth either deny God’s existence or live as though He did not exist.

**“What two elements of existence does David mention as originating with God? Ps. 36:9.**

When the mind is not enlightened by God, life loses its sense of meaning. Modern life is characterized by this loss of meaning. The popular interest in pleasures of all kinds covers an inner urge to find coherence and sense in human existence.

**Why is the church’s special last-day message extremely relevant to this end-time situation? Rev. 14:6, 7.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Am I a practical atheist although a professing Christian?  
How does my belief in God affect my life-style?**

An example of one who lived a rich and rewarding life is Paul. His motto: “For to me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21).

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 91-97.

**Part 4**  
**SOCIAL VIOLENCE**

**When the knowledge and fear of God are removed from a society, what attitudes and actions begin to appear?**

**“Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood” (Hosea 4:1, 2).**

The moral law which governs mankind rests upon the two-fold principle of love to God and impartial love to one's fellow beings. When people cease to respect God, they cease to respect one another. Crime and violence result.

**Since the antediluvians did not wish to retain God in their knowledge, what developed in their society? Gen. 6:11.**

**In what specific ways did that ancient generation sin against one another? Rom. 1:28-32. (Compare with 2 Tim. 3:1-5.)**

“Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 91.

Since God is no longer central in modern life, do conditions similar to those of Noah's time prevail today? Even a cursory survey of modern societies reveals deep-seated social unrest in various forms of vandalism, increasing rates of crime, and the infiltrating of organized crime into society, riots, racial tensions, student unrest, crippling strikes, and revolutions. Corruption exists at all levels of society.

“Fraud and bribery and theft stalk unrebuked in high places and in low. The issues of the press teem with records of murder. . . . The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations. . . . The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening. Even now, in the present century, and in professedly Christian lands, there are crimes daily perpetrated as black and terrible as those for which the old-world sinners were destroyed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 102.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways can I and my fellow members help to improve conditions caused by man's inhumanity to man?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 101-104.

**Part 5**  
**TAINED THOUGHTS**

**What description does the Bible give of the antediluvians?**

**“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).**

The great citadel of the human being is the mind. As far as the individual is concerned, the controversy between good and evil is a battle to gain the mind which rightly owes its allegiance to the Creator. Rejecting God, the minds of the people of the antediluvian society became vain and darkened (Rom. 1:21). Controlled by Satan (Rom. 6:16), their imaginations became corrupted and perverted.

**What kinds of life-styles do tainted and impure thoughts produce? Mark 7:21-23. (Compare Prov. 23:7.)**

Corrupt thinking was widespread in the antediluvian society; so it is today in “the time of the end” as we approach Christ’s coming. Newspapers, magazines, books, movies, radio—and especially television—make tremendous impacts on human thinking. Television, now only a little more than a quarter of a century old, has had an incalculable molding influence upon an entire generation of youth from babyhood to adulthood. Unfortunately, the mass media pours forth in its torrential output much that is worldly-wise, impure, perverted, and violent. “By beholding we become changed” is an unvarying law of the mind. Modern society is fast moving toward the mental condition of the antediluvian world.

“This is an age when corruption is teeming everywhere. . . . The heart is corrupted through the imagination. The mind takes pleasure in contemplating scenes which awaken the lower and baser passions. . . . Avoid reading and seeing things which will suggest impure thoughts. Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 410.

**What prayer must an end-time Christian make and what positive action must he take if he would preserve and develop wholesome thought processes? Ps. 19:14; Phil. 4:8.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**If I am honest with my soul and the eternal interests which are at stake, what TV programs and reading would I eliminate from my daily life?**

“When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 25.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 187-189.

**Part 6**  
**PREACHERS OF**  
**RIGHTEOUSNESS**

The apostle Peter described Noah as what kind of a preacher? On what topic did Noah preach?

**“And [God] spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5).**

While Noah earnestly appealed to the morally bankrupt society of the antediluvian world and warned of the impending Flood, we must not think that he was merely an alarmist. His ministry was a ministry of righteousness; he preached under the power of the Holy Spirit (see Gen. 6:3) for conversion of heart which would result in a changed life-style.

**Of what was Noah an heir? Heb. 11:7. (Compare Phil. 3:9.)**

“Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man’s Substitute and Surety.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

In various times of crisis God sends warning messages to the world through the preaching of His servants. These warnings of judgments are not sent merely as means to scare individuals into salvation. Warnings of an imminent Flood such as Noah uttered, or warnings of divine judgments to fall on those who worship the beast or its image, or receive its mark, serve to arrest the attention of the people. Startling and solemn, they arouse the mind to sense its deep spiritual need and the downward course it is pursuing. Under the Spirit’s conviction, the truly penitent cry out for help. To meet that cry God’s preachers of righteousness both anciently and now offer the healing balm of the gospel.

**What message is offered by God’s last-day preachers of righteousness to a morally falling society, and with what results? Rev. 14:6, 12; Matt. 24:14. What are its warning aspects? Rev. 14:7-11; 18:4.**

“Before the Flood God sent Noah to warn the world, that the people might be led to repentance. . . . As the time of Christ’s second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with a warning to the world to prepare for that great event. . . . All who will put away their sins by repentance toward God and faith in Christ are offered pardon.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 102.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Noah was more successful with the members of his family than with those outside his home. How is it with my family?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 306-313.





# 7. ERODING MORAL BEHAVIOR

**“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:28-30).**

In describing the social conditions of the end time, Jesus compared them with the times of Noah and of Lot. Both societies were corrupt, since they repudiated the governing law of God, but Sodom was especially infamous for its gross forms of immorality.

In the Christian era the gospel of Christ, with its high principles of morality and its regard for human life, has permeated and influenced many cultures even beyond the confines of the so-called “Christian nations.” The Western world, in particular, has had a long heritage of Christian teachings and perspectives.

It is indeed a painful sign of the times to see modern society repudiating this heritage of Judeo-Christian morality and regressing to the licentious patterns of the antediluvians and the Sodomites. Even more alarming is the fact that some religious leaders who claim to be Christians openly defend and condone the immoral practices for which Sodom was destroyed and blotted from the face of human society.

This week we will survey some of the aspects of the eroding ethical behavior

in our times. That which is pure and noble and upright is being corroded and besmirched before our eyes. That which is evil is called good, and good is called evil (Isa. 5:20). First, we will look at one of the modern attacks on the law of God—situational ethics and its subtle deceptions.

Moral impurity is especially seen today in open abnormal practices, adultery, and the widespread collapse of the home. Then there are the multiple problems resulting from the formation of religiously divided homes as well as conflicts between parents and children. All are having their impact in eroding Christian norms of behavior.

In a time of collapsing standards the Christian must practice the principles of his religion and keep himself unstained by the world. As we take to heart the counsels of the Bible we may like Enoch live a life of moral purity in a degenerate age.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3).

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Moral Authority**  
(Judges 21:25)
- 2. Abnormal Associations**  
(Rom. 1:26, 27)
- 3. Faithlessness in the Family**  
(Rom. 1:31)
- 4. Mixed Marriages**  
(Gen. 6:1, 2)
- 5. Generation Gap**  
(2 Tim. 3:1, 2)
- 6. The Divine Desire**  
(1 Thess. 4:3-7)

**Part 1**  
**MORAL AUTHORITY**      **How does the Bible writer characterize the moral situation in Israel during the period of the judges?**

**“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).**

When there is no governing authority in a country, anarchy prevails because each citizen does as he pleases. The same is true in the spiritual realm. If God and His authority are rejected and His law disregarded, then spiritual anarchy results. Men do as they choose to do, and being controlled by carnal natures, sins of every hue abound. God and His law have been excised from modern life. The ethics of many moderns spring from their own desires.

“Society at the present time is corrupt, as it was in the days of Noah. . . . They [the antediluvian race] expelled God from their thoughts; they despised His law; trampled His standard of character in the dust.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 421.

**Can the individual of himself always know what is the right thing to do? Prov. 16:25.**

Current in modern society among the attacks on God's law is the philosophy that there are no divine absolutes such as the Ten Commandments to be strictly obeyed. It is argued that one should do the loving thing in any given situation, and that the “loving thing” may actually require lying, murder, adultery, etc. However, since man has a sinful nature, even a born-again Christian needs to be told by God just what the “loving thing” is in various situations. God's law and God's Word provide adequate essential guidance.

“God has given men no liberty to depart from His requirements. . . . In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 634.

**What does this subtle hatred against God's law in “the time of the end” reflect? 1 John 3:4, 8.**

Lucifer transgressed God's will. He did not consider the law a necessity for created beings. Ellen White writes: “He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 499.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, how can I best show the positive value of living in harmony with God's will?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 762-764.

Part 2  
ABNORMAL  
ASSOCIATIONS

**What perversion in morals became commonplace when people turned away from God?**

**“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error” (Rom. 1:26, 27, RSV).**

**For what abnormal associations were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? Jude 7. (Compare Gen. 19:1-11.)**

Jesus said that one of the signs of His near return would be a condition of morality similar to that among the antediluvians and Sodomites. Not only have the same deviant sexual patterns become prominent in our times, being pursued with open boldness, but some professed ministers now defend such practices, organize churches for persons of this life-style, and ordain some to the ministry. Such sinful brazenness indicates again the eroding morality of our times and the approaching end of the age.

“The sins that destroyed the antediluvians and the cities of the plain exist today—not merely in heathen lands, not only among popular professors of Christianity, but with some who profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man. If God should present these sins before you as they appear in His sight, you would be filled with shame and terror.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 218.

**Can divine grace in our end time of moral pollution save and transform the immoral who are penitent? 1 Cor. 6: 9-11.**

“While he [Abraham] loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner. All around us are souls going down to ruin as hopeless, as terrible, as that which befell Sodom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 140

“There is a strange abandonment of principle, the standard of morality is lowered, and the earth is fast becoming a Sodom.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 125.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What concept will help me and my family to maintain moral purity as Christians? See 1 Cor. 6:18-20.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 110-112.

Part 3  
FAITHLESSNESS  
IN THE FAMILY

**In describing the development of sin in the world, what particular transgressions does the apostle Paul mention?**

**“Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful” (Rom. 1:31).**

One of the most important moments in a person's experience is marriage. God designed marriage to be a permanent bond between two responsible, loving persons. One of the marked tragedies of modern times is the waning of loyalty, faithfulness, and affection between spouses, and the consequent breakup of the home.

Among the antediluvians “Neither the marriage relation nor the rights of property were respected. Whoever coveted the wives or the possessions of his neighbor, took them by force, and men exulted in their deeds of violence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 92.

**What is God's ideal for marriage? Matt. 19:3-6.**

**What relationships are forbidden, being detrimental to both Christian experience and the home? 1 Cor. 6:15, 17.**

“Recent painful developments of evil are one of the great evidences we have that the end is near. Satan, like a roaring lion, is going about, seeking whom he may devour; and if men and women, under the blazing light that now shines in this perilous time, will be found fornicators, I am afraid that God will separate them from the work forever. . . .

“Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with. Fornication is in our ranks; I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. . . . Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 426-428.

**How does God regard divorce? Mal. 2:15, 16. On what basis only may the marital bond be broken and the innocent partner remarry? Matt. 19:7-9.**

“The slightest insinuations, . . . inviting you to indulge in sin or to allow the least unwarrantable liberty with your persons, should be resented as the worst of insults to your dignified womanhood. The kiss upon your cheek, at an improper time and place, should lead you to repel the emissary of Satan with disgust.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 458.

## THINK IT THROUGH

**What is the influence of my clothing and deportment on others? Do they promote a strong tone of moral purity?**

## FURTHER STUDY

*The Adventist Home*, p. 80; *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 458, 459.

**Part 4**  
**MIXED MARRIAGES**      **What disastrous decision did the descendants of Seth make as they became acquainted with the descendants of Cain?**

**“And It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. 6:1, 2).**

One of the basic causes for the quick erosion of moral standards in the antediluvian age was the intermarriage between the followers of God and the worldly descendants of Cain. The influence of the nonbelieving partners had a deadening effect on the spiritual experience of the believers.

“The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain’s descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. Many of the worshipers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 81.

**Why did God forbid His ancient people to intermarry with those who were not of their faith? Deut. 7:1-4.**

**Whose tragic marriages are recorded in the Bible as a warning on this point? 1 Kings 11:1-4. (Compare Neh. 13:25-27.)**

“Never should God’s people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 63.

**Why is incomplete happiness to be expected if a husband and wife form a religiously divided home? 2 Cor. 6:14-16.**

“The heart yearns for human love, but this love is not strong enough, or pure enough, or precious enough, to supply the place of the love of Jesus. . . . Let woman give herself to Christ before giving herself to any earthly friend, and enter into no relation which shall conflict with this. . . . Unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 440.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **Why is it not spiritually safe, nor in the interest of mutual happiness, for a Seventh-day Adventist to marry a Christian of another faith?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Adventist Home*, pp. 61-69.

Part 5  
GENERATION GAP      **What conditions between parents and children did the apostle Paul predict would be especially prominent in the end time?**

**“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3:1, 2).**

The prediction indicated that in many homes there would be an open clash between parents and children. Respect for parental authority is basic to human happiness. A failure to appreciate its legitimate place in society leads to a general contempt for authority whether in the church, school, state, or even in heaven.

“The family is the most important and fundamental unit in society and government. Respect for parental authority and obedience to parental law are the foundation of all order and organization. As goes the home, so goes society, the nation, and the world.”

“The lack of regard for authority—parental, civil, and divine—is the greatest evil of the modern world.”—Taylor G. Bunch, *The Ten Commandments* (Washington, DC, Review and Herald, 1944), pp. 91, 97.

**What is said of Abraham as an example of a good parent? Gen. 18:19.**

The first care of the parents should be to establish good government in the family. The word of the parents should be law, precluding all arguments or evasions. Children should be taught from infancy to implicitly obey their parents.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 85.

**How did twelve-year-old Jesus act toward His parents even though they did not completely understand His mission? Luke 2:49-51.**

“For eighteen years after He had recognized that He was the Son of God, He acknowledged the tie that bound Him to the home at Nazareth, and performed the duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 86.

**What does God intend that His last-day Elijah message shall accomplish in the families of His people? Mal. 4:5, 6.**

“The secret of true unity in the . . . family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties . . . but union with Christ.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 179.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Child Guidance*, pp. 21-25.

**Part 6  
THE DIVINE  
DESIRE**

**What is God's desire for Christians when they establish a home?**

**"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from immorality; that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God. . . . For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness" (1 Thess. 4:3-7, RSV).**

Whether the Greek phrase of verse 4 refers to the Christian himself (KJV) or to a wife (RSV) is immaterial to the thrust of the passage which calls the sanctified Christian to a life of moral purity. Marriage is sacred. True love is honorable and responsible. Premarital sex, trial marriages, and wife-trading are but various forms of immorality condemned in the Bible. Such practices are destructive of genuine happiness and holiness.

**How did God establish the marriage relationship? Gen. 1:27; 2:18-24.**

"God Himself gave Adam a companion . . . —one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. She was . . . to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. . . .

" . . . When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

**How does the apostle Paul show that conjugal love is proper and sacred to the marriage estate? 1 Cor. 7:3-5.**

The King James Version rendering "due benevolence" refers to "conjugal rights" (RSV).

"Jesus did not enforce celibacy upon any class of men. He came not to destroy the sacred relationship of marriage, but to exalt it and restore it to its original sanctity. He looks with pleasure upon the family relationship where sacred and unselfish love bears sway."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 121.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways may an apparently "innocent" husband or wife be guilty of contributing to a partner's moral lapse?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Adventist Home*, pp. 121-128.

# 8. A CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

**"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:1, 2).**

One phase of God's last message to be given in the time of the end pertains to the "fall" of spiritual Babylon. (See Rev. 14:8.) The word "Babylon," which has come to mean "confusion," is used by John in the Revelation to represent the religious confusion and apostasy—especially Christian apostasy—which would develop in Christendom in the end time. The message is designed to call those who love Christ and who serve Him to the best of their ability to separate themselves from the ever-increasing religious declension.

The message was first preached in the summer of 1844 when the Protestant bodies, particularly in North America, rejected the proclamation of the second advent of Christ and expelled those members who believed He was about to appear. In turning against the doctrine of the return of Christ, the churches suffered a moral fall. But since the mid-nineteenth century strange developments have continued to take place in the Christian religion.

According to Revelation 18:1-4 a further emphasis was to be placed on the moral fall of Babylon. The prophet hears an angel proclaim mightily that not only has Babylon fallen, but she also has become "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." A deep-seated deterioration and the influence of

demonic agencies is here set forth.

In this week's lesson we shall survey the sad facts of a greatly changed Christianity. The onset of the theory of evolution and higher critical studies of the Bible have led to the development of a liberal Christianity which has rejected the authority of Scripture, its miracles, prophecies; and teachings regarding sin and salvation. The deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His atoning death and resurrection are likewise denied. Such viewpoints have left many Christians without an authority, and without a gospel, and open to the deceptions of Satan. Liberalism is Christianity's self-inflicted wound. Its progress and influence within Christendom is a startling commentary on the extent and moving progression of Babylon's fall.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Mother and Daughters**  
(Rev. 17:1-5)
2. **The Scriptures Challenged**  
(2 Tim. 4:1-4)
3. **A Failing Faith**  
(Luke 18:8; Matt. 24:12)
4. **Denied Deity**  
(1 John 4:1-3)
5. **Proposition or Encounter**  
(2 Tim. 3:16)
6. **Altered Objectives**  
(Matt. 28:19, 20)





THIRTY FIVE CENTS

**TIME**  
THE WEEKLY

**Is  
God  
Dead?**

VOL. 87 NO. 14

A MENTOR BOOK

**Charles Darwin**  
**The Origin of Species**  
With a special Introduction by JULIAN HUXLEY



Part 1  
MOTHER AND  
DAUGHTERS

Under what symbol does John portray the organized religious apostasy of the last days?

**“Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. . . . And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. . . . And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:1-5).**

In the Scriptures the professed followers of God are figuratively represented as a woman (see Jer. 6:2) married to God (see Isa. 54:5). Whenever God’s people fraternized with the world and corrupted their lives and teachings by adopting the world’s views, they committed spiritual adultery in the eyes of God. (See Eze. 16:15; James 4:4.) Thus at times apostasy is symbolized as a fallen, impure woman.

In the Revelation two symbolic women are presented. The true people of God are symbolized by a pure, noble woman clothed in gospel light (Revelation 12). The Christian apostasy is symbolized by a fallen, impure woman who has illicit connections with the rulers of the world (Revelation 17).

**What biblical clues clearly identify this organized apostasy? Rev. 17:3, 6, 18.**

Only one professing Christian system has truly controlled to a large extent the governments of the world and has been guilty of slaying millions of Christians who differed with it. That is the papacy.

**Who would be the daughters of Babylon, depicted as being like the mother in Revelation 17:5?**

“Babylon is said to be ‘the *mother* of harlots.’ By her *daughters* must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 382, 383. The symbol of daughters thus depicts similar apostasy in the non-papal systems, that is to say, in Protestantism.

## THINK IT THROUGH

**Because a prophetic symbol may deal with apostasy in a given Christian system, does it mean that all persons in the system are apostate? (See Rev. 18:4.)**

## FURTHER STUDY

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 381-390.

**Part 2**  
**THE SCRIPTURES**  
**CHALLENGED**

**What attitude against the Scriptures did the apostle Paul forewarn would develop within the Christian faith?**

**"I charge you . . . : preach the word . . . For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths" (2 Tim. 4:1-4, RSV).**

The Christian religion rests upon two basic premises: (1) There is a God, and (2) God has revealed Himself to man in the Holy Scriptures. Yet a large portion of Christians in "the time of the end" has rejected the authority of the Scriptures. And more amazing is the fact that this change of attitude toward the Bible developed largely in Protestantism which originally took as its platform "the Bible and the Bible only"!

As noted in lesson 6, the entrance of the concepts of Darwinian evolution in the mid-nineteenth century had a profound influence on all areas of human thought. To the higher critical Bible scholars who were already questioning the validity of Scripture, it seemed to offer "scientific" proof that the first chapters of Genesis were only myth and not genuine historical records. At first there were attempts to harmonize the evolutionary theory with the biblical account of Creation, but in time liberal Protestantism gave this up. Eventually the authority of the Scriptures was eroded away for those who accepted the conclusions of evolution and higher criticism.

**What biblical doctrine calls attention to the truth of the Genesis account of Creation? Ex. 20:8-11; Mark 2:27.**

"Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God's word is to be tested by the teachings of 'science falsely so called.' 1 Timothy 6:20. . . . Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a step further and doubt the existence of God and attribute infinite power to nature. Having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 522.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Does the witness of the Bible conflict with that of nature? Or does the problem lie with interpretations? Should one source of witness have precedence over the other? Explain.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Education*, pp. 128-134.

**Part 3**      **What did Jesus foresee would dwindle among His**  
**A FAILING FAITH**      **professed followers?**

**“When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).**

**“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matt. 24:12).**

It is hard to imagine the widespread effect that the concepts of evolution in conjunction with higher critical studies of the Scriptures have had on religious thought. The claim that man has evolved upward from simple forms forces the conclusion that man never fell morally, as the Scriptures assert. Hence, he is not a sinner in need of saving grace. Thus in one stroke the doctrine of sin and the plan of salvation are rejected.

Furthermore, natural processes allow for no miraculous intervention by God. Thus all miracles in the Scriptures are at once suspect and denied.

**Upon what great miracle—the greatest of miracles—does Christianity rest? 1 Cor. 15:13, 14.**

Liberal Protestantism has not only denied the recorded miracles of healing, but also the miracles of Creation, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus in victory, and predictive prophecy.

**What particular group of predictions would be openly denied by some in the end time? 2 Peter 3:3, 4.**

Higher critics see an evolutionary development of Israel's beliefs from simple to more complex. This, together with other factors, has led to dissecting and speculating as to when the Old Testament books were written. Inspired authors have been repudiated in favor of editors and compilers. Critical studies in the Gospels by scholars have promoted the belief that one can today know nothing about the real Jesus of history, but only the early church's concept of Him.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What are the evidences that assure me of the trustworthiness of my Bible when so many Christians reject it?**

“To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 474.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 427-429, 439, 440.

**Part 4** By what means did John propose to test the false views  
**DENIED DEITY** about Christ which would be taught to Christians?

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:1-3).**

That person teaches the authentic Christian faith who teaches that Christ is true Deity, who, by the mystery of the incarnation, became truly man, God with us (John 1:1-3, 14). One of the sad signs of the end time is the open denial of the full deity of Christ, not only by liberal Christians, but also by other groups who claim to follow the Bible.

**What do the Scriptures teach about the deity of Christ? Phil. 2:5, 6; Col. 2:9.**

**How did Jesus assert His divine eternal nature? John 8:24, 28, 57-59.**

**What acknowledgement and worship did Jesus accept from His followers? John 20:27-29.**

“If men reject the testimony of the inspired Scriptures concerning the deity of Christ, it is in vain to argue the point with them; for no argument, however conclusive, could convince them. . . . None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man's redemption.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 524.

**What two other doctrines about Christ did Paul hold as basic to the Christian faith? 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.**

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 315.

**THINK IT THROUGH** **What difference does it make whether one believes Christ is true Deity or just an extraordinary human teacher? (See Matt. 16:13-17.)**

**FURTHER STUDY** *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 246-251.

**Part 5  
PROPOSITION  
OR ENCOUNTER**

**Why are the Scriptures authoritative in matters of doctrine and instruction?**

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).**

The Greek word translated “inspiration of God” means literally, “God-breathed.” Bible truths originated with God.

**What Divine Agent was involved in transmitting Heaven's messages to mankind? 2 Peter 1:20, 21.**

The Holy Spirit qualified the Bible writers both to receive the divine messages and to transmit them orally or in writing in a trustworthy manner. These prophetic revelations became a body of objective truth, disclosing to later generations the revealed will of God. The possession of the written revelation of God was one of the great advantages enjoyed by God's people. (See Rom. 3:1, 2.)

In recent years a different concept of inspiration has been introduced into the Christian world and has permeated the seminaries and ministries of liberal Protestantism and Catholicism. The view holds that when a Bible writer had an encounter with God it was simply a mystical confrontation of Person to person. No information was revealed. The prophet had only an experience with God. Later, as the situation demanded, the prophet wrote to meet the need. However, what he wrote was not information from God, but his own ideas, a witness of his encounter with God. But since it is his own message, it may contain error both of fact and of theology. A reader of this document may also experience a divine encounter in spite of its errors, and at that point the document becomes inspired to him. It can be readily seen that such a view permits the Bible to be freely criticized according to human criteria, and that its divine authority is destroyed. The Bible is no longer regarded as an objective body of truth to guide and to correct the believer. The source of knowledge about the Christian religion and its requirements is at once nullified—and this by Christians themselves.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What effect will the Bible have on my life if I regard it as the voice of God? As the opinions of holy men?**

“Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God. . . . This is one of the marked signs of the last days.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 15.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 15-23.

**Part 6  
ALTERED  
OBJECTIVES**

**What explicit command did Christ give His church?**

**"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matt. 28:19, 20, RSV).**

**As Christians preach the gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit, what changes are wrought in those who accept it? John 3:3, 5; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:17.**

The objective of the gospel message is the salvation and the transformation of the sinner. It is a one-by-one procedure. But each converted individual exerts in turn an uplifting influence upon others and his society.

With a changed view of the Scriptures and its doctrines there also came into liberal Protestantism an altering of its objectives. Since, in its opinion, man is not a lost sinner in need of salvation, this wing of Christianity has turned to a "social gospel"—a humanitarian attempt to better the physical and mental lot of humanity by earthly and political means. Foreign missions have declined since liberal Protestantism sees Christianity as only one of a variety of religious roads leading heavenward.

**Did Jesus teach that His kingdom of grace was to be extended by social action for the masses, or by the ministry to individual lives? John 4:13, 14.**

"The Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

"Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies . . . is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 509, 510.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**"The sure hope of a better age, is a better man."—John Wesley. Does this preclude Christian social service?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Welfare Ministry*, pp. 29-34.





# 9. RELIGIOUS TRENDS

**“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:6-8).**

These divine admonitions, always applicable, are especially pertinent to God’s people in this present century. In these times of religious confusion we need to be in full union with Christ, and to have clear and solid reasons for our faith which are fully sustained by the plain testimony of Scripture.

This week we shall study in part some of the religious trends occurring

in our times which Bible prophecy foretold would take place in the time of the end. These trends may appear conflicting to us now, but they are the surface movements and eddies of the deeper controversy between God and Satan which will eventually erupt in the final crisis of the age.

Bible prophecy foretells the resurgence of the papacy in the end time and implies widespread cooperation among the various denominations of Christendom. We already see the partial fulfillment of these signs. At the same time we may expect what will appear to be a great revival of religious interest and a strong emphasis on miracles. From another angle there will also develop a revival of and a growing interest in non-Christian religions.

Along with such developments, one of the most important signs of the times is God’s own last-day movement which He has raised up to be an Elijah and a John the Baptist to the last generation of mankind.

May the study of this week assist in confirming each of us in the eternal verities and certainties of the truths held by the remnant people in these awesome times.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **A Revived Papacy**  
(Rev. 13:3)
2. **Ecumenical Movements**  
(Rev. 13:11-14).
3. **Counterfeit Revivals**  
(Matt. 24:11)
4. **Prophecy Perverted**  
(Matt. 24:23-26)
5. **Resurgence of Non-Christian Religions** (Rev. 16:13)
6. **Adventist Action**  
(Rev. 14:6)

**Part 1**  
**A REVIVED**  
**PAPACY**

**According to John, what religious organization would excite the admiration of the modern world in the time of the end?**

**“One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder” (Rev. 13:3, RSV).**

As we have seen from our earlier studies, the period known as “the time of the end” began with the wounding of the papal power in 1798. The abolition of papal civil rule and the setting up of the French republic meant the full death of the system to the thinking people of that period. But prophecy foretold a healing of that wound. The papacy suffered another setback in 1870 when the newly unified kingdom of Italy took over the Papal States. However, since the 1929 Concordat between the Vatican and the Italian government (which restored the pope’s political control over the Vatican State), the papacy has been steadily growing in power and influence throughout the world.

**What will be the nearly universal attitude toward the papacy near the end? Rev. 13:4.**

There has been an astounding change in attitude toward the papacy by Protestants and others since the pontificate of John XXIII and Vatican Council II (1962-1965) at which time the Roman Church sought to orient itself in a more meaningful manner to the modern world. That council has markedly reduced the tensions between the Roman communion and other groups and ushered in an era of dialogue. As a result many Christians of different persuasions are willing to see a renewed papacy functioning as a visible sign of the unity of the Church.

**How supreme will Rome become again? Rev. 13:8.**

“The Scriptures teach that popery is to regain its lost supremacy.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 975.

“Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery; they have made compromises and concessions which papists themselves are surprised to see and fail to understand. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 566.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Vatican Council II emphasized the importance of the Bible and its study. How can I use this interest in Bible study to help my Catholic friends get a clearer picture of God’s plan for humanity?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 563-568.

**Part 2**      **What cooperative efforts are implied in the prophecy of the**  
**ECUMENICAL**      **two-horned beast and the establishment of "the image of the**  
**MOVEMENTS**      **beast"?**

**"I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. . . . [He says] to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Rev. 13:11-14).**

Adventist Bible students have long recognized that the two-horned beast symbolizes Protestant America. The prophecy implies cooperation between Protestantism and Catholicism. Protestant America is depicted as causing its people to show homage to the beast and form an image to it. In its fullest development the papacy is a union of church and state with the church controlling the state. To form an "image" of this would require the religious forces of the nation to be strong enough to control the state and to employ it to further the ends of religion. But to obtain such influence would require a large degree of cooperation and fraternity among the various church communions. One of the religious phenomena particularly vigorous in the twentieth century is the ecumenical movement among Christians, an active movement to foster Christian unity and cooperation

**What will be the final cooperative effort of Christendom?**  
**Rev. 19:11, 19, 20.**

"The wide diversity of belief in the Protestant churches is regarded by many as decisive proof that no effort to secure a forced uniformity can even be made. But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 444.

One by-product of some modern church mergers and of councils of churches is to constitute a block of public opinion and thus become a political force.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Jesus prayed that His people might be one (John 17). How  
only can true unity of Christians be achieved?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 440-445.

**Part 3  
COUNTERFEIT  
REVIVALS**

**Against what religious development did Christ forewarn His people who would be living in the end time?**

**"Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11).**

**What made false religious teachers in the Corinth church so deceptive? 2 Cor. 11:13-15.**

"The path of error often appears to lie close to the path of truth. It is hardly distinguishable from the path that leads to holiness and heaven. But the mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit may discern that it is diverging from the right way. After a while the two are seen to be widely separated."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 290, 291.

**What may accompany counterfeit religion that makes it convincing to many? Matt. 24:24.**

A worldwide religious phenomenon which has attracted great attention in recent years is the charismatic movement, sometimes referred to as neo-Pentecostalism. Its emphasis is upon speaking in tongues (glossolalia). The movement has made deep inroads into Roman Catholicism as well as into the old-line Protestant denominations. Because it has leaped denominational walls and has been embraced by Christians of various persuasions, it is viewed by many as the force that will accomplish the ecumenical objectives. Many hail it as a genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

**What tests must the Christian apply to any message even though it may appear very Christian? Isa. 8:20; Matt. 7:15, 16, 1 John 4:1-3.**

"The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work [the true outpouring of the Spirit]; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world."—*The Great Controversy*. p. 464.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why would the fact that the charismatic movement unites persons of diverse communions by experience rather than by the teaching of Scripture make it suspect?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 412-414.

**Part 4  
PROPHECY  
PERVERTED**

**Jesus warned his followers to expect deceptive teachings on what important prophetic subject in the end time?**

**"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. . . . Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matt. 24:23-26).**

While liberal Protestantism has rejected the validity of Bible prophecy, conservative Protestants have largely adopted the system of prophetic interpretation known as futurism or dispensationalism. Popularized by the notes of the Scofield Bible and more recent works, "Futurism" is a perversion of the prophecies with roots reaching back to the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The view separates the seventieth week of Daniel 9 from its context, placing it at the end of the age. The prophecies of the antichrist (little horn; leopard beast; man of sin) are applied to a single person. Prophecies about Israel are misapplied to teach a restored Judaism. The second advent is divided into two phases: First, according to this view, there is "secret rapture" at the beginning of the seventieth week, at which time the "church" is taken to heaven. Then, it is taught, an open coming will occur seven years later, at which time Christ will establish His personal reign on the earth for a millennium. The preaching of the "secret rapture" in connection with a future restoration of the Jews has become very popular in our times among conservative Christians.

**According to Jesus, how open and known will His coming be? Matt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7.**

**"The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. . . . This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 625.**

**What will be heard by all at Christ's return? What will take place among the righteous? 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.**

**Where does Christ take His redeemed ones? 1 Thess. 4:17; John 14:1-3. Where does John see them? Rev. 7:9, 10.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why are false teachers, who cite the Bible for support, more deceptive than those who openly deny the Bible?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 884-887.

**Part 5**  
**RESURGENCE OF**  
**NON-CHRISTIAN**  
**RELIGIONS**

**From the mouths of what three symbols of religious powers did John see demon spirits issue forth?**

**"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (Rev. 16:13).**

In the book of Revelation the "dragon" is first depicted in chapter 12. There it is identified primarily as Satan (Rev. 12:9), and secondarily as the power of pagan Rome which sought to destroy Christ (verses 4, 5). In chapter 16 the "dragon" may be understood as representing pagan or non-Christian religions. For centuries Satan opposed God through paganism; later he was successful in compromising Christianity with paganism.

**With what fervor may we expect Satan to work near the end? What kind of religious teachings may we expect to become prominent? Rev. 12:12; 1 Tim. 4:1.**

The resurgence of non-Christian religions is a modern phenomenon. Millions in both the East and the West are turning to modernized forms of Buddhism, Hinduism, and other Oriental religions. Some young people in traditionally Christian countries know more about Krishna than they do about Christ. Many developing nations are reviving their ancient native religions to increase the national consciousness. Such movements hinder the preaching of the gospel.

"As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 117, 118.

**Through whom only can genuine salvation and happiness be obtained? Why? John 14:6. (Compare Acts 4:12.)**

"The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion. . . . Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 35, 36.

**What exclusive claim did Jesus make? Are all religions doors to the same place? John 10:1, 7-9.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What explanation can you give (apart from satanic influence) for the avid interest in non-Christian religions of many modern persons.**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, p. 478; *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 56.

**Part 6  
ADVENTIST  
ACTION**

**What features of the first angel's message symbolize the speed and the extensive outreach of the final gospel invitation?**

**"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).**

The Seventh-day Adventist movement itself is a remarkable sign of the times. Organizing its General Conference in 1863 with a membership of about 3500 and 30 ministerial workers, the movement has grown to more than 2.5 million, some 82 percent being outside North America. Today Adventists proclaim their message in 559 languages. By means of radio and television the message is literally sounding through the air.

**What three lines of endeavor did Jesus pursue in proclaiming the gospel? Matt. 4:23.**

The advent movement works in these same three areas—Christian education, evangelistic outreach, and medical missionary work. By these agencies we seek to uplift Christ and to draw mankind to Him in preparation for His coming.

"The greatest wealth of truth ever entrusted to mortals, the most solemn and fearful warnings ever sent by God to man, have been committed to them to be given to the world; and in the accomplishment of this work our publishing houses are among the most effective agencies."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 138.

**What parable continues to depict the external growth of the church? Matt. 13:31, 32.**

"In this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little seed will become a tree. The last message of warning and mercy is to go to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue' (Rev. 14:6-14), 'to take out of them a people for His name' (Acts 15:14)."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 79.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What can I do within my sphere to help God's last-day movement fulfill its divine commission?**

"There is a great work to be done, and every effort possible must be made to reveal Christ . . . ; and the Lord will give us favor before the world until our work is done."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 20, 21.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "Like a Grain of Mustard Seed," pp. 76-79.





# 10. FASCINATION WITH THE OCCULT

**"They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast" (Rev. 13:4).**

**"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).**

In this last quarter of the twentieth century no other religious phenomenon is stranger than the revival and resurgence of the occult arts. All the trappings of ancient heathenism are again being displayed in modern times. Magic, witchcraft, astrology, Satanism, and the whole range of the occult have become very popular—not only among the masses, but also among the highly educated. Millions daily consult their horo-

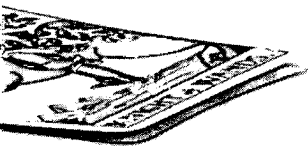
scopes which are published in hundreds of newspapers. Covens of modern-day witches meet regularly.

Supplies for sorcery and related occult activities are sold in stores now established for that purpose. Ouija boards and like devices may be purchased in ordinary department stores. Spiritism and interest in demon possession and exorcism is widespread in our times. Many are literally worshipping the dragon, Satan, and are giving heed to the seducing doctrines of devils. And all this is occurring in an age of highly developed science and widespread education, an age which has increasingly emphasized the competency of man and his ability to solve his own problems apart from God.

The occult was one aspect of heathenism which proved a strong temptation to ancient Israel. This week we wish to study the counsels God gave Israel regarding occult arts. The divine judgment on the occult in ancient times is still the same today.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Horoscopes or Christian Hope**  
(Jer. 10:2, 3)
2. **Forbidden Practices**  
(Deut. 18:9-11)
3. **Judgment on the Occult Arts**  
(Isa. 47:9)
4. **Frustrated Fortune-tellers**  
(Dan. 2:27, 28)
5. **Books of Magic**  
(Acts 19:18, 19)
6. **Demon Possession**  
(Mark 1:23-25)



**Part 1**  
**HOROSCOPES OR**  
**CHRISTIAN HOPE**

**God cautioned Israel not to be concerned and anxious over what heathen system of predicting?**

**“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain” (Jer. 10:2, 3).**

Astrology seems to have had its origin in Mesopotamia. The assumption upon which ancient astrology rested was that the movements of the celestial bodies affected human destinies. Hence, the ancients were concerned to analyze carefully such celestial phenomena as eclipses, comets, and the conjunctions of the heavenly bodies. The earliest known text giving a horoscope is dated April 29, 410 BC.

Although we live in a very scientific age, millions have turned to a revived astrology to find answers to their problems. Christ, however, not stars, is the only satisfying solution.

**To whom do the orderly but inanimate heavenly bodies direct man's attention? Ps. 19:1; 8:3, 4.**

**What does the Creator wish to assure His earthly children when they behold the stars? Isa. 40:26-31; Ps. 147:3-5.**

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

**Where does the Christian find his source of guidance in all the affairs of life? Ps. 73:23, 24; Matt. 4:4.**

“Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why are rational and often highly educated people attracted to astrology in these modern times?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Education*, pp. 99, 100, 103, 104.

**Part 2  
FORBIDDEN  
PRACTICES**

**What practices did God expressly forbid Israel to learn or to adopt?**

**"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deut. 18:9-11).**

The Canaanites whom Israel dispossessed were a deeply depraved people, and their influence and practices were degrading; hence, the straightforward warning to Israel.

A diviner might consult arrows, images, or animal livers in seeking information or guidance (Eze. 21:21). An "observer of times," literally, "of the clouds," may have been one who based his predictions on a study of the clouds. The "enchanter" and the "consulter with familiar spirits" were spirit mediums. The "wizard" was also one who alleged to have special knowledge from contact with the dead. Witchcraft or sorcery pertained to those persons who employed powers gained from evil spirits, and who at times used chemical substances. "A charmer," literally, "a tier of knots," refers to the making and wearing of magic cords and knots as spells against evil.

**Why did God command His people not to engage in these pagan practices? Deut. 18:12.**

**What counsel did Paul give to the Ephesian members which is also good counsel for modern Christians who might be tempted to dabble in revived occultism? Eph. 5:11; 6:11, 12.**

"There are many who become restless when they cannot know the definite outcome of affairs. They cannot endure uncertainty, and in their impatience they refuse to wait to see the salvation of God. Apprehended evils drive them nearly distracted. They give way to their rebellious feelings, and run hither and thither in passionate grief, seeking intelligence concerning that which has not been revealed. If they would but trust in God, and watch unto prayer, they would find divine consolation. Their spirit would be calmed by communion with God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 687.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What are some disadvantages of knowing the details of one's immediate future?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 100, 101; *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 480-482.

**Part 3**  
**JUDGMENT ON THE**  
**OCCULT ARTS**

**What is one of the reasons God gave for the overthrow of ancient Babylon?**

**"These two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:9).**

The great interest of the Babylonians in the occult arts is attested to by classical writers and archaeological data.

**In determining to deliver the Jews from Babylonian captivity, whom did the God of heaven say He would frustrate? Isa. 44:24, 25.**

**Who were unable to assist Belshazzar and the nation of Babylon on its last night of revelry to read the message on the wall? Dan. 5:7, 8.**

"Hushed was the boisterous mirth, while men and women, seized with nameless terror, watched the hand slowly tracing the mysterious characters. . . . They seemed to be arraigned before the judgment bar of the eternal God, whose power they had just defied."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 524.

**The destructive judgments which fell on the mighty Babylonian Empire were also predicted to fall upon what class of persons? Isa. 47:13, 14.**

In the judgments pronounced on Babylon's practitioners of occult arts we may see God's attitude toward these activities. God is no respecter of persons. What was wrong then is wrong today. Christians dabble at their eternal peril.

"The magicians of heathen times have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants, and the fortune-tellers of today. The mystic voices that spoke at Endor and at Ephesus are still by their lying words misleading the children of men. Could the veil be lifted from before our eyes, we should see evil angels employing all their arts to deceive and to destroy. Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget God, there Satan is exercising his bewitching power. When men yield to his influence, ere they are aware the mind is bewildered and the soul polluted."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 290.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**To many persons such things as the Ouija board, palm reading, fortune-telling are simply fun things. Why can the informed Christian not take the occult arts lightly or have any part in them?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 507, 508.

**Part 4  
FRUSTRATED  
FORTUNE-TELLERS**

**What experience in Daniel's early service in Babylon exposed the falseness of heathen astrology?**

**"Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:27, 28).**

**Although these leaders in the occult arts claimed contact with superhuman spirits and powers, what did they openly admit on this occasion? Dan. 2:10, 11.**

**What was their experience some years later when they were told the monarch's dream? Dan. 4:7, 18.**

**"Once more in this idolatrous nation, testimony was to be borne to the fact that only those who love and fear God can understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 516.**

**Who only is omniscient and can truly foretell the future? Isa. 46:9, 10.**

Satan cannot know the future. He is an astute student of human nature. He controls many persons and has considerable freedom to create events as he will. These factors enable evil agencies to make predictions. But it is well known that the spirits often err in their forecasts.

"Satan closely watches events, and when he finds one who has a specially strong spirit of opposition to the truth of God he will even reveal to him unfulfilled events, that he may more firmly secure himself a seat in his heart. . . .

"Those who have bitterly opposed the truth of God, Satan uses as his mediums. To such he will appear in the assumed person and garb of another, it may be a friend of the medium. He will increase their faith by using the words of this friend and relating circumstances which are about to take place or which really have taken place and of which the medium knew nothing. Sometimes previous to a death or an accident he gives a dream or, personating another, converses with the medium, even imparting knowledge by means of his suggestions. But it is wisdom from beneath and not from above."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 171, 172.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why do you think people—even in high places such as government—continually consult fortune-tellers and clairvoyants even though their predictions are often wrong?**

**Part 5**      **Convicted of the wrongness in participating in the occult**  
**BOOKS OF MAGIC**      **arts, what did the Ephesian Christians do?**

**“Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19:18, 19).**

“These [magical] arts were almost a specialty in Ephesus. The magicians and astrologers were about in great numbers, and carried on a brisk trade in charms, books of divination, and rules for interpreting dreams. The so-called ‘Ephesian spells,’ or ‘Ephesian writings’ (*Ephesia grammata*) were small slips of parchment kept in silk bags, and on these slips were written archaic words of obscure meaning.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 376.

**What experience had occurred which led new believers to burn their books on the occult arts? Acts 19:13-20.**

“By burning their books on magic, the Ephesian converts showed that the things in which they had once delighted they now abhorred. It was by and through magic that they had especially offended God and imperiled their souls; and it was against magic that they showed such indignation. Thus they gave evidence of true conversion.

“These treatises on divination contained rules and forms of communication with evil spirits. They were the regulations of the worship of Satan—directions for soliciting his help and obtaining information from him. By retaining these books the disciples would have exposed themselves to temptation; by selling them they would have placed temptation in the way of others. They had renounced the kingdom of darkness, and to destroy its power they did not hesitate at any sacrifice.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 288, 289.

**With what kind of information should the Christian fill his mind? Prov. 23:23; Col. 2:3, 10.**

“Many will never be convinced that it is bliss to be ignorant of a certain kind of knowledge, which arises from unsanctified desires and unholy aims. The sons and daughters of Adam are fully as inquisitive and presumptuous as was Eve in seeking forbidden knowledge.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 504.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **What kinds of books might be as destructive to Christian experience as books dealing with the occult? See “Messages to Young People,” pp. 275-278.**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 286-290.

**Part 6**      **What was it that enabled the man in the synagogue of**  
**DEMON POSSESSION**      **Capernaum to recognize the deity of Jesus?**

**“There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him” (Mark 1:23-25).**

“The fact that men have been possessed with demons, is clearly stated in the New Testament. The persons thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes. Christ had perfect understanding of that with which He was dealing, and He recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 514.

**To what extent did the demons degrade and ruin the two Gadarene men Jesus met? Mark 5:1-19. (Compare Matt. 8:28-34.)**

“The encounter with the demoniacs of Gergesa had a lesson for the disciples. It showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power. Those wretched beings, dwelling in the place of graves, possessed by demons, in bondage to uncontrolled passions and loathsome lusts, represent what humanity would become if given up to satanic jurisdiction. Satan’s influence is constantly exerted upon men to distract the senses, control the mind for evil, and incite to violence and crime. He weakens the body, darkens the intellect, and debases the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 341.

**What is required of the Christian who seeks to help the demon possessed to find freedom in Christ and release from Satan’s control? Matt. 17:19-21.**

Jealousy of the three intimate disciples of Christ, a careless, self-sufficient attitude, and unbelief caused the nine disciples to fail in casting out the demon. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 430, 431.)

**What formerly devil-possessed person became the first proclaimer of the resurrection of Christ? Mark 16:9.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why is it true that any who sin knowingly, and who willfully tamper with evil may become demon possessed?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 511-517.

# 11. SPREADING SPIRITUALISM

**"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13, 14).**

Since 1848, the birth date for modern spiritualism in New York, interest in its various forms has grown enormously. Many prominent personalities have both pursued and promoted its progress. Spiritualism has in some respects taken the form of a religion. There are spiritist "churches," services, and ministry. But spiritualism in our times is but a rebirth of ancient heathen spiritism. Its revival and widespread acceptance is a warning sign of the intense activity on the part of the devils to turn the minds of earth's last generations away from God and His final message of mercy.

"Spiritualism is about to take the world captive. There are many who think that Spiritualism is upheld through trickery and imposture, but this is far from the truth. Superhuman power is working in a variety of ways, and few have any idea as to what will be the manifestations of Spiritualism in the future. The foundation for the success of Spiritualism has been laid in the assertions that have been made from the pulpits of our land. The ministers have proclaimed as Bible doctrines falsehoods that have originated with the arch deceiver.

"The doctrine of consciousness after death, of the spirits of the dead being in communion with the living, has no foundation in the Scriptures, and yet these theories are affirmed as truth. Through this false doctrine the

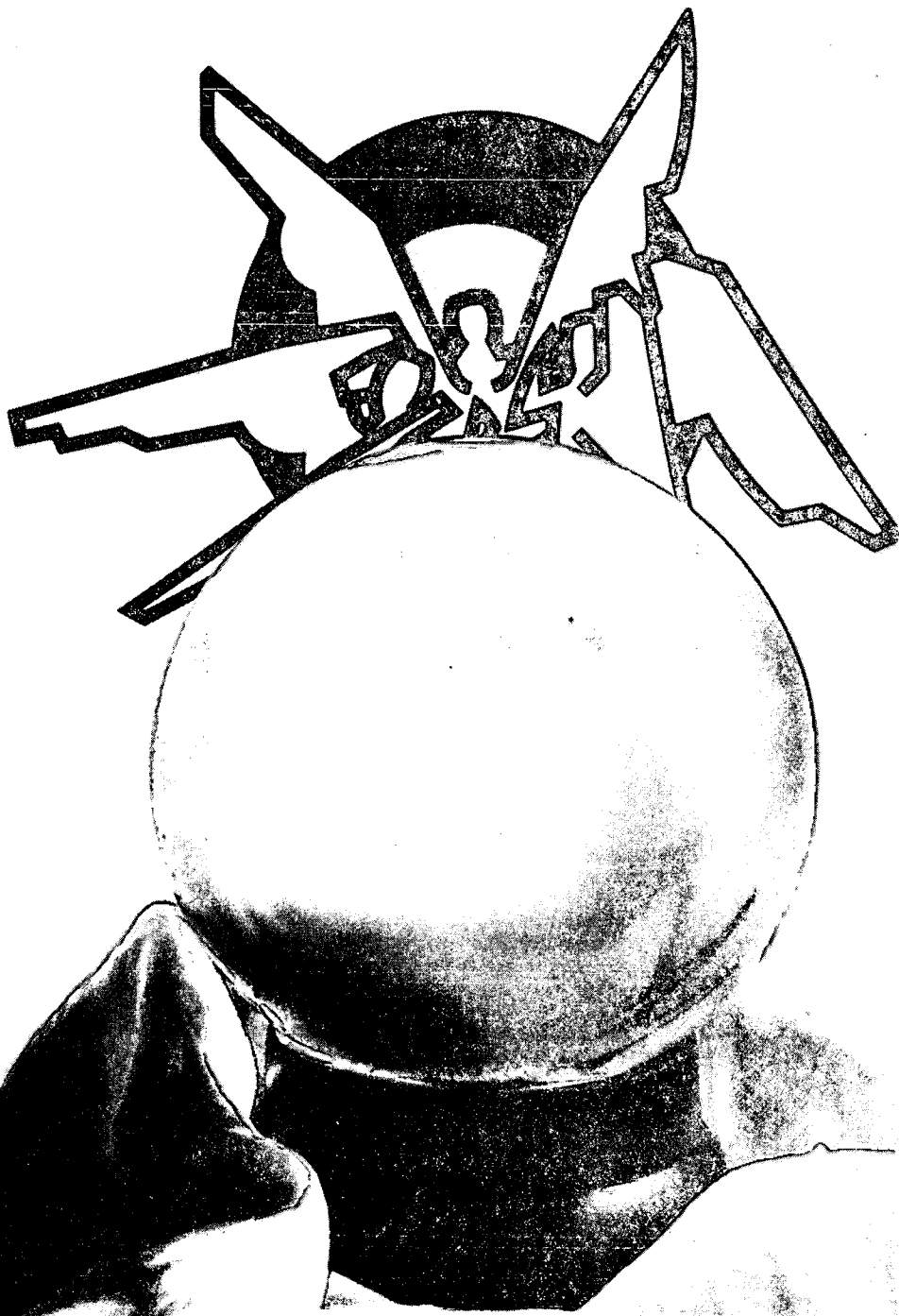
way has been opened for the spirits of devils to deceive the people in representing themselves as the dead. Satanic agencies personate the dead and thus bring souls into captivity."—*Evangelism*, pp. 602, 603.

This week we will examine the Bible's teaching about spiritualism. The inspired counsels and warnings made in Bible times are applicable to Christians living in the time of the end, for Satan is making extraordinary efforts to deceive all levels of humanity in order to bring all under his control.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Spirits of Spiritualism (Neh. 9:6)**
2. **The First Lie (Gen. 3:2-4)**
3. **Ancient Admonitions (Lev. 19:31)**
4. **False Forms of Guidance (1 Sam. 28:6)**
5. **The Spirits and the State (Isa. 8:19)**
6. **Dangerous Deceptions (2 Cor. 11:3)**





**Part 1**  
**THE SPIRITS OF**  
**SPIRITUALISM**

**What is the origin of angels?**

**"Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host . . . ; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6).**

**Angels and mankind are created beings. What is their relationship? Ps. 8:3-5.**

**What task has been assigned to holy angels? Ps. 91:11; Matt. 18:10.**

**What are the holy angels called in Hebrews 1:14?**

"The connection of the visible with the invisible world, the ministration of angels of God, and the agency of evil spirits, are plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and inseparably interwoven with human history. . . .

"Before the creation of man, angels were in existence; for when the foundations of the earth were laid, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' Job. 38:7. After the fall of man, angels were sent to guard the tree of life, and this before a human being had died. Angels are in nature superior to men."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 511.

**What is the origin of evil angels? Rev. 12:9; 2 Peter 2:4.**

Sin originated among the angels of heaven. Those who refused to live in obedience were expelled.

"Evil spirits, in the beginning created sinless, were equal in nature, power, and glory with the holy beings that are now God's messengers."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 513.

**How are these evil supernatural powers referred to by Paul? Eph. 2:2; 6:12.**

"We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make-believe conflict."—*Evangelism*, p. 704.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Actors can portray apt characterizations of other people. Why would this be easy for evil angels to do?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 492-499.

Part 2  
THE FIRST LIE

What was the first lie ever told on earth? By whom was it told?

**"The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:2-4).**

It is upon this lie—the natural immortality of the soul—that Satan erected the pagan religions with their various views of the afterlife.

"Nearly all forms of ancient sorcery and witchcraft were founded upon a belief in communion with the dead. . . .

"This same belief in communion with the dead formed the cornerstone of heathen idolatry. The gods of the heathen were believed to be the deified spirits of departed heroes. Thus the religion of the heathen was a worship of the dead. . . .

"Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship—all having communion with the dead as their vital principle—are founded upon that first lie."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 684, 685.

**What does the Bible teach about the condition of a person in death? Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10. (Compare Ps. 88:10-12.)**

**Whether in the Old or in the New Testament, how does the Bible consistently describe death? Why? 1 Kings 2:1, 2, 10; John 11:11-14.**

"Many expected to hear from Lazarus a wonderful account of scenes witnessed after death. They were surprised that he told them nothing. He had nothing of this kind to tell. Inspiration declares, 'The dead know not anything.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 557, 558.

**Can the dead in some manner return to their former homes? Job 7:9, 10.**

"Two main planks in Spiritualism's platform are: First, that those who have 'passed on' are conscious and can communicate with us; that there is no death, but a continuation of life; and second, that there is hope in the hereafter for the most sinful."—LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), vol. 4, p. 1238.

THINK IT THROUGH

**Since the Bible asserts that the dead are unconscious, who are the beings the spiritualist communicates with?**

FURTHER STUDY

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 683-689.

**Part 3  
ANCIENT  
ADMONITIONS**

**Against what persons did God warn the Israelites?**

**"Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:31, RSV).**

The Hebrew for "medium" is rendered in the KJV as "them that have familiar spirits," referring to the evil spirit to which the medium has recourse.

"It is fondly supposed that heathen superstitions have disappeared before the civilization of the twentieth century. But the word of God and the stern testimony of facts declare that sorcery is practiced in this age as verily as in the days of the old-time magicians. The ancient system of magic is, in reality, the same as what is now known as modern spiritualism. Satan is finding access to thousands of minds by presenting himself under the guise of departed friends. . . . The dead do not hold communion with the living. But true to his early cunning, Satan employs this device in order to gain control of minds.

"Through spiritualism many of the sick, the bereaved, the curious, are communicating with evil spirits. All who venture to do this are on dangerous ground."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 289, 290.

**What punishment was inflicted upon spirit mediums in the days of the Israelite theocracy? Lev. 20:27.**

**Which of Israel's kings were especially noted for their endeavors to stamp out spiritualism from among God's people? 1 Sam. 28:3; 2 Kings 23:24.**

"Spiritualists are increasing in numbers. They will come to men who have the truth as Satan came to Christ. . . . The only safety for the people of God is to be thoroughly conversant with their Bibles, and be intelligent upon the reasons of our faith in regard to the sleep of the dead.

"Satan is a cunning foe. And it is not difficult for the evil angels to represent both saints and sinners who have died, and make these representations visible to human eyes. These manifestations will be more frequent, and developments of a more startling character will appear as we near the close of time."—*Evangelism*, p. 604.

**What warning was given to Israel about consulting spirit mediums? Lev. 20:6.**

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What did Satan use as his first medium? Gen. 3:1. With whom was Eve actually conversing?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 551-553.

**Part 4  
FALSE FORMS  
OF GUIDANCE**

**At a time of crisis in Israel, what response did Saul receive from his earnest prayers for guidance?**

**“When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets” (1 Sam. 28:6).**

“The Lord never turned away a soul that came to Him in sincerity and humility. Why did he turn Saul away unanswered? The king had by his own act forfeited the benefits of all the methods of inquiring of God. He had rejected the counsel of Samuel the prophet; he had exiled David, the chosen of God; he had slain the priests of the Lord. Could he expect to be answered by God when he had cut off the channels of communication that Heaven had ordained? He had sinned away the Spirit of grace, and could he be answered by dreams and revelations from the Lord?” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 676.

**In his desperation what did Saul request? Into what experience did he voluntarily enter? 1 Sam. 28:7-20.**

“It was not pardon for sin and reconciliation with God, that he sought, but deliverance from his foes. By his own stubbornness and rebellion he had cut himself off from God. There could be no return but by the way of penitence and contrition; but the proud monarch, in his anguish and despair, determined to seek help from another source.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 676.

**What prediction did the apparition make with regard to Saul and his sons? 1 Sam. 28:19.**

“The pretended visitants from the world of spirits sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct. . . . The fact that they state some truths, and are able at times to foretell future events, gives to their statements an appearance of reliability; and their false teachings are accepted.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 552.

**For what specific reasons did God permit the destruction of Saul by the Philistines? 1 Chron. 10:13, 14.**

“God had borne long with Saul; . . . there was still opportunity for repentance. But when . . . he turned from God to obtain light from a confederate of Satan, he had cut the last tie.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 679.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**For what reason did the evil spirit reprove Saul for his sins? Does God’s reproof work the same way? Why not?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 675-683.

**Part 5**  
**THE SPIRITS AND**  
**THE STATE**

**What warning and counsel did Isaiah give Ahaz about consulting mediums and wizards?**

**"When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa. 8:19, RSV).**

The unholy course of Saul and Ahaz (the king to whom Isaiah's message was directed) continues to be practiced even in modern times. Heads of state and officials in governments in various periods of modern history have been known for seeking political advice from spirit mediums.

"Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 556.

**To what extremity was the kingdom of Judah eventually led by King Manasseh's promotion of spiritualism and other forms of the occult? 2 Kings 21:1, 6, 12, 13. (Compare Jer. 15:4.)**

According to Ellen White, a number of army officers in the U.S. Civil War consulted spirit mediums on military matters. "Very many men in authority, generals and officers, act in conformity with instructions communicated by spirits. The spirits of devils, professing to be dead warriors and skillful generals, communicate with men in authority and control many of their movements. One general has directions from these spirits to make special moves and is flattered with the hope of success. Another receives directions which differ widely from those given to the first. Sometimes those who follow the directions given obtain a victory, but more frequently they meet with defeat."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 363, 364.

**Why may we expect rulers and civil officials in the end time to consult spirit mediums? Rev. 16:13, 14.**

"Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. . . . Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. . . . It will be reached in the last remnant of time."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 561.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**What are the similarities and differences between Bible prophets and spirit mediums and fortune-tellers?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 561, 562.

Part 6  
DANGEROUS  
DECEPTIONS

**What is Satan's purpose in speaking through spirit mediums? Compare his communication with Eve through a serpent.**

**"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).**

"When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in heaven and even to occupy exalted positions there, and thus the error is widely taught that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. . . . The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised, the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing. The spirits deny the deity of Christ and place even the Creator on a level with themselves." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 552.

"Spiritualism teaches 'that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead.' And again: 'Each mind will judge itself and not another.' 'The judgment will be right, because it is the judgment of self. . . . The throne is within you.' Said a spiritualist teacher: . . . 'My fellow men, all were unfallen demigods.' And another declares: 'Any just and perfect being is Christ.' "—*The Great Controversy*, p. 554.

**What does the apostle Paul state about the way Satan may appear? 2 Cor. 11:13-15.**

"There are many who shrink with horror from the thought of consulting spirit mediums, but who are attracted by more pleasing forms of spiritism. . . . Still others are led astray by the teachings of Christian Science, and by the mysticism of theosophy and other Oriental religions.

"The apostles of nearly all forms of spiritism claim to have the power to cure the diseased. . . . And there are not a few, even in this Christian age, who go to these healers, instead of trusting in the power of the living God and the skill of well-qualified Christian physicians."—*Evangelism*, p. 606.

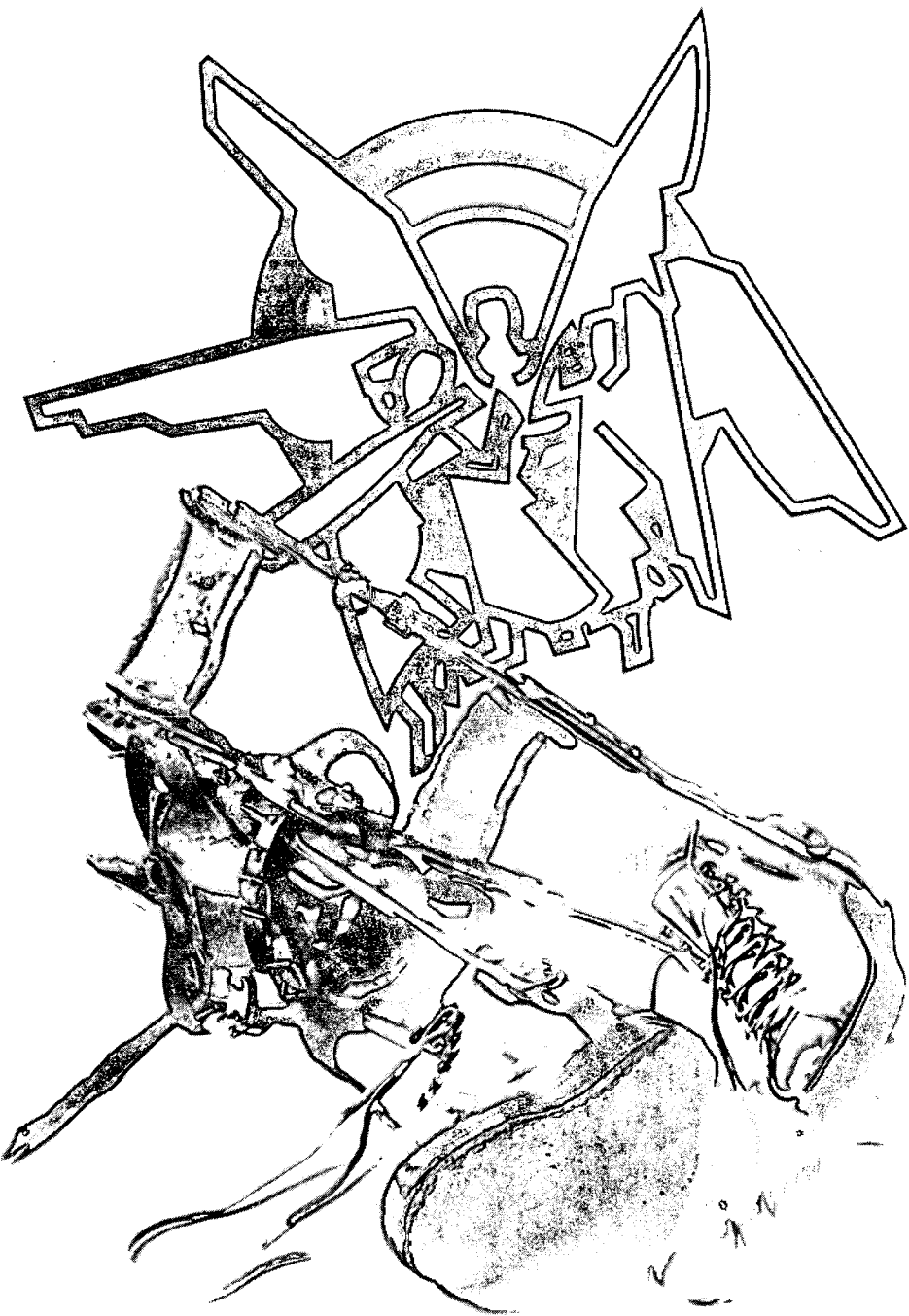
Since most Christians believe in inherent immortality, their minds are conditioned to accept spiritualism's claims.

## THINK IT THROUGH

**What is the best preparation I can make to avoid deception? Why is factual knowledge alone not sufficient? (See 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.)**

## FURTHER STUDY

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 554-557, 588, 589.





# 12. MISLEADING MIRACLES

**“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thess. 2:8-10).**

“The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by ‘the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.’ . . . And the apostle John, describing the miracle-working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: ‘He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.’ Revelation 13:13, 14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan’s agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 553.

“We are coming right upon the time when Satan is to work with all manner of bewitching influences, and those who are charmed with them now, or give them the least countenance now, will be all ready to be swept right in to act a part with the devil then. Evil angels are working all the time upon

the hearts of men. Satan is working with everyone who is not under the control of the Spirit of God. It is the lying wonders of the devil that will take the world captive, and he will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. He is to work miracles; and this wonderful, miracle-working power is to sweep the whole world. It is now just beginning.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 51.

The peoples of the world are currently being conditioned to believe almost anything through the publicized happenings in the occult sphere and in the charismatic movement. Extraordinary miracles of all kinds are reported as well as dramatic healings. Closely related to the interest in miracles is the preoccupation with speaking in tongues, a phenomenon which in recent years has penetrated Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

What do the Scriptures have to say about the miraculous and its last-day manifestations? This will constitute the area of our study this week.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Persuasive Power of the Miraculous (Acts 8:5-11)**
2. **The Purpose of Divine Miracles (Acts 10:38)**
3. **Convincing Counterfeits (Matt. 24:24)**
4. **Testing the Miraculous (Deut. 13:1-3)**
5. **Mission and Miracle (John 10:41)**
6. **Miracles and Tongues (1 Cor. 14:11, 12)**

**Part 1**  
**THE PERSUASIVE**  
**POWER OF THE**  
**MIRACULOUS**

**What was a major factor in attracting the attention of the Samaritans to both the evangelism of Philip and the sorcery of Simon Magus?**

**"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. . . . But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people . . . : to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries" (Acts 8:5-11).**

It seems as though the human mind is always dazzled and attracted by any happening which may be out of the ordinary. At times God has enabled His servants to perform miracles. The attention of the people has thereby been secured, their minds made receptive for receiving truth, and God's name honored. At the same time Satan through his agents has likewise wrought miracles or illusions of miracles to sweep the unwary into his deceptions.

"Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 48.

**Upon what did the nobleman of Cana determine to hang his faith in Jesus as the Messiah? John 4:48.**

"He [Jesus] knew also that the father had, in his own mind, made conditions concerning his belief in Jesus. Unless his petition should be granted, he would not receive Him as the Messiah."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

**What effect did the resurrection of Dorcas have on the work of the church? Acts 9:42.**

"Dorcas had been of great service to the church, and God saw fit to bring her back from the land of the enemy, that her skill and energy might still be a blessing to others, and also that by this manifestation of His power the cause of Christ might be strengthened."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 132.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Since both God and Satan can cause miracles to be performed, how can I determine whether truth or error is being confirmed through such wonders?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Evangelism*, p. 594.

**Part 2**  
**THE PURPOSE**  
**OF DIVINE**  
**MIRACLES**

**What description of Jesus' ministry is given by the writer of Acts?**

**"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).**

The miracles of Christ were not wrought to attract attention to Himself, nor to enrich Himself in a monetary way with offerings from the grateful. Rather, the object of each miracle was to bring honor to God, to open doors to broken hearts which would permit grace to enter in a saving way.

"In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 696.

"Christ never worked a miracle except to supply a genuine necessity, and every miracle was of a character to lead the people to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 366.

"He desires that our dull senses shall be quickened to discern His merciful kindness and to glorify Him for the working of His power. He desires us to recognize Him in His gifts, that they may be, as He intended, a blessing to us. It was to accomplish this purpose that the miracles of Christ were performed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 368.

**What is one purpose for which God performs miracles for His people as He sees fit? Heb. 2:3, 4.**

**What spiritual gifts may at times be entrusted to certain believers? 1 Cor. 12:9, 10, first part. (See also verses 28-30.)**

True miracles do not result from impetuous demands, but are given as God sees best.

"The apostles were not always able to work miracles at will. The Lord granted His servants this special power as the progress of His cause or the honor of His name required."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1064.

"Some died in the days of Christ and in the days of the apostles because the Lord knew just what was best for them."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 17.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Which is the greater, a miracle of healing or that of a transformed life?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 208-210.

**Part 3  
CONVINCING  
COUNTERFEITS**

**What emphasis upon the miraculous by false teachers may we expect near the time of Christ's return?**

**"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).**

**What three miracles of Moses did the magicians counterfeit in Pharaoh's court? Ex. 7:11, 12, 20-22; 8:6, 7.**

"The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents; but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, they were able to produce this appearance. It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents. The prince of evil, though possessing all the wisdom and might of an angel fallen, has not power to create, or to give life; this is the prerogative of God alone. But all that was in Satan's power to do, he did; he produced a counterfeit."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 264.

**To what conclusion did the magicians come when they could not duplicate the miracle of lice? Ex. 8:17-19.**

"Satan wrought through the magicians in a manner calculated to harden the heart of the tyrant Pharaoh against the miraculous manifestations of God's power. Satan thought to stagger the faith of Moses and Aaron in the divine origin of their mission. . . . The magicians failed to produce the miracle of lice, and could no more imitate Moses and Aaron. God would not suffer Satan to proceed further."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 292.

**What marvelous mirage was Satan able to produce before the eyes of Christ? Luke 4:5, 6.**

"The sunlight lay on templed cities, marble palaces, fertile fields, and fruit-laden vineyards. The traces of evil were hidden. The eyes of Jesus . . . now gazed upon a scene of unsurpassed loveliness and prosperity."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 129.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Have I grown in my experience to the point that I will trust the Bible rather than my eyesight?**

"Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 588.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 302.

**Part 4**  
**TESTING THE**  
**MIRACULOUS**

**Does a fulfilled prediction or a marvelous miracle of healing always prove that a given teaching is from God?**

**"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).**

One of the striking facts of our scientific age is the recent interest by all classes of people in the miraculous and the supernatural. Faith healers are popular. Advertised meetings of healing are well attended; some have been televised. Such a climate is preparing the minds of the masses for the final delusions of Satan. The question the Christian must ask is not whether a miracle or wonder has truly taken place. Rather, he must ask if the *teaching* or viewpoint which is being advocated by the miracle worker is in harmony with the Word of God.

"The man who makes the working of miracles the test of his faith will find that Satan can, through a species of deceptions, perform wonders that will appear to be genuine miracles."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 52.

**Why will some who profess Christ and who work miracles in His name not be accepted by the Master in the judgment? Matt. 7:21-23.**

"So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

"The light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 48.

"If those through whom cures are performed are disposed, on account of these manifestations, to excuse their neglect of the law of God, and continue in disobedience, though they have power to any and every extent, it does not follow that they have the great power of God. On the contrary, it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 50, 51.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Explain how a Bible-quoting miracle worker may actually teach doctrine that is contrary to the Bible. (See Matt. 4:6.)**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 48-53.

**Part 5**  
**MISSION AND**  
**MIRACLE**

**Was God's special message which John the Baptist proclaimed, highlighted, authenticated, or made more believable by miracles?**

**"Many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true" (John 10:41).**

The validity of John's message did not rest upon the miraculous, but upon its harmony with the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah. In the last preaching of God's final message miracles will be wrought, but its truthfulness must rest upon its agreement with Scripture, not on miracles.

"Unbelievers will require them [God's people] to do some miracle, if they believe God's special power is in the church and that they are the chosen people of God. . . . They should refer the unbelieving to the written, inspired testimony for evidence of their being the loyal people of God and heirs of salvation."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 15.

**What instruction is given those Christians who seek physical healing? James 5:14, 15.**

"The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because servitious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

"For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 54.

**What lesson does Second Corinthians 12:7-9 teach us? How must the Christian always pray? 1 John 5:14.**

"Some have asked me, 'Why should we have sanitariums? Why should we not, like Christ, pray for the sick, that they may be healed miraculously?' I have answered, 'Suppose we were able . . . ; how many would appreciate the healing? Would those who were healed become health reformers, or continue to be health destroyers?' "—*Medical Ministry*, p. 13.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**In what ways may education in healthful living be more vital to long-term happiness than a miracle of healing?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 345-348.

**Part 6  
MIRACLES AND  
TONGUES**

**For what purpose only should a Christian desire the genuine gift of tongues?**

**“Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor. 14:11, 12).**

Closely allied to the great emphasis today on faith healing is a kindred emphasis on glossolalia or speaking in tongues. In fact, the two are made prominent in the current charismatic movement. Glossolalia is not a language; rather it consists of strings of unintelligible sounds understood by neither the speaker nor the listener. It provides an ecstatic, semitrancelike experience for the participant, but the gospel is not thereby transmitted to others.

Writing about some Sabbath keepers who became involved in a tongues experience in the 1850s, Ellen White identified its source: “Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 412.

**What are some of the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows on believers as He chooses? 1 Cor. 12:1-11.**

**Does the Bible teach that every one must receive the gift of tongues as evidence that he has been saved? 1 Cor. 12:27-31.**

**According to the clearest record of this phenomenon, what is the genuine gift of tongues? For what purpose was it given at Pentecost? With what result? Acts 2:1-11, 37-41.**

“This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. . . . They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 39, 40.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**An experience is important. How can I test my experience to know whether it is genuine or not? (See “Selected Messages,” bk. 1, p. 43.)**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 35-46.

# 13. NATURAL CALAMITIES

**"There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:7, 8).**

In His prophecy of the future, Jesus mingled His descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem and His second advent. The events which were to take place before the fall of the nation would also take place again in the time prior to His return. As there were famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, that is to say, natural calamities before the ruin of Jerusalem, so we may expect such to continue through the time of the end.

"As I hear of the terrible calamities that from week to week are taking place, I ask myself: What do these things mean? The most awful disasters are following one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of seemingly disorganized, unregulated forces, but in them God's purpose may be read. They are one of the means by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.

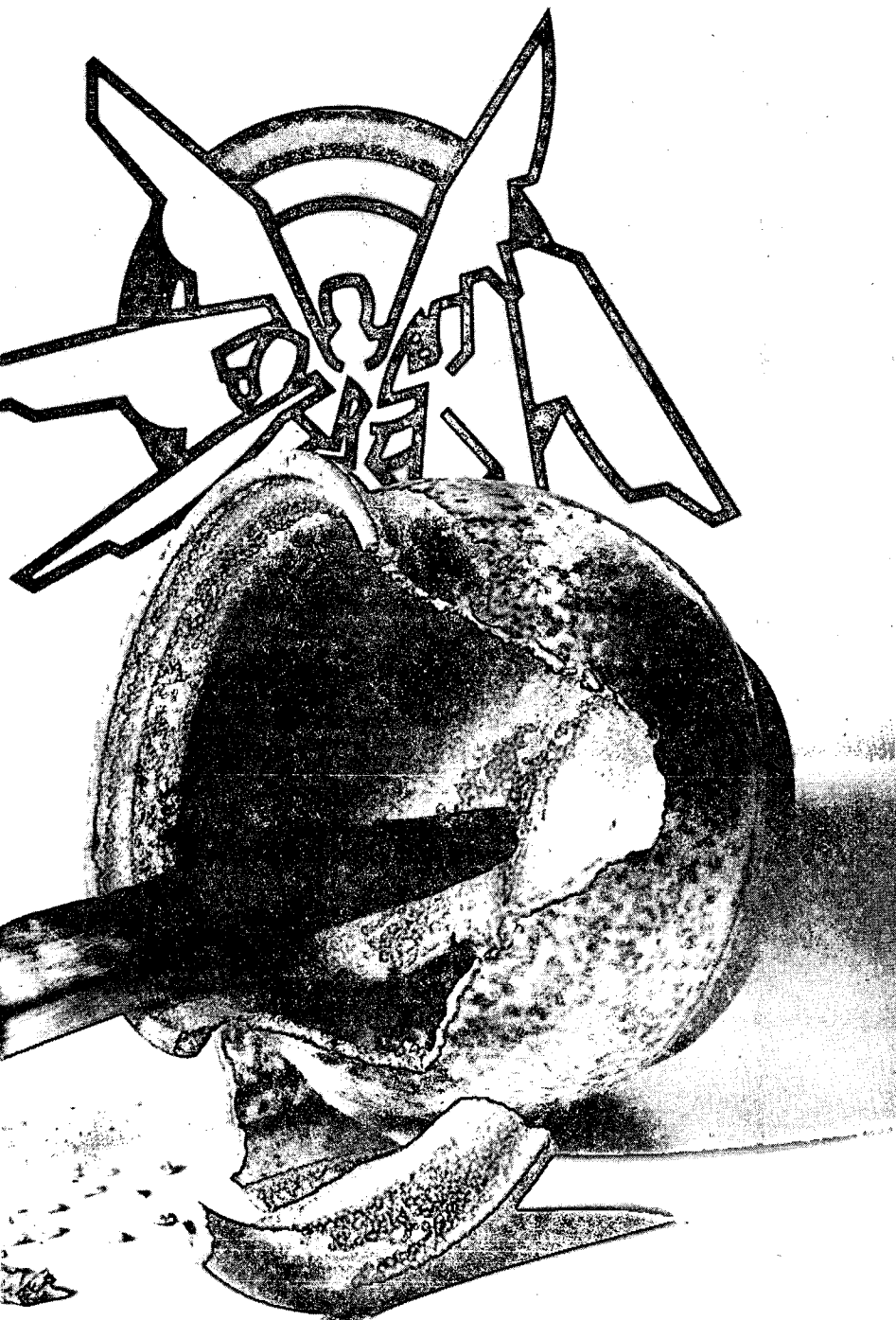
"The coming of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. The judgments of God are in the land. They speak in solemn warning, saying: 'Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' Matthew 24:44."—  
*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 252.

In our study this week we will first note what natural calamities were to indicate to God's people Israel. They were not to be regarded as mere quirks of nature, but as messengers of warning. In the remaining portion of our study we will examine the extent of the particular signs Jesus predicted, and the Christian's relationship to these as he seeks to prepare for the end of the age and his Lord's return.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Disobedience and Drought**  
(Deut. 11:13, 14)
2. **Plagues and Penitence**  
(Joel 2:12, 13)
3. **Seismic Signs**  
(Luke 21:11)
4. **Famines**  
(Mark 13:8)
5. **Pollution and Accountability**  
(Rev. 11:18)
6. **Prevailing Pestilences**  
(Luke 21:11)





**Part 1  
DISOBEDIENCE  
AND DROUGHT**

**What promise did God make to the nation of Israel concerning adequate rain? What were the conditions?**

**"It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your iand in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" (Deut. 11:13, 14).**

The "first" or "early" rains falling in late October or in November were light, but sufficient to enable the Israelite to plow and sow his fields. Heavy rains came in the end of December and January. The latter rains fell in March and April, ripening the harvest. If either of the early or later rains—or both—failed, crop failure resulted and famine conditions ensued.

**What did God forewarn the nation He would do if it turned from allegiance to Him? Deut. 11:16, 17.**

**What was God's purpose in withholding the rains from the land of Israel? Amos 4:6-8. (Compare Jer. 5:24, 25.)**

"As the 'whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together' . . . , the heart of the infinite Father is pained in sympathy. Our world is a vast lazar house, a scene of misery that we dare not allow even our thoughts to dwell upon. Did we realize it as it is, the burden would be too terrible. Yet God feels it all."—*Education*, pp. 263, 264.

**What extensive drought led the nation of Israel, at least in part, to repent of their sins? 1 Kings 17:1. (Compare James 5:17, 18.)**

"For stricken Israel there was but one remedy—a turning away from the sins that had brought upon them the chastening hand of the Almighty, and a turning to the Lord with full purpose of heart. . . . It was to bring to pass this blessed result that God continued to withhold from them the dew and the rain until a decided reformation should take place."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 128.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**The Israelites knew why severe droughts periodically afflicted their land. What do the extensive droughts and famines of modern times say to me?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 119-128.

**Part 2  
PLAGUES AND  
PENITENCE**

**At a time of deep national apostasy, what earnest appeal did God make to His people through the prophet Joel?**

**“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:12, 13).**

**What terrible plague and other calamities had shaken the nation to feel its spiritual need? Joel 1:1-4, 6, 7, 12, 17-20. (Compare Deut. 28:15, 38, 42.)**

Through the centuries great swarms of locusts have plagued mankind in different areas of the world. A ton of locusts—just a portion of a swarm—will consume in a day as much as ten elephants or 250 people can eat. The following eyewitness account gives an idea of the devastation of such a plague:

“We had a famine in the 2d year of the war [1915]. . . . The sky was darkened by the gigantic swarms of locusts which covered the whole country, and neither sun nor moon could be seen. All of Palestine was transformed into a desert within a few days. All trees, from their tops to the ground, including the bark, were eaten up clean; our vegetable gardens . . . disappeared as by magic. The following spring there crept forth from hundreds of billions of eggs the new brood, which consumed the little that had been left. The result was a terrific famine.” —*SDA Bible Dictionary*, art., “Locust,” p. 658.

**Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what warning did the prophet see in these natural calamities? Joel 1:15.**

The term “day of the Lord” is a common expression of the prophets. The phrase indicates a time of divine judgment. Joel saw in the terrible natural calamities a divine warning of a day of retribution on Judah. If Joel prophesied in the seventh century BC, the “day of the Lord” of which he wrote was the Babylonian invasions and captivity.

Each local, historical “day of the Lord” in the days of the prophets may be seen as a type of the ultimate day of the Lord. (See 1 Thess. 5:1-4.) Thus we may see in today’s ever-increasing natural calamities the approaching of the return of Christ.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**How am I personally affected by the many TV reports of floods, tornadoes, and other natural disasters?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 276-278.

**Part 3**      **What kind of physical disturbances did Jesus predict would occur before His return as well as before the fall of Jerusalem?**  
**SEISMIC SIGNS**

**“Great earthquakes shall be in divers places” (Luke 21:11).**

“There was a series of major earthquakes between A.D. 31 and A.D. 70. The worst of these were in Crete (46 or 47), Rome (51), Phrygia (60), and Campania (63).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 497.

“More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God’s judgments are in the world. In fire and flood and earthquake He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 97.

**What event marked the opening of the sixth prophetic seal, the seal which spans the “time of the end” period? Rev. 6:12.**

“Inasmuch as the earthquake is followed by the darkening of the sun, and the latter event may be dated in A.D. 1780 . . . , this earthquake has been identified with the Lisbon quake on Nov. 1, 1755, one of the most extensive and severe seismological disturbances ever recorded.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 779.

**What important events were marked by the occurrence of earthquakes? Matt. 27:51, 52; 28:2-4.**

**Continuing destructive earthquakes in the time of the end indicate the tremendous forces locked within the earth. When will they finally convulse and shatter the planet? Rev. 16:17, 18, 20.**

Of this time Ellen White writes: “The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **While earthquakes and related disasters warn us of the end, in what way may Christians react and thus increase the spread of the gospel?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *The Great Controversy*, pp. 304, 305.

**Part 4**  
**FAMINES**

**In addition to civil strife and earthquakes, what other kind of disaster would be more widespread as the world approached its end according to Jesus?**

**“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles” (Mark 13:8).**

Deaths or famines occur when crops fail or food cannot be shipped to dependent areas. Wars, floods, extensive droughts, or insects are the chief culprits in causing famine conditions. Probably the worst famines in recorded history have come in the “time of the end.” Nine million Chinese died in the famine of 1877-1879; another million in a 1902 famine. A million persons died in India in the famine of 1863; a million more in 1900. The most widespread shortage of food occurred in Europe and Asia after World War II. And famines continue to press the populations of large areas of the globe. A belt of hunger encircles the earth on either side of the equator in which two and one-half billion people live, 60 percent of which are malnourished, 20 percent starving. Because of crop failures even large nations have had to import foodstuffs. Although various nations share food products with less fortunate lands, it was openly reported in the U.S. press (1974) that North American food reserves available for emergencies were down to 27 days of world consumption.

**What gracious promises are made by the Creator to His people with regard to food? Matt. 6:25, 26, 31-33; Isa. 33:16.**

Another source of great concern to world leaders is the ever-increasing population—approximately 200,000 new persons per day, or some 75 million per year. At present rates the population of 4 billion is expected nearly to double by the end of the century. Recurrent famine conditions aggravate the ever-increasing need for more food. In spite of man’s scientific achievements, it would appear that he is approaching bankruptcy in this area as in others.

**In the famine years of Elijah’s time how did God care for the needs of the prophet? 1 Kings 17:3-7, 9-16.**

“Though it [Christ’s] is a spiritual kingdom, fear not that your needs for this life will be uncared-for. If you give yourself to God’s service, He who has all power in heaven and earth will provide for your needs.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 99.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 124-132.

**Part 5  
POLLUTION AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Whom do the 24 elders state will be brought to account and destroyed at the close of human probation? Why?**

**“The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants . . . ; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18).**

The late Albert Schweitzer once said, “Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth.” Although the Bible declares plainly that the second advent of Christ will end this age, it is a harrowing fact of modern life that man is capable of destroying the earth.

Since the invention and detonation of an atom bomb in the 1940s, greater and more deadly nuclear armament has been devised. Some six nations presently have atomic weapons, but nuclear technology and resources are such today that any nation could—given sufficient time—manufacture atomic bombs. Man is now capable, were he to enter into an all-out nuclear warfare, literally to destroy civilization and life on the earth.

Modern man is also in danger of perishing by the pollution of his own environment. The wastes of cities and industries are befouling earth’s rivers and lakes, destroying the wildlife and upsetting the balance of nature. Pesticides often destroy animal life and harm man himself. The fumes of automobiles and factories are poisoning the atmosphere.

**Who is the true owner of the earth and its resources? Ps. 24:1.**

**What did God entrust to man? For what purpose? Ps. 115:16; Gen. 1:26, 28.**

God gave man dominion over the earth and its creatures. Thus he has authorization to explore, to study, and to utilize the resources of the natural world for the benefit of human and animal life, thereby bringing glory to the Creator. But God never intended man to exploit nature for selfish ends or to his own destruction. The enormous problems of pollution, together with the inventions of lethal forces capable of global destruction, indicate the rapid approach of the hour when man must give an account of his stewardship before the Judge of all the earth.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**As a Christian, in what ways may I contribute to the improving of my community? Do I have a responsibility in this area?**

**Part 6  
PREVAILING  
PESTILENCES**

**What sign did Jesus foretell would occur in the end time which would afflict the physical health of mankind?**

**“Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences” (Luke 21:11).**

In spite of modern medical knowledge, from time to time various parts of the habitable globe have been terribly ravaged by disease and pestilence. Twenty million died in the world epidemic of influenza (1918-1919) both from the disease and from ensuing complications. Wars, earthquakes, and famines create conditions for the outbreak of disease. Physically weakened, refugees from these disasters are often decimated by epidemics of typhus, cholera, diphtheria, and dysentery. Some devastating diseases seem to strike an area without warning; others, such as venereal disease, are of epidemic proportions due to man's pursuit of sensual pleasure.

**Who is attempting to control this earth and constantly seeks the destruction of its inhabitants? Eph. 2:2.**

“Even now he [Satan] is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 589, 590.

**What promise did God make to His people anciently that is still valid today? Ex. 15:26. If disobedient, what could they expect? Deut. 28:15, 21, 60, 61.**

“We ask to be kept from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, that is stalking with such power through the world; we are then to cooperate with God, observing the laws of health and life. Having done all that we possibly can, we are to keep asking in faith for health and strength. We are to eat that food which will preserve the health of the body.”—*Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 938, 939.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Lung cancer is virtually unknown among lifetime Seventh-day Adventists. What might our witness be if all the divine counsels regarding healthful living were consistently obeyed?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Education*, pp. 195-201.

# 14. HUMAN SOLUTIONS— OR THE SAVIOUR?

**“He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”**  
(Luke 12:54-56).

In these straightforward statements Jesus was referring to the evidences that clearly set Him forth as the long-awaited Messiah. The leaders could see relationships in other areas but refused to acknowledge the relationship between the ministry of Jesus and the predictions of the prophets. The time had arrived. The great needs of both the Roman and the Jewish worlds desperately called for a Saviour. But few thought that God had answered their need in the One who stood before them.

So it is again with many in our day who are busy devising solutions to heal the woes of the age. While good-intentioned men seek to stem the rising tide of a thousand global problems, time is running out. Man's problems are insurmountable. Human answers are as helpful now as a Band-Aid would be if applied to a mortally wounded soldier! The signs of change and decay which surround us call our attention to the fact that the end of this present age is at hand.

But the signs signify more than the demise of a world whose disease is incurable. Collectively they may be compared to the voice announcing the train's arrival at the station just before it comes within view of the waiting passengers.

“The Lord is coming. Lift up your heads and rejoice. Oh, we would think that those who hear the joyful news, who claim to love Jesus, would be

filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. This is the good, the joyful news which should electrify every soul, which should be repeated in our homes, and told to those whom we meet on the street. What more joyful news can be communicated! . . .

“The voice of the true watchman needs now to be heard all along the line, ‘The morning cometh, and also the night.’ The trumpet must give a certain sound, for we are in the great day of the Lord's preparation.”—*Evangelism*, p. 218.

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Uplook and Redemption**  
(Luke 21:28)
2. **The Blessed Hope**  
(Titus 2:11-13)
3. **Resurrection and Reunion**  
(1 Cor. 15:16-18)
4. **Immortality Bestowed**  
(1 Cor. 15:51-54)
5. **The Saints' Inheritance**  
(Heb. 1:1, 2)
6. **Nothing Between**  
(John 17:24)







**Part 1**  
**THE ULOOK AND**  
**REDEMPTION**

**How did Jesus say His people should react when they see the signs of His coming?**

**“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).**

The inhabitants of the world will grow more perplexed as problems multiply. The outlook robs men of hope. But for the Christian the uplook is bright. Jesus is coming again, and this age of sin and suffering is about to end! There are better things ahead!

“Every report of calamity by sea or land is a testimony to the fact that the end of all things is at hand. Wars and rumors of war declare it. Is there a Christian whose pulse does not beat with quickened action as he anticipates the great events opening before us?”—*Evangelism*, p. 219.

**How does Paul picture the condition of the physical earth and God's people as they await their change? Rom. 8:22, 23. (See also Heb. 1:10, 11.)**

“Paul pictures the creation in the pangs of childbirth, as it looks forward to joyful deliverance. . . .

“ . . . [The Christian] senses that the pangs of a world in travail point forward to a time of deliverance, when there shall be ‘new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ ”  
—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 571.

In a sense, the “time of the end” is the birth-pang period of the earth which will grow more intense until the appearance of Christ in glory.

**In spite of the trials a Christian may have, upon what does he rivet his faith and confidence? 2 Cor. 4:16-18.**

“These trials of life are God’s workmen to remove the impurities, infirmities, and roughness from our characters. . . . But as we pass through these trials, as the fires of affliction kindle upon us, we must not keep the eye on the fire which is seen, but let the eye of faith fasten upon the things unseen, the eternal inheritance, the immortal life, the eternal weight of glory; and while we do this the fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 706, 707.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why is it spiritually healthier to contemplate the eternal realities than to focus on present troubles? Is this an escape from reality, or good sense?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*Steps to Christ*, “Rejoicing in the Lord,” pp. 117-126.

**Part 2** As the Christian contemplates the grace of God and the  
**THE BLESSED** blessed hope of Christ's return, how is he prompted to live?  
**HOPE**

**"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).**

"The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness." —*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 406.

**Of what should no Adventist be ignorant? How should he react to the signs of this age? 1 Thess. 5:1-9; Rom. 13:11-14.**

"We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. Oh, how glorious it will be to see Him and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud: 'Homeward bound!' We are nearing the time when Christ will come in power and great glory to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 253.

**When Christ returns, what will be one of the great joys of the redeemed who have been colaborers with Him? 1 Thess. 2:19, 20.**

"Every impulse of the Holy Spirit leading men to goodness and to God is noted in the books of heaven, and in the day of God everyone who has given himself as an instrument for the Holy Spirit's working will be permitted to behold what his life has wrought. . . .

"The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls!"—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 310, 311.

**What hope sustained the imprisoned Paul as he faced an inevitable execution? 2 Tim. 4:6-8.**

**THINK IT THROUGH** What would life mean to you if there were no advent hope?

**FURTHER STUDY** *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 305, 309-312.

**Part 3  
RESURRECTION  
AND REUNION**

**How vital to the Christian faith is the doctrine of the resurrection?**

**"If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:16-18).**

Death is an enemy, the fruitage of sin (1 Cor. 15:26; Rom. 5:12). It is no respecter of persons. There is an empty cradle, a vacant chair, a missing loved one in most homes. One of the most precious truths of Scripture is its truth about the resurrection. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). "Because I live," said Jesus, "ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

**What did Jesus promise to those who believe in Him should they die? John 6:40.**

"Look to Jesus. Trust in Jesus, whether you live or die. He is your Redeemer. He is our Life-giver. If you fall asleep in Jesus He will bring you forth from the grave to a glorious immortality. May He give you peace and comfort and hope and joy from henceforth."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 254.

**At what great event will the righteous dead of all ages be resurrected and united with the last living generation of God's people? 1 Thess. 4:16-18.**

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Why is the Bible teaching of the resurrection more comforting than a belief that one goes to his reward at death?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Desire of Ages*, p. 804; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.

**Part 4**  
**IMMORTALITY**  
**BESTOWED**

**When and in what manner will the gift of immortality be bestowed upon the redeemed?**

**“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:51-54).**

The resurrection is a strong hope to the Christian, but as mortals we cannot fathom the endlessness of an immortal existence! Here “we spend our years as a tale that is told,” (Ps. 90:9), but at the resurrection we will begin to live a life that will never end.

“Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated were united, never more to part.”—*Early Writings*, p. 287.

**Our immortal bodies will be like whose glorified body? Phil. 3:20, 21.**

“The redeemed are not only to possess Christ’s character but also to be clothed in an immortal body similar to that possessed by Jesus since His resurrection. . . . This transformation completes the redemptive work. . . . The Christian is completely conformed to the likeness of his Master.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 172.

**How does Paul explain the nature of the immortal body? Is personal identity lost? 1 Cor. 15:35-38, 42-44, 50, 53.**

“Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. . . .

“ . . . The planted kernel decays, but there comes forth a new kernel. . . . A much finer material will compose the human body, for it is a new creation, a new birth.”—Ellen G. White *Comments*, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1093.

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 258, 259.

**Part 5**  
**THE SAINTS'**  
**INHERITANCE**

**Whom has God the Father appointed heir of the earth?**

"God. . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1, 2).

**What relationship do the redeemed have with Christ in regard to His inheritance? Rom. 8:17.**

**What will God do to the earth before it becomes the eternal home of the saved? 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12, 13.**

"The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. . . .

"There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there. There 'they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them.' Isaiah 49:10."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 17, 18.

**What was God's original purpose for the earth? Isa. 45:18.**

"The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored. [Isa. 45:18 quoted] . . . God's original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. 'The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.' Psalm 37:29."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

**Describe, as represented to John, the New Jerusalem which will be the capital of the new earth. Rev. 21:2, 9-27.**

"There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the widespread plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

**THINK IT THROUGH**

**Is it profitable to contemplate in imagination the glories of the new earth even though such are beyond our knowing? Why or why not?**

**FURTHER STUDY**

*The Great Controversy*, pp. 675-678.

**Part 6**      **What request did Jesus make of the Father a short time**  
**NOTHING BETWEEN**      **before His crucifixion?**

**“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).**

Man was made in the image of God so that he might have communion and fellowship with his Maker. “Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his [Adam’s] high privilege.”—*Education*, p. 15. By causing man to join him in sinful rebellion against God, Satan had thought to estrange man from his Sovereign forever. But, through the carrying out of the plan of salvation, that blessed communion will be fully restored. The bond between God and the redeemed will be, in a sense, even closer than it was originally, for the humanity of Jesus links His earthly “brethren” to the divine center of all.

**Although the Deity dwells in such glory as to be unapproachable by sinful men (1 Tim. 6:16), how will it be in the new earth? Rev. 22:3, 4.**

“The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly.’ 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 676, 677.

**What beings will there be in the ages of eternity with whom the redeemed can have fellowship? Rev. 7:9-12.**

“There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together ‘the whole family in heaven and earth’ (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

**THINK IT THROUGH**      **What are some of the questions you would like to ask the**  
   **Father and the Son in the age to come?**

**FURTHER STUDY**      *Education*, pp. 301-309.

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Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1978 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "God the Creator."

## First Lesson

**GOD THE CREATOR. Memory text, Jer. 10:12.**

1. *God Above All Gods (Jer. 10:11, 12)*
2. *Giver of Life (Ps. 36:9)*
3. *Satan Cannot Create Life (Gen. 3:4)*
4. *The Great Sustainer (Isa. 40:26)*
5. *No Beginning—No End (Ps. 90:2)*
6. *Giver of Eternal Life (1 John 5:11, 12)*

## Second Lesson

**CREATION. Memory text, Isa. 44:24.**

1. *The Beginning (Gen. 1:1)*
2. *The Purpose (Isa. 43:7)*
3. *The Method of Creation (Ps. 33:6, 9)*
4. *The Time of Creation (Gen. 1:31; 2:2)*
5. *In His Image (Gen. 1:27)*
6. *The Results (Gen. 1:31)*

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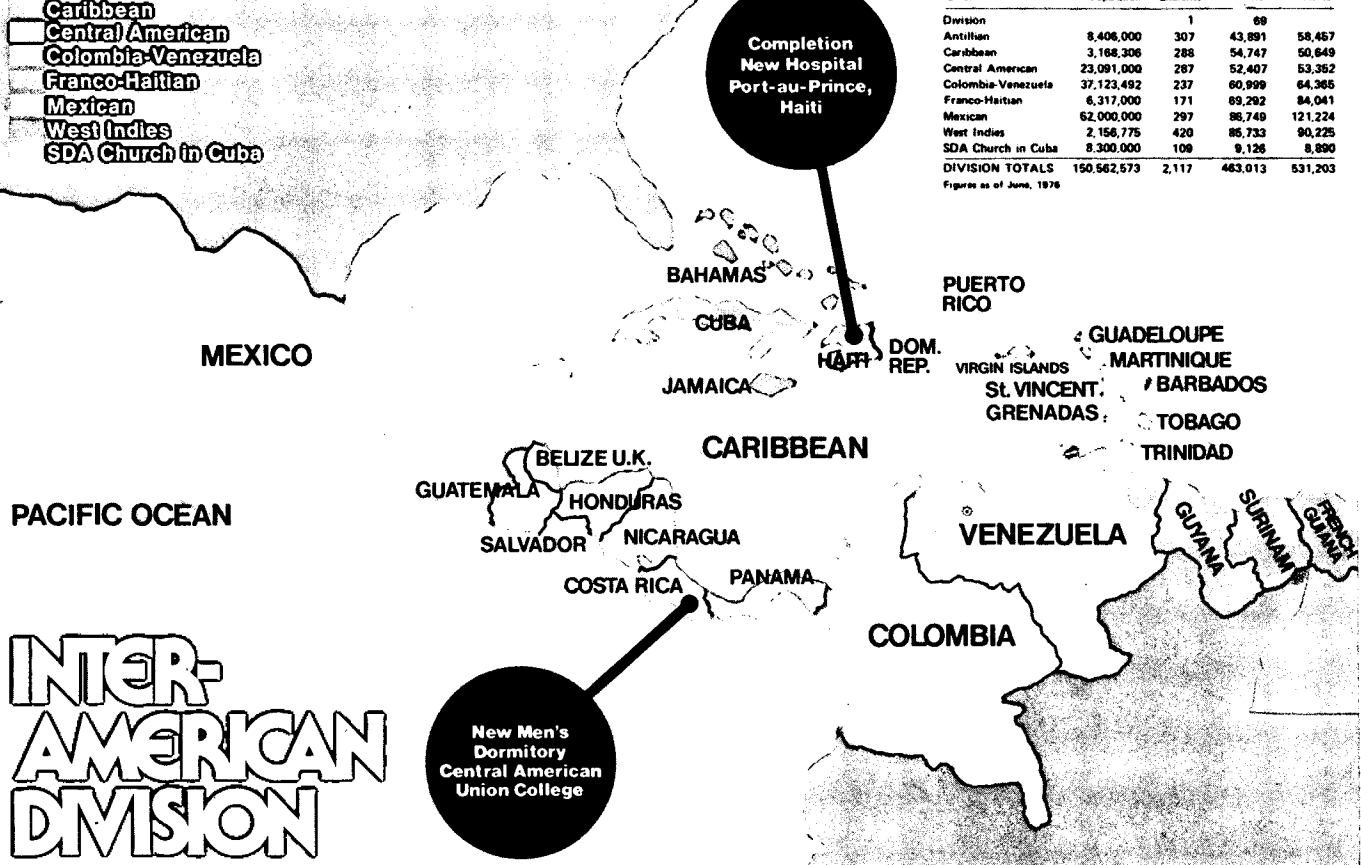
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SDA Church in Cuba	8,300,000	109	9,126
<b>DIVISION TOTALS</b>	<b>150,562,573</b>	<b>2,117</b>	<b>463,013</b>

Figures as of June, 1976



# INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION