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APRIL-JUNE 1980

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

THE WITNESS OF JESUS



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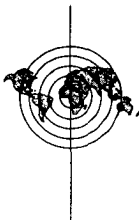
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Sabbath School Members
World Divisions of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Dear Members:

I am pleased to bring you greetings from the 451,329 Sabbath School members in North America. We, your brothers and sisters, feel very close to you in the work of the gospel as we approach the day of His coming.

Some do not think of North America as having any special needs, but there is on this continent a great variety of challenging situations.

For instance, there is the Northeastern Academy, an inner city institution serving the needs of a large number of black youth. The great need here is for additional vocational training classrooms.

Then there is the great challenge of Quebec, one of the largest French-speaking communities in the world. We must train indigenous talent to work for their own people in this difficult area of endeavor. To establish a French-speaking academy of Montreal is the priority item for the church in Quebec.

The American Indian has been strangely neglected. We have done some work among these true native Americans but not nearly enough. Your Thirteenth Sabbath offering will help to expand the outpatient clinic at Monument Valley Hospital in the Nevada-Utah Conference and assist in the financing and equipping of the Pine Ridge School vocational arts building in South Dakota.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support of the North American Thirteenth Sabbath projects in the past. It is the liberal soul that is blessed and enriched. Heaven's law of reciprocity wills it so.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Bradford



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Our daily study is more than a perfect record.
Through it comes knowledge of "The Word."

Your Adult Sabbath School Lesson is designed to
fill the need.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

The Sabbath School lessons this quarter are devoted to the study of the testimony of Jesus as revealed in the book of Revelation. They are not an exhaustive study of the entire book, but rather a careful examination of the prophetic messages that the faithful and true Witness addresses to His church, exhorting her to bear her testimony during every period of her history, from the apostolic age to the end of time.

Particular attention is given to the messages that directly concern us today: first, the one addressed to the church of Laodicea and then those of the three angels of Revelation 14. Pioneers of the advent movement studied these messages profoundly and systematically. Their faith and their testimony depend upon that study. Is that not also true today?

"Many have entertained the idea that the book of Revelation is a sealed book, and they will not devote time and study to its mysteries. They say that they are to keep looking to the glories of salvation, and that the mysteries revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos are worthy of less consideration than these. But God does not so regard this book. . . .

" . . . It should be studied with reverential awe."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 954.

"Let none think, because they cannot explain the meaning of every symbol in the Revelation, that it is useless for them to search this book in an effort to know the meaning of the truth it contains. The One who revealed these mysteries to John will give the diligent searcher for truth a foretaste of heavenly things. Those whose hearts are open to the reception of truth will be enabled to understand its teachings, and will be granted the blessing promised to those who 'hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 584, 585.

The finishing of God's work on earth, which was entrusted to the remnant church, depends upon our understanding of the testimony of Jesus and upon our fidelity in proclaiming God's last message for humanity as revealed in the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. In order for our understanding to grow, we must study it over and over again. Only in this way can we render an effective testimony.

"When we as a people understand what this book [Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 113.

March 30 to April 5

I. Jesus, the Faithful and True Witness



“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen” (Rev. 1:17, 18).

These are the words that open the dialogue between the prophet on Patmos and Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness. It is also as the faithful and true Witness that Jesus delivers His message to the church of Laodicea, and, finally, when He appears sitting upon a white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords, His name is given as “Faithful and True” (Rev. 19:11).

All the work of Christ bears the hallmark of incomparable fidelity. Speaking of the faithfulness of Moses, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but,” he adds, “Christ was faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope” (Heb. 3:5, 6, RSV).

Jesus is not only the faithful Witness; He is also God’s only true or perfect witness. It was to bear witness of His Father that Jesus came to this world, and He did this to deliver us from the power of delusion and make us participants in the “glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Heb. 2:1-4).

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Faithful and True Witness**
(Rev. 1:5; 3:14)
- 2. Witness of Truth**
(John 18:37)
- 3. The Witness of God**
(1 John 5:9-12)
- 4. The Power of God**
- 5. True Words of God**
(Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:16)
- 6. Blessed Is He That Reads, Hears, and Keeps**
(Rev. 1:3)

**Part 1
THE FAITHFUL
AND TRUE
WITNESS**

What unique title does the book of Revelation give to Jesus Christ?

**"From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5).
"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness"
(Rev. 3:14).**

The Revelation is the only book in the New Testament that gives the title of "witness" to our Lord. Jesus is the perfect witness, the only authentic and true witness. All other witnesses named in the Bible are cited because of their connection with Jesus. They are not simply called "witnesses," but "witness of Jesus."

Of whom is Jesus the faithful and true witness? In what sense? John 1:18; 1 John 5:20.

By nature Jesus is God's authentic witness. He is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. 1:3). Being the true expression of the nature of God, Jesus alone is able to reveal the only true God, of whom He is the perfect expression of His character, His mind, His will. "If ye had known me," Jesus said, "ye should have known my Father also. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7-9).

"He [Christ] is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1131.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent is Jesus the source of knowledge for me concerning the only true God?

"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me" (John 7:28, 29). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 14:6, 7).

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 19, 20.

**Part 2
WITNESS
OF TRUTH**

For what purpose did Jesus come into this world?

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

As the authentic and true witness, the testimony of Jesus can only pertain to truth. "John frequently . . . uses the word [truth] in a wider sense to denote what is true in things pertaining to God and the duties of man, or in a more restricted sense the facts taught in the Christian religion concerning God and the execution of His purposes through Christ. This revelation had been given by Jesus (ch. 1:17). He, in fact, was 'the truth' (ch. 14:6). He was 'full of grace and truth' (ch. 1:14)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 989, 990.

"In His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression, not only of His own life experience, but of His own character. Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth."—*Education*, pp. 78, 79.

Where, today, as in former times, do we find witness borne to Jesus and to truth? John 5:39; 17:17.

The close relationship between Jesus and the Scriptures is not sufficiently emphasized. To the one as to the other, the Bible gives the name "Word of God." Whereas Christ is the Word of God made human flesh, the Scriptures are the Word of God in human language. Divinely inspired, the Written Word is only a means. Its testimony leads to a knowledge of the Living Word of God. Actually the witness and the testimony are inseparable—Christ is revealed to us through the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are given to reveal Jesus Christ to us.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent is the witness of Jesus, borne by the Written Word, the foundation of my spiritual life?

"The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 3:11. 'There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts 4:12. Christ, the Word, the revelation of God,—the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life,—is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 148, 149.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 402, 403.

Part 3
THE WITNESS
OF GOD

What is inherent in the witness of God expressed in Jesus?

"This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. . . . And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:9-12).

He who confesses the deity of Jesus receives the testimony of God. In this way God imparts to him the very life of the Son. Gospel truth becomes his truth, the premise of his life. The object of the divine witness is our quickening through communion with the Son of God. To him who believes His testimony God gives the eternal life that is in His Son. From that moment he shares the life that proceeds from the Father through the unique Mediator of life, Jesus Christ.

"Only the believer in Christ can receive life everlasting. Only by continually feeding on Christ's flesh and blood can we have the assurance that we are partakers of the divine nature. No one should be indifferent on this subject, saying, If we are honest, it is no matter what we believe. You cannot with safety surrender any seed of vital truth in order to please yourself or anybody else. Do not seek to avoid the cross. If we receive no light from the Sun of Righteousness, we have no connection with the Source of all light; and if this life and light do not abide in us, we can never be saved."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 299.

What promise is made to him who receives the testimony borne by Jesus? John 1:12, 13.

"John here brands as error the belief that simply because Christ died for all men, all will therefore be saved. Marked equally false is the belief that God predestines certain men to be saved and others to be damned. John emphatically declares that the decisive factor lies with men themselves—'as many' as receive and believe are granted access to sonship."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 900.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can I say with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ"?

"This is the most perfect interpretation in a few words, in all the Scriptures, of what it means to be a Christian. This is the whole truth of the gospel. Paul understood what many seem unable to comprehend. How intensely in earnest he was! His words show that his mind was centered in Christ, that his whole life was bound up with his Lord. Christ was the author, the support, and the source of his life."—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 903.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Test of Discipleship," pp. 62-65.

Part 4
THE POWER
OF GOD

What are other effects of the testimony of Jesus in the life of the believer?

The testimony of Jesus as presented to us in the Gospels, and in all Scripture, is truly "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Under the imperceptible influence of the Spirit, the Written Word becomes the instrument by which God effects the salvation of man, the sword of the Spirit by which He persuades the sinner to pass from death unto life.

Here are 10 ways in which God's Word brings about transformation in the life:

1. It "lighteth every man" (John 1:9).
2. It awakens the conscience (Heb. 4:12, 13).
3. It serves as judge (John 12:48).
4. It leads to faith (Rom. 10:17).
5. It begets new life (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18).
6. It frees from the power of sin (John 8:31, 32).
7. It purifies the soul (1 Peter 1:22; John 15:3).
8. It sanctifies believer and church (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26).
9. It determines the Christian witness (Phil. 2:15, 16).
10. It leads to the Source of life eternal (John 5:24, 39).

"Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink. And as in the natural, so in the spiritual economy; it is that which our minds dwell upon which sustains the spiritual nature. . . . [John 6:63 quoted]. Spiritual life must be sustained by communion with Christ through His Word. The mind must dwell upon it, the heart must be filled with it. The Word of God laid up in the heart and sacredly cherished and obeyed, through the power of the grace of Christ can make man right, and keep him right; but every human influence, every earthly invention, is powerless to give strength and wisdom to man. It cannot restrain passion, or correct deformity of character. Unless the truth of God controls the heart, the conscience will be warped."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 125.

THINK IT THROUGH

Has the divine Communicator been able to form my character after the likeness of Christ through the Written Word?

"Even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature. Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development. Created to find in God his highest joy, he can find in nothing else that which can quiet the cravings of the heart, can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God's word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development."—*Education*, pp. 124, 125.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "What to Do With Doubt," pp. 109-113.

Part 5
TRUE WORDS
OF GOD

How should we consider the words in the book of Revelation as well as those in all the Bible?

"He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:9).

"He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:5).

"He said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true" (Rev. 22:6).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

"It takes all of eternity to unfold the glories and bring out the precious treasures of the Word of God. Do not let any living man come to you and begin to dissect God's Word, telling what is revelation, what is inspiration and what is not, without a rebuke. Tell all such they simply do not know. They simply are not able to comprehend the things of the mystery of God. What we want is to inspire faith. We want no one to say, 'This I will reject, and this will I receive,' but we want to have implicit faith in the Bible as a whole and as it is."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 919.

What solemn warning does the Saviour address explicitly to anyone who takes the liberty of manipulating His message in Revelation and, by extension, in all the Bible? Rev. 22:18, 19.

"Such are the warnings which God has given to guard men against changing in any manner that which He has revealed or commanded. These solemn denunciations apply to all who by their influence lead men to regard lightly the law of God. . . . The written word, the law of God, will measure the character of every man and condemn all whom this unerring test shall declare wanting."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 268.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are my purposes in searching the Scriptures? To find something to uphold my opinions? To know what God says?

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles. Never let mortal man sit in judgment upon the Word of God or pass sentence as to how much of this is inspired and how much is not inspired, and that this is more inspired than some other portions. God warns him off that ground. God has not given him any such work to do."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 919.

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pp. 386, 387; *Education*, pp. 189-191.

**Part 6
BLESSED IS HE
THAT READS,
HEARS, AND
KEEPS**

What promise is made at the beginning of the book of Revelation?

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3).

The Revelation contains seven beatitudes (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). The first and the sixth are related to the book itself. The first declares, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear . . . , and keep"; and the sixth repeats, "Blessed is he that keepeth" the words of this prophecy.

A benediction is pronounced upon those who pay due regard to this communication. The blessing is promised to encourage a study of this book. We are not to weary of it because of its apparently mystical symbols. Christ can give us understanding.

"There should be a closer and more diligent study of the Revelation, and a more earnest presentation of the truths it contains—truths which concern all who are living in these last days."—*Evangelism*, p. 197.

Who alone will finally receive a blessing? Rev. 22:7.

"He that keepeth" is the one for whom the revelation of God had not been in vain. Jesus declares, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28); and again, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it" (Luke 8:21). He also points out in Matt. 7:24-27 the difference between those who merely hear and those who hear and do the words of Jesus. This hearing and doing is the patience of the saints. (See Rev. 14:12.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What can a study of Revelation do for me?

"When we as a people understand what this book [Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it. . . .

"When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart."

"If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 113, 114, 118.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 112-114.

2. The Testimony of Jesus



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

Since Jesus has been presented to us as the incomparable Witness, “the faithful and true witness,” He must perforce have a testimony. He revealed that testimony to His servants the prophets who, by “the Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . , testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:11).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2). Jesus justified the prophetic word when He came into the world; He bore witness to the truth and to His Father who sent Him. (See John 5:36.)

However, Jesus was unable to reveal all that He wished during His earthly ministry, even to His disciples. “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). “But,” He promised, “when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:26, 27).

This promise was realized in a special way in the revelations made to John, “who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw” (Rev. 1:2). Repeatedly the apostle was

told to write the things that had been revealed to him and to send them to the seven churches designated by Jesus.

“In the providence of God, John was placed where Christ could give him a wonderful revelation of Himself and of divine truth for the enlightenment of the churches.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 581.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Testimony of Jesus**
(Rev. 1:2, 9)
- 2. The Faithful Witnesses**
(Rev. 1:9)
- 3. The Spirit of Prophecy**
(Rev. 19:10)
- 4. The Gift of Prophecy**
(Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:28)
- 5. The Remnant Church**
(Rev. 12:17)
- 6. Write to the Seven Churches**
(Rev. 1:11)

Part 1
THE TESTIMONY
OF JESUS

How is the message given by the "faithful and true witness" designated in the book of Revelation?

"John . . . bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"I John . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:2, 9).

Repeatedly in the book of Revelation it speaks of "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:2, 9; 12:17), "the testimony of Jesus" (ch. 19:10), or simply the "testimony" (ch. 6:9; 11:7; 12:11). "In the Greek this phrase [testimony of Jesus Christ] may be understood either as the 'testimony' (or 'witness') Christians bear concerning Jesus, or as the 'testimony' (or 'witness') that originates with Jesus and is revealed to His church through the prophets. . . . A comparison with ch. 19:10 clearly favors the latter interpretation. There the 'testimony of Jesus' is defined as the 'spirit of prophecy,' meaning that Jesus is witnessing to the church through the medium of prophecy."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 812.

What other expressions are associated with "the testimony of Jesus"? Rev. 1:2, 9; 12:17.

The expression "testimony of Jesus" is associated with either "the word of God" or "the commandments of God." The expression does not deal with the witness of the Scriptures, but of Jesus Himself. The testimony of the Revelation is the fact that Jesus is the "Word of God" (Rev. 19:13), so that, in reality, the two are one and the same. This parallelism is also used in Revelation 1:1, 2.

THINK IT THROUGH

How important to me is the testimony of Jesus revealed to the prophet John on Patmos?

"We have been given a message exceeding in importance any other message ever entrusted to mortals. This message Christ came in person to the Isle of Patmos to present to John. He told him to write down what he saw and heard during his vision, that the churches might know what was to come upon the earth. . . .

"The word, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,' is applicable to many living in this time. God calls for immediate repentance and reformation. It is time for a great change to take place among the people who are looking for the second appearing of their Lord. Soon strange things will take place. God will hold us responsible for the way in which we treat the truth."—*Medical Ministry*, pp. 37, 38.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 578-581.

Part 2
THE FAITHFUL
WITNESSES

What happened to John because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus?

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9).

"In exiling John, the enemies of truth had hoped to silence forever the voice of God's faithful witness; but on Patmos the disciple received a message, the influence of which was to continue to strengthen the church till the end of time. Though not released from the responsibility of their wrong act, those who banished John became instruments in the hands of God to carry out Heaven's purpose; and the very effort to extinguish the light placed the truth in bold relief."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 581.

What has happened to other witnesses for the same reason? Rev. 6:9; 20:4.

"When the fifth seal was opened, John the Revelator in vision saw beneath the altar the company that were slain for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 968.

"The enemy of righteousness left nothing undone in his effort to stop the work committed to the Lord's builders. . . . Like the apostles, many of them fell at their post, but the building of the temple went steadily forward. The workmen were slain, but the work advanced."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 598.

THINK IT THROUGH

What valuable lesson can I learn from the experience of those Christians who have the "testimony of Jesus"?

"In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plotting of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty. Often the gospel laborer carries on his work amid storms of persecution, bitter opposition, and unjust reproach. At such times let him remember that the experience to be gained in the furnace of trial and affliction is worth all the pain it costs. Thus God brings His children near to Him, that He may show them their weakness and His strength. He teaches them to lean on Him. Thus He prepares them to meet emergencies, to fill positions of trust, and to accomplish the great purpose for which their powers were given them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 574, 575.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 649-652.

Part 3
THE SPIRIT
OF PROPHECY

What meaning did John give to the expression "the testimony of Jesus"?

"I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

According to this scripture, the testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy are identical; in other words, all true prophets have the testimony of Jesus, and all who have the testimony of Jesus are prophets in the sense that they are mouthpieces or witnesses for Jesus.

"The word 'prophecy' describes any inspired message communicated by God through a prophet. . . . Prophecy may be a prediction of future events, though more commonly it is not. The expression 'spirit of prophecy' refers specifically to the 'manifestation of the Spirit' in the form of a special gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires the recipient and enables him to speak authoritatively as a representative of God (1 Cor. 12:7-10) when 'moved by the Holy Ghost' to do so (2 Peter 1:21). The context of the expression in Rev. 19:10 defines 'the testimony of Jesus' and 'the spirit of prophecy' in this sense."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 876.

What other detail proves that angels do indeed confer the testimony of Jesus to prophets? Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9.

"The close relationship between the 'testimony of Jesus' and prophecy is further demonstrated by a comparison between chs. 19:10 and 22:9. In ch. 19:10 the angel identifies himself as 'thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus,' and in ch. 22:9 as 'thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets.' Thus, on the reasonable conclusion that these two expressions of the angel are parallel, those who have the testimony of Jesus are identified with the prophets. Since it is the distinctive work of the prophets to bear messages from Jesus to the people . . . , the interpretation that the testimony of Jesus refers to the 'testimony,' or 'witness,' that Jesus bears to the church is strongly supported."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 812.

THINK IT THROUGH

What attention do I give to the prophecies of Revelation?

"The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people. . . .

" . . . Will not those who profess to have a knowledge of the truth read the testimony given to John by Christ?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 302.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. viii-xii.

Part 4
THE GIFT OF
PROPHECY

What can be assumed by the fact that the promise of the gift of prophecy was made to the church for the same reason as were the other gifts? Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:28.

"New Testament writers nowhere suggest that the gift of prophecy was to end with the apostolic church. On the contrary, Paul declares that, with the other gifts of the Spirit he lists in Eph. 4:11, it was to continue 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (v. 13). All of the other special gifts mentioned in v. 11 are still needed in the church, and men and women are still qualified by the Holy Spirit to fill these offices. Why should the office of prophet be considered an exception?"—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 876.

What solemn warning did the apostles give? 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1.

"Our Lord warned that the Christian church would be troubled by false prophets, particularly as the time for His second advent should draw near (Matt. 24:11, 24). The deceptive power of these false prophets was to be so great that if it were possible they would 'deceive the very elect.' The fact that Christ warned against a false manifestation of the prophetic gift prior to His second coming argues strongly that there would also be a genuine manifestation of this gift, as otherwise He could simply have warned against any and all prophets who might arise."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 876, 877.

THINK IT THROUGH

By what criteria am I able to judge the true prophet from the false?

"The Scriptures specify certain standards by which those who profess to speak for God are to be measured: (1) The personal life of the prophet will be in harmony with the teachings of Scripture (Matt. 7:15-20). (2) His messages will likewise accord with Scripture. (3) His ministry will exalt Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men (1 John 4:2). (4) His ministry will be confirmed by fulfilled predictions (Jer. 28:9; cf. 1 Sam. 3:19). It is reasonable also to expect that the messages he bears will be of practical benefit to the church, that they will be timely and appropriate, that they will be free from human influence, and that when he is in open vision his experience will be similar to that of the Bible prophets."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 877.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 671-676.

Part 5
THE REMNANT
CHURCH

What two characteristics distinguish the remnant church?

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

"The commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus are united. They are to be clearly presented to the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 117.

These two distinctive marks characterize the remnant church for the following reasons: (1) "The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 582. (2) Jesus wished to entrust a special testimony to the remnant church, the church charged with the responsibility of proclaiming His last message to the world. "Seventh-day Adventists . . . believe that the 'remnant' will be distinguished by the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in their midst. The 'testimony of Jesus Christ,' they believe, is the witness of Jesus in their midst through the medium of the prophetic gift."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 812.

How can we justify our claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the church of the remnant? In Hebrew the word translated "remnant" means "those who escape," "what remains," or "what is left." Those who escaped from Assyrian captivity are called a "remnant." (See 2 Chron. 30:6.) The same word is applied to those who escape from mystical Babylon.

How is the spirit of prophecy evident in the Adventist Church? Seventh-day Adventists have ground to believe that the gift of prophecy was evidenced in the ministry and writings of Ellen White. She was active as God's messenger among us from 1844 to 1915. However, we do not consider her writings to be a substitute for or an addition to the Bible. They are simply, she explained, "a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."—*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 125. These writings do not present a new path to salvation; rather they lead to a better understanding of the plan of salvation revealed in the Bible.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I have complete confidence in the testimony of Jesus given to our church through the messages of Ellen White?

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 48.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 384-386.

**Part 6
WRITE TO
THE SEVEN
CHURCHES**

To whom was the prophet instructed to make known the testimony of Jesus?

“What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea” (Rev. 1:11).

John was told several times to put into writing all that he had seen, all the things which must shortly come to pass, and that which the Lord had sent His angel to make known unto him. He was instructed to send the book to the seven churches.

“The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.

What is the essential content of the testimony of Jesus to the seven churches? The Revelation is, first of all, a revelation of Jesus Christ (ch. 1:1). No longer as the suffering Messiah, but as the risen Lord, who is “alive for evermore” (ch. 1:18), now He works for His church at the right hand of the throne of God (ch. 5:7) in the heavenly sanctuary (ch. 11:19; 15:5), until the day when He will return in the clouds of heaven (ch. 1:7; 19:11-16).

Second, the Revelation is a disclosure of “things which must shortly come to pass” (ch. 1:1), information which Christ wished to reveal to His church. This is why He addressed a special message to each of the seven symbolic churches. Besides local and historical application, each of the messages has spiritual value for all the other churches, and thus for today.

Finally, the Revelation contains a special testimony for the remnant church, the one entrusted with the mission of preaching “the everlasting gospel” (ch. 14:6). That too will be the subject of our study, for we know that on the understanding of it depend, not only the faith of the Adventist community, but also the success of its mission in the world.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I picture Jesus?

Our picture of a risen Christ, victorious over death, and “alive for evermore,” depends essentially on the visions recorded in the book of Revelation. Through the study of the Revelation, Seventh-day Adventists rediscovered the all-powerful, living Jesus described by John, along with the unique truth of Christ’s working for His people in the heavenly sanctuary. This is the way He chose to reveal Himself in each of the visions in the Revelation.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 737, 738.

3. The Churches of the Catacombs



"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

The seven letters of the book of Revelation are addressed to the churches located in Asia Minor, modern Turkey. The basic meaning of the letters is in the messages sent to these literal churches. Another level of meaning is in the messages contained in the letters and applied to the church universal. A third area of meaning is in application of each church to a period of church history. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.) It is in this last way that we shall study the letters to the seven churches.

Ephesus represents the apostolic church, spanning the years 31 to 100 of the Christian Era, and Smyrna is the church of imperial persecution, A.D. 100 to 313, the year that Constantine issued the Edict of Milan decreeing equal rights for all religions.

There are three possible reasons why Ephesus was named first. First, because of the importance of the city. It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and residence of the proconsuls. It was most famous, however, as an important religious center, home of a great temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, called Diana by the Romans. (See Acts 19:23-34.)

Second, because of its seniority. The Ephesian church was the first Christian church established by Paul in Asia in the year A.D. 52, and it rapidly became an important Christian center. According to tradition the apostle John settled in Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and it was from there that he was deported to Patmos, probably between A.D. 96 and 98.

And finally, the symbolic meaning of the name—desirable—no doubt prompted the choice of Ephesus to represent the first, or apostolic, church.

The church in Smyrna is mentioned only in the Revelation. It probably owes its origin to Paul's missionary work during the three years he spent in Ephesus. (Compare Acts 19:10; 20:1-3.) The city of Smyrna was founded about 1200 B.C. Beautifully situated along the Aegean seacoast, some 30 miles north of Ephesus, it was extolled by ancient peoples for its marvelous location. They called it the "Ornament of Asia." It was also the birthplace of the illustrious Greek poet, Homer. Smyrna still exists and is known as "Izmir."

The name "Smyrna" means "myrrh," a derivative of *muron*. It is a substance with a bitter, aromatic odor, used for embalming the dead. No other name could better symbolize the painful experience through which the "church of the catacombs" had to pass because of imperial persecution. At the same time, it is an example of what a church in this world should be, a pleasing fragrance for Christ.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Message to the Apostolic Church**
(Rev. 2:1)
2. **"Thou Hast Left Thy First Love"**
(Rev. 2:2, 3, 6)
3. **"Do the First Works"**
(Rev. 2:5)
4. **"To Him That Overcometh"**
(Rev. 2:7)
5. **Message to the Persecuted Church**
(Rev. 2:8)
6. **The Crown of Life**
(Rev. 2:10)

Part 1
MESSAGE TO THE
APOSTOLIC
CHURCH

Unto whom is each of the seven letters to the churches addressed?

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write” (Rev. 2:1).

John was instructed to write to the angel of each of the seven churches. In the original this can designate a human messenger as well as a celestial being. Here it refers to the one to whom God has entrusted weighty responsibilities in His church. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 586.)

What is the meaning of the symbols under which Jesus presents Himself to the church in Ephesus? Rev. 2:1; 1:20.

“Christ is represented as holding the seven stars in His right hand. This assures us that no church faithful to its trust need fear coming to nought, for not a star that has the protection of Omnipotence can be plucked out of the hand of Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 586.

What relation is there between the symbol of the candlesticks and the warning that Jesus addresses to the church in Ephesus? Rev. 2:5.

“In the message to the church at Ephesus, Christ is represented as holding the seven stars in His hand, and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is represented as ‘walking’ among them, thus illustrating His constant diligence in behalf of His church. . . . These figures are to be carefully studied by the undershepherds, and faithfully applied to their own experience, that they may not lose sight of their great privilege of securing light from the Source of all light, and giving it in turn to those for whom they labor.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 956.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can we do to assure that our candlestick will not be removed out of its place?

“What greater delusion can deceive the human mind than that in which individuals flatter themselves that they have the truth, that they are on the only sure foundation, and that God accepts their works because they are actively engaged in some work in the cause of God, when they are sinning against Him by walking contrary to the expressed will of God? . . .

“The standard must be elevated. The work must have a higher mold. There must be a coming out from the customs and practices of the world and being separate. There must be a coming up upon a higher platform by both ministers and people.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 451, 452.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 586, 587.

Part 2
"THOU HAST
LEFT THY
FIRST LOVE"

What message of commendation was sent to the church in Ephesus?

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

"Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (Rev. 2:2, 3, 6).

"To each of the seven churches Christ declares, 'I know thy works.' His admonition is that of One who is fully acquainted with problems of each church and who is therefore able to recommend an appropriate and effective solution."—S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 743.

The commendation made to the church at Ephesus rested upon its works, its labor and endurance, the deeds which exhibited its character. The Ephesian church did not tolerate evildoers and false brethren any more than it did false shepherds and false apostles. Moreover, the church did not become weary in its afflictions for Christ. In verse 6 special mention is made of its attitude toward the Nicolaitanes, members of a heretical sect whose works displeased God.

What reproof is directed to the church in Ephesus? Rev. 2:4.

"At the first the experience of the church at Ephesus was marked with childlike simplicity and fervor. . . .

"But after a time the zeal of the believers began to wane, and their love for God and for one another grew less. Coldness crept into the church. Some forgot the wonderful manner in which they had received the truth."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 578-580.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does the experience of the Ephesians concern me?

"I am instructed to say that these words [Rev. 2:4, 5] are applicable to Seventh-day Adventist churches in their present condition. The love of God has been lost, and this means the absence of love for one another. . . . Great light has been given to her. She has had abundant opportunity for bearing much fruit. But selfishness has come in, and God says, 'I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.'"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 25, 1902.

An important lesson from the experience of the Ephesian community is that love cannot be replaced by other virtues. The lack of love renders the other virtues hollow and empty. (See 1 Corinthians 13.)

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 167-173.

Part 3
"DO THE
FIRST WORKS"

What triple counsel is given to the Ephesian Christians?

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5).

Spiritual decline has only one cure—the one recommended by Jesus. It bears the three characteristics of genuine conversion: an awakening of conscience, repentance, and works of faith. A call to repentance is sounded in all of the messages to the churches with the exception of those addressed to Smyrna and Philadelphia.

What did the Witness say would happen if the believers did not repent? Verse 5.

The Lord is always ready to act on behalf of His children, be it to strengthen or to comfort them. If they do not turn from Him, He will continue to work, to lead them to repentance. However, divine warnings will not continue if they go unheeded. Unless there is repentance, the Lord will remove their candlestick out of its place and bestow on others the responsibility of lighting the world, which is the high mission of the church. (See Matt. 21:41.)

The apostolic church was essentially of Jewish origin. After the death of the apostles and the destruction of Jerusalem a change took place. This warning could well have been realized by the transfer of the candlestick from the Judeo-Christian church, represented by the church at Ephesus, to a Christian church of pagan background, represented by that of Smyrna.

THINK IT THROUGH

Of what do I personally need to repent?

"Has the candlestick been removed out of its place? I call upon all who are resting unconcerned in their present state of spiritual deadness, to arouse and arise from the dead, and Christ will give them light. Many rest as content as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night were sheltering and guiding them. Many profess to know God, and yet deny Him in their works. They reckon themselves among God's peculiar, chosen people, who have a special, solemn message entrusted to their keeping to sanctify their lives and to give to the world, and yet the power of the truth is scarcely felt or manifested in our midst in zealous work for God. How great is our darkness, and we know it not! The light has not diminished, but we walk not in its rays."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 451.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Repentance," pp. 23-25.

Part 4
"TO HIM THAT
OVERCOMETH"

What call was made to each of the seven churches?

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:7).

This call is repeated at the close of each of the letters to the seven churches, either to introduce a promise (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17) or to conclude the message (ch. 2:29; 3:6, 13, 22). Here the Spirit addresses "the churches," because God's promises are for the believers of every age.

The first condition for gaining eternal life is to know how to listen. On several occasions Jesus emphasized this in His teachings. (See Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 14:35.) In the Scriptures, to listen means not only to hear but also to understand and put into practice. (See 1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 8:21; Rev. 1:3.)

To whom is the promise in the first letter made? Where will it be fulfilled? Rev. 2:7.

In all seven letters the promise is for those who overcome. Revelation 2:7 never specifies what victory is in question, but all who are born of God know that it is the "victory that overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). Jesus defined it clearly when He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). For the Ephesian Christians, the needed victory is a return to their first love. The fulfillment of this promise will be perfectly realized in the kingdom of God.

It is interesting to note that some of the promises made to the churches are details from the description given in Revelation 21 and 22 of the "new heaven and new earth." (See Rev. 22:2, 4.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the traits of character over which I need to gain the victory?

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action."—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

"When He [Jesus] comes, He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will be accomplished before that time."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 355.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 92; *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, "Not Judging, but Doing" (Luke 13:24), pp. 141-144.

**Part 5
MESSAGE TO
THE PERSECUTED
CHURCH**

What is the relationship between the way that Jesus presents Himself to the church in Smyrna and the message that He addresses to them?

"These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" (Rev. 2:8).

The manner in which the Saviour presents Himself to each of the seven churches is always related to the needs of that church. To the church persecuted by imperial Rome, Christ reveals Himself as the timeless, all-powerful One in heaven and on earth, the One who suffered and died and who lives again.

What is the condition of the Smyrna church? Verse 9.

The tribulations of the church in Smyrna issued from three sources: persecution, abject poverty, and slander. For more than two centuries the Christian church had to face a period of the most bitter persecution. Although the church of Smyrna was stripped of all worldly possessions, the spiritual riches which it possessed amply compensated for the condition of material poverty. Thus the church in Smyrna enriched the world more than any other church (compare 2 Cor. 6:10); the testimony of her martyrs constituted gospel seed.

For the church of this era the cruelest trial resulted from the blasphemy of the Jews. The book of Acts records that the earliest persecution could be traced to the synagogues. (See Acts 13:45; 14:2, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:5, 6, 12.) During the second century the Jews accused the Christians of having falsified the Scriptures, which was the worst possible accusation. From then on, becoming enemies of the Christian church, the blasphemers were no longer true Jews. They lined up on the side of him who accuses the children of God, and thus they formed the "synagogue of Satan." (See Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Would I be able to withstand slander for the sake of the gospel?

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5:11).

"I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:44, 45).

"Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat" (1 Cor. 4:12, 13).

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Beatitudes" (Matt. 5:11), pp. 31-35.

Part 6
THE CROWN
OF LIFE

What double exhortation did Christ address to the Smyrna Christians?

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: . . . ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

This exhortation is without reproof or threat, and also without hiding the sufferings awaiting the Smyrna church. The devil (literally "slanderer"), clearly pointed out as the instigator of the persecution, wants only to make the believer fall. God permits suffering to try one's faith (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Rom. 5:3, 4), but God's church is not to fear. Although some of its number must endure persecution, in this they are privileged to participate in the sufferings of Christ for the edification of the church. (See Col. 1:24.)

The tribulation of ten days foretold here corresponds to the ten years of bitter persecution (A.D. 303-313) unleashed by Diocletian to exterminate the Christian church. But the fidelity of Christ's witnesses assured the triumph, not the extermination, of the gospel. After more than two centuries of tribulation at the hands of successive Roman emperors, Constantine was obliged to sign the Edict of Milan in 313, establishing the triumph of Christianity.

What promise is made to the overcomer? Rev. 2:11.

In verse 10 the Saviour promises a "crown of life" to him who is "faithful unto death." In verse 11 He assures the overcomer that he will not suffer the "second death," which is the final destruction "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). (See Rev. 20:6, 14.)

"Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God's law should be the motto of every Christian."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 147.

THINK IT THROUGH

How shall I prepare to suffer for the triumph of God's cause?

"We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 71.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 103, 104.

4. The Churches of the Cathedrals



"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

The third and fourth letters in the book of Revelation are addressed to the churches in Pergamos and Thyatira, representing respectively the years of conquest in the history of the Christian church, A.D. 313 to 538, and the church's period of domination, A.D. 538 to 1798.

The city of Pergamos (or Pergamum) was situated some 60 kilometers (37 miles) northeast of Smyrna. Built on the summit and slopes of a high hill, the city seemed impregnable, which in reality it was except when entered by ruse. It was the seat of government for the Roman province of Asia, however, and its capital before losing that honor to Ephesus. Pergamos was a city of temples, the most celebrated being the temple of Zeus, which has been reconstructed in the Pergamon Museum in East Berlin.

The origin of the name "Pergamos" is uncertain. The meaning given it is derived from the topography of the city: citadel, acropolis, summit, height. These words embody the characteristics peculiar to the Christian church of that era, years when the priests of Rome were exalting themselves and strengthening their influence to the point of supplanting the Roman emperors and becoming the political leaders of Western Europe.

In A.D. 538 the edict issued by Justinian in 533 became effective, legally conferring the political power of the Western Empire on the bishop of Rome. This date marks the beginning of the 1260 years of papal

supremacy, represented by the church of Thyatira.

Located some 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Pergamos, the city of Thyatira was well known for the dyeing of wool and linen textiles with the purple dyestuff that Thyatira dyers had discovered. (See Acts 16:12-14.) The city was also known for the great temple built in honor of the sun god, Apollo. These two features are meaningful in describing the church of that period. The Thyatira church achieved ruling powers, symbolized by the wearing of purple, and it was she who decreed the day of the sun as the day of rest.

Because of the importance of the Reformation, one usually fixes the dates for the Thyatira period from A.D. 538 to 1517. However, if one allows that one period can parallel another, and that the end of one does not coincide precisely with the beginning of the next, the Thyatira era could extend beyond 1517, the year that the Sardis period begins.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Message to the Apostate Church (Rev. 2:12)**
- 2. Worldly Influences Condemned (Rev. 2:14, 15)**
- 3. Promises to the Overcomer (Rev. 2:17)**
- 4. Message to the Church of the Middle Ages (Rev. 2:18)**
- 5. Jezebel, the Prophetess (Rev. 2:20, 21)**
- 6. Promise of the Morning Star (Rev. 2:26, 27)**

**Part 1
MESSAGE TO
THE APOSTATE
CHURCH**

What is the meaning of the symbol under which Jesus presents Himself to the church in Pergamos?

"To the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (Rev. 2:12). (Compare Heb. 4:12.)

This distinctive characteristic of Jesus has already been mentioned in Revelation 1:16, and it will be found again in Revelation 19:15. Jesus is the Living Word, the standard of all truth. In a time of compromise, apostasy, and rising popularity of Christianity, the Saviour presents Himself to His church as the One possessing the "sword of the Spirit," ready to contend with all that is not in harmony with truth. (See Eph. 6:10, 17.)

For what did Jesus commend the church in Pergamos? Verse 13.

The principal virtue of the church in Pergamos was that she was able to hold fast in an unfavorable environment, a veritable citadel of paganism, even "where Satan sits enthroned" (Moffatt). It was at Pergamos that the first cult worship of a living emperor was established in 29 B.C. At the very time that John was writing these messages Christians were being persecuted for refusing to worship the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96), who insisted that people worship him as "lord and god."

The Pergamos church aptly symbolizes the period of church history when the adversary established himself through deceitful means in the very "temple of God," as the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 had foretold would happen.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is there no widespread persecution in our day?

"The only reason [that persecution seems to slumber] is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 48.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 49-54.

Part 2
WORLDLY
INFLUENCES
CONDEMNED

What double rebuke does Jesus address to the church in Pergamos?

"I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:14, 15).

The church is not accused of believing the condemned doctrines, but of tolerating "them that hold the doctrine of Balaam" in their midst and also "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes." The problem of the church in Pergamos lay in allowing the true and the false to live together. The introduction of the pagan masses into the church, after Christianity was recognized as the state religion, led to spiritual idolatry and worldly license. What Satan was unable to accomplish through persecution, he achieved by seduction, encouraging practices that advanced selfish interests, not those of God's people, as Balaam had in the time of ancient Israel.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes was one that God hated, one that He commended the Ephesus church for rejecting. (See Rev. 2:6.) For the Christian church to tolerate it was proof of its apostasy at the very moment of triumph (A.D. 313-538).

What does the Lord's threat of intervention signify? Verse 16.

Again our Lord sounds a call to repentance. Jesus is not calling those who are in sin and error, but those who tolerate error while carrying His name. Jesus assures that He Himself will intervene to combat the heresy. The threat, "I . . . will fight against them with the sword of my mouth," typifies the punishment meted out at the judgment. (See Rev. 19:15, 21.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What worldly ways are in my life that are condemned by God's Word?

"As the truth is brought into practical life, the standard is to be elevated higher and higher, to meet the requirements of the Bible. This will necessitate opposition to the fashions, customs, practices, and maxims of the world. Worldly influences, like the waves of the sea, beat against the followers of Christ to sweep them away from the true principles of the meekness and grace of Christ; but they are to stand as firm as a rock to principle. It will require moral courage to do this, and those whose souls are not riveted to the eternal Rock, will be swept away by the worldly current."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 288, 289.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 542-549.

**Part 3
PROMISES
TO THE
OVERCOMER**

What triple promise is made to the overcomer?

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

"A white stone," according to some, recalls the stone given to the winning gladiator; according to others, it is the stone used by jurors to signify acquittal; or, according to still others, the stone given as a ticket to enter the theater. Whatever significance is alluded to, it is recognized as a well-known ceremony of ancient times honoring the receiver.

"A new name" signifies a new character. In Bible times a name was given that described the character of the receiver. Here a new name is promised the overcomer—a name that describes the new character of the overcomer, one that perfectly reflects his personal, intimate experience with Jesus. That is why "no man knoweth [it] saving he that receiveth it." This new name, written in the white stone, will serve as a sign evidencing victory, or acquittal of all guilt of sin, or perhaps serve as a ticket to enter the kingdom of heaven.

How can the Word be both a sword and manna at the same time? Rev. 2:12, 17.

In the Christian's armor "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17), is the only offensive weapon. It is the one used by Jesus to triumph over the tempter, and the one that He is ready to use in the church against all who are not in harmony with holy doctrine. But the Word of God is also daily bread for the believer; it is the manna from heaven that nourishes every man who wishes to do the will of God. (See Matt. 4:4; John 4:34.) Just as Jesus is the sharp, two-edged sword, so He is also "the living bread which came down from heaven." He counsels, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:51).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my character like? Am I fitted to enter the kingdom?

"Each one will have a close struggle to overcome sin in his own heart. This is at times a very painful and discouraging work; because, as we see the deformities in our character, we keep looking at them, when we should look to Jesus and put on the robe of His righteousness. Everyone who enters the pearly gates of the city of God will enter there as a conqueror, and his greatest conquest will have been the conquest of self."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 182, 183.

FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pp. 95-97.

**Part 4
MESSAGE TO
THE CHURCH
OF THE
MIDDLE AGES**

What title does Jesus use to present Himself to the church in Thyatira? What attributes are inherent in that title?

"Unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (Rev. 2:18).

This is the only time in the book of Revelation that Jesus uses the title "Son of God" with the definite article. Thus He specifically identifies Himself as a member of the Godhead and lays claim to the divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence. He is the One who sees all, penetrates all, examines all; the One to whom "all power is given . . . in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).

What Christian virtues did Jesus extol in His words of commendation to the Thyatira church? Verse 19.

The Saviour never judges by appearances. He is able to detect good, to see whatever is worthy of commendation, even in the darkness of the Middle Ages. In truth, the heart is never completely devoid of spirituality when one devotes himself to the dissemination of faith among the faithless. For ages works of charity were numerous and flourishing. Genuine Christians dedicated themselves to the binding up of Europe's wounds in the wake of wars, invasions, and calamities. Contrary to the experience at Ephesus, the church in Thyatira experienced spiritual progress. She was the only one of the seven where, despite serious weaknesses, there was growth. "I know thy works, . . . and the last to be more than the first" (verse 19).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is a fair judgment of Thyatira Christians?

"Millions went down to the grave loaded with infamy because they steadfastly refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals they were adjudged the vilest of criminals."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 650.

In passing judgment one must distinguish between Catholicism as a religion and the Catholic believer. "It is true that there are real Christians in the Roman Catholic communion. Thousands in that church are serving God according to the best light they have. . . . God looks with pitying tenderness upon these souls, educated as they are in a faith that is delusive and unsatisfying. He will cause rays of light to penetrate the dense darkness that surrounds them. He will reveal to them the truth as it is in Jesus, and many will yet take their position with His people."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 565.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 55-60.

**Part 5
JEZEBEL, THE
PROPHETESS**

What serious reprimand is directed to the church in Thyatira? Rev. 2:20, 21.

The name "Jezebel" recalls the worst moment of Israel's history.

When Jezebel became queen, she introduced the worship of Baal in Israel, and established over 400 priests of Baal. She did not hesitate to use temporal power to force her pagan customs upon the people. As in Jezebel's day when Israel suffered three and a half years of famine before there was a reform, so many other details of Israel's history are symbolic of the history of the Christian church in the Middle Ages.

The Lord gave the church opportunity to repent. Throughout the centuries He raised up reformers—Wycliffe, Savonarola, Huss and Jerome, Luther, and others—"but," He exclaimed, "she refuses to repent of her immorality" (Rev. 2:21, RSV).

What serious judgments were pronounced against those who accepted Jezebel? Verses 22, 23.

A bed of pain would replace her bed of impurity. Great tribulation would strike those "that commit adultery with her." God would "kill . . . with death," probably by pestilence or by the second death, the children of her prostitution. The Lord vowed to render to each one according to his works.

What counsel is given to all others in Thyatira? Verses 24, 25.

As in the time of Jezebel, when the Lord had 7000 in Israel whose knees had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings 19:18), so through the ages of the Thyatira period there were those who did not accept the doctrine of Jezebel,—the Vaudois, the Albigenses, the Hussites, the Huguenots, the Moravian Brothers, etc. ¶To them, "the rest in Thyatira," the Lord promised not to put upon them any other burden. "But," He admonished, "that which ye have already hold fast till I come" (verse 25).

THINK IT THROUGH

Everyone will be held responsible according to the light that he has received.

"Our fathers are not accountable for the light they never received, or for the messages of warning they never heard. . . .

"Special truths have been adapted to the conditions of the nations as they have existed. The present truth, which is a test to the people of this generation, was not a test to the people of generations far back. . . .

"We are accountable only for the light that shines upon us."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 13, 1897.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 114-116.

Part 6
PROMISE OF THE
MORNING STAR

What promise is made to the overcomer in Thyatira?

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26, 27).

The words of this promise are borrowed from Psalm 2, and some of the details are repeated by the apostle John later in this book (ch. 12:5; 19:15). The promise to the elect is that they shall reign with Christ and have authority over the nations. (See Rev. 20:6.) To this end the Master Potter will break in pieces the old order, all the wicked nations, and make all things new; and the power and dominion will be given Him by His Father.

What is the significance of the words "morning star" contained in the climax of this promise? Verse 28.

This symbol, probably a reference to Balaam's promise to Israel (Num. 24:17) announcing the coming of the Messiah, was also used by Peter in alluding to the believer's experience with the Saviour (2 Peter 1:19). To the overcomer will be given the privilege of seeing Jesus face-to-face, because it is He who is the "bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).

The morning star, a sign of day, of soon-coming greater light to disperse the night, was a fit promise to the church of the Middle Ages.

Why does the call to listen come at the close of this message? Verse 29.

In the three preceding letters this admonition called the hearer's attention to the promise which followed. Beginning with the letter to the Thyatira church the call comes at the close of the message to emphasize how important it is for the listener to hear and understand the entire message, "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" in its entirety.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I progress in my spiritual experience according to God's plan for the overcomer?

The message to the church at Thyatira invites us to hold fast that which we have (verse 25); to persevere in works that reflect Christ until the very end (verse 26); and to act in such a way that "the last [works] be more than the first" (verse 19).

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "First the Blade, Then the Ear," pp. 66-69.

April 27 to May 3

5. The Churches of the Reformation and Revival



“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).

With the letters to the churches of Sardis and Philadelphia we come to the Christian church of modern times, from the beginning of the Reformation (1517) to the present era (1844).

Situated some 48 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of Thyatira, the city of Sardis was the capital of the kingdom of Lydia. It reached its zenith of wealth and power under Croesus during the sixth century B.C. Built on a plateau of crumbling rock, some 457 meters (1500 feet) above sea level, Sardis was considered impregnable except at one point. It was there that Cyrus made his surprise attack, like a thief in the night, and during the second century B.C. the city was again captured in the same way, which explains the admonition “be watchful” in verse 2.

The churches of Sardis and Philadelphia are mentioned only in the book of Revelation, although their origins must certainly date back to the time of the apostle Paul. The first represents the church of the Reformation, 1517 to 1798, and the second, whose name means “brotherly love,” admirably symbolizes the great evangelical awakening during the years 1798 to 1844.

Because of its geographic position, Philadelphia still commands access to an important pass through the neighboring mountains. It is a key city, the gateway to eastern highlands.

At the time, with a population of only 15,000, Philadelphia was a small city of little importance. “I know that you have but little power” (verse 8, RSV), the Witness said. Considering

her name, however, the small Philadelphian community knew how to live an exemplary Christian life. That is why no reproach was addressed to this church, as was also true with the church in Smyrna.

It is interesting to note that of the seven churches named, only those of Philadelphia and Smyrna still exist. Both of these Christian communities survived the Turkish invasion.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Church of the Reformation**
(Rev. 3:1)
- 2. Be Watchful**
(Rev. 3:2, 3)
- 3. A Threefold Promise**
(Rev. 3:4)
- 4. Church of the Awakening**
(Rev. 3:7)
- 5. “Thou Hast Kept the Word”**
(Rev. 3:8-10)
- 6. “A Pillar in the Temple”**
(Rev. 3:12)

Part 1
THE CHURCH
OF THE
REFORMATION

What is the significance of the two symbols used by Jesus to identify Himself in His epistle to the Sardis church?

"Unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars" (Rev. 3:1).

Here our Lord presents Himself as the One that has the seven Spirits of God, or the Spirit in His fullness and completeness (Rev. 1:4), and, at the same time, control of His church, since the seven stars are in His right hand. (See Rev. 1:16, 17.)

What is the true condition of the church in Sardis? Rev. 3: 1, 2.

Although the church in Sardis has the reputation of being alive, the Lord is not deceived; He does not mistake vigorous activity for life. Jesus states plainly, "Thou . . . art dead." What the Sardis members need is to come alive in Christ by being filled with His Spirit, without which vital godliness is impossible; and then they will obtain spiritual accountability to maintain and nourish this new life. Jesus comes to Sardis with the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars to meet this need.

In truth Sardis represents the sad plight of modern-day Protestantism. In its beginning the Reformation church rediscovered what it means to live by faith in Jesus Christ, but, satisfied with certain attainments, the church grew indifferent. Today, ignorant of the great truths upon which it was founded, Protestantism has only a pretense of life; and, barring vigilance and special care, "the things which remain . . . are ready to die."

What judgment is pronounced upon the works of the Sardis church? Verse 2.

The works of Sardis were not perfect. This also means that the members were incomplete, unfulfilled. By a return to the Bible the Reformation church found truth, but this work was not completed. It did not come to perfection.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to maintain my spiritual life?

"Yes, there are many such [persons who neglect Bible study] among us as a people, many who claim to be alive, while they are dead. My brethren, unless the Holy Spirit is actuating you as a vital principle, unless you are obeying its prompting, depending on its influences, laboring in the strength of God, my message to you from God is: 'You are under a delusion which may prove fatal to your souls.'"—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 155.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 352, 353.

Part 2
BE WATCHFUL

What is the fivefold counsel given to the church in Sardis?

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. . . . Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent" (Rev. 3:2, 3).

Historically, overconfidence and carelessness resulted in the capture of Sardis by the enemy. It was also a lack of vigilance that caused the spiritual death of the Sardis church. But the condition is not without remedy. Jesus, who possesses the Spirit in all His fullness, is able to revive spiritually. The remedy, a full return to the gospel, is clearly indicated.

To possess the truth it is not sufficient to have received it in a providential way or to have heard it with fervor; one must be vigilant and persevere in keeping it. If spirituality has degenerated into a state of lifeless formalism, only repentance can heal the condition.

"'And repent.' The life we live is to be one of continual repentance and humility. We need to repent constantly, that we may be constantly victorious. When we have true humility, we have victory."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 959.

What will be the result to the church if Sardis does not watch? Verse 3.

Here we have a reference to the return of Jesus. (Compare Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10; Rev. 16:15.) This allusion establishes this church chronologically. Sardis is the church that should have recognized the signs announcing the return of Jesus to earth—the Lisbon earthquake, 1755, and the dark day, May 19, 1780—but because it was not watching, the Lord would come, for it, as a thief in the night, at an hour that it knew not. Today many nominal Christians are not only ignorant of the signs pointing to the return of Jesus, but also purely and simply deny His return.

THINK IT THROUGH

As an alert Christian, am I conscious that spiritual ramparts require constant vigilance?

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 634, 635.

**Part 3
A THREEFOLD
PROMISE**

Whom does the Lord commend in the church in Sardis?

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4).

"The church of Sardis is represented as having in it a *few* faithful ones among the many who had become, as it were, careless and insensible of their obligations to God. . . . Who is so favored as to be numbered among these few in Sardis? Are you? Am I? Who are among this number? Is it not best for us to inquire into this matter, in order that we may learn to whom the Lord refers when He says that a *few* have not stained their white robes of character?"—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 959.

**What threefold promise is made to the overcomer in Sardis?
Verse 5.**

In this threefold promise the conditions of salvation are clearly stated as follows:

1. One must be clothed in white raiment, which is the symbol of the righteousness of Christ received by faith, or justification by faith.

2. One's name must be written in the book of life, figurative of salvation by grace. This does not depend on an arbitrary act on the part of God, but on our faith in Jesus and our obedience to His law—"faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), or "obedience to the faith" (Rom. 1:5).

3. One must receive Christ's approval. It is He who confesses (literally, confirms) our names before His Father in His work of intercession.

THINK IT THROUGH

Examples to follow: "Because of their faith this honor [to walk with Jesus in white] is bestowed on them [the faithful few]. In this life they did not boast, nor lift up their souls unto vanity. With intensity of desire, with a pure, holy faith, they grasped the promise of eternal riches. Their one desire was to be like Christ. Ever they kept the standard of righteousness uplifted. To them is given an eternal weight of glory, because on the earth they walked with God, keeping themselves unspotted from the world, revealing to their fellow beings the righteousness of Christ."—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 960.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 483, 484.

Part 4
CHURCH
OF THE
AWAKENING

What is the significance of the qualifications under which the Lord announces Himself to the church of Philadelphia?

“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7).

Once again Jesus presents Himself with the attributes of the Divinity. He is “the Holy One” (Acts 3:14)—that is, He who was preeminently set apart to accomplish the will of God. Because He perfectly accomplished His mission, He possesses the key of David and the power to open or to close the door of the kingdom of which the throne of David was the type, the kingdom of the children of God.

This verse has special historical significance for Seventh-day Adventists. “I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it (Rev. 3:7, 8); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God’s people.”—*Early Writings*, p. 42.

What qualities embody the worth of the church of Philadelphia? Verse 8.

Christ addresses neither a reproach nor a warning to the church of Philadelphia. The Lord simply points out the result of an exceptional religious situation. All is possible for God when His children do not depend on their own power (2 Cor. 1:9, 10), when they keep His word, and when they are not ashamed of the testimony of Jesus.

THINK IT THROUGH

“The true Witness has given us the assurance that He has set before us an open door, which no man can shut. Those who are seeking to be faithful to God may be denied many of the privileges of the world; their way may be hedged up and their work hindered by the enemies of truth; but there is no power that can close the door of communication between God and their souls. The Christian himself may close this door by indulgence in sin, or by rejection of heaven’s light. He may turn away his ears from hearing the message of truth, and in this way sever the connection between God and his soul. . . . Neither man nor Satan can close the door which Christ has opened for us.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 961.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 428-430, 435.

**Part 5
"THOU HAST
KEPT THE WORD"**

What triple promise is made to the church of Philadelphia as the result of its exceptional spiritual experience? Rev. 3:8-10.

1. **"Behold, I have set before thee an open door" (verse 8).** This is a promise of unlimited opportunity for missionary endeavor that no worldly power can hinder. (See Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:8, 9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col 4:3.) In the history of the church the period represented by Philadelphia witnessed an unparalleled missionary movement. It also marked renewed interest in the study of the Bible and incomparable zeal in its distribution, aided by the creation of Bible societies.

2. **"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan . . . to come and worship before thy feet" (verse 9).** Whether this refers to those of Jewish lineage, to false Christians, or to pagans, the important fact is that the Saviour promised to make them receptive to the gospel, to put them in contact with genuine Christians, and to make Himself known to them. Facts confirm this prophecy. Between 1816 and 1843 there was a wave of conversions among Jews. Great religious revivals also shook Protestantism, giving birth to the advent movement, among others. And, finally, this era saw the birth of modern missions—special missionary endeavor for pagan peoples.

3. **"I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world" (verse 10).** This is a direct reference to events to come upon the world at the end of time, particularly during the time of trouble to come upon the inhabitants of the world. (See Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.)

The first part of this declaration made by the faithful and true Witness has been fulfilled; it is an accomplished fact. The second is still being fulfilled, but the third is in the future.

What are the Philadelphia Christians invited to hold fast? Verse 11.

As long as the struggle lasts, as long as the course is not finished (2 Tim. 4:7, 8), the promised crown of life can be snatched away (Rev. 2:10, 11). This is an invitation to perseverance (Matt. 24:13; Heb. 10:36-39), all the more pertinent because the Lord announces His soon return: "*Behold, I come quickly.*"

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I meet more fully the Saviour's conditions for one who wishes to be an instrument of action in His hands?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 587-589.

Part 6
"A PILLAR IN
THE TEMPLE"

What singular privilege is promised to the overcomer in the Philadelphia church? What is the significance of this metaphor?

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. 3:12).

This promise harmonizes beautifully with the character and work of the Philadelphia Christians. The victor, because of his faithfulness in God's service, will become a pillar—symbol of strength, stability, and victory (Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 10:1)—in the temple of God; that is, in the very presence of God (Rev. 21:3) for all eternity.

What further honor will the Saviour accord him? What is the meaning of these distinguishing marks? Verse 12.

The overcomer will carry three names that will be his glory. In the Bible the name always implies the personality, character, and ownership of the bearer.

1. "The name of my God": The promise here is that the Creator's image will be fully restored in the overcomer: he will again belong to God.

2. "The name of the city of my God": The victor will have a right to live in the New Jerusalem; he will be a citizen there. The New Jerusalem will be his city.

3. "My [Christ's] new name": The character of the overcomer will perfectly reflect that of Jesus; he will be like Him, because he will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). Jesus will have a new name, for He will have laid aside the form of a servant and appear in all His glory.

The name of God in the forehead "signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God's commandments."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 370.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much do I reflect the character of Jesus?

"In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, 'Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?' Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, 'Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.' . . .

" . . . 'Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh. . . . Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice.' "—*Early Writings*, pp. 64-67.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 444-447.

6. The Church of the Last Days



“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

The letter to the Christian church in Laodicea is of particular importance to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is Christ’s last message to His people and is especially addressed to the church in the end of time.

Whatever the meaning of the name—“a justified people,” “the judging of the people,” or “the separation of peoples”—Laodicea is always used in relation to the final work of Christ’s church during the last phase of history. This is why the Laodicean era begins in the year 1844, at the close of the 2300-year prophecy (Dan. 8:14) and the beginning of the investigative judgment.

The city of Laodicea was named in honor of Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II, who founded the city in the third century B.C. It was situated some 65 kilometers (40 miles) southeast of Philadelphia. The city became prosperous during the Roman era, toward the end of the first century B.C.

A Laodicean specialty was the soft, silklike, black cloth manufactured from the wool produced by the black sheep raised in the area. Laodicea was also famous for its flourishing school of medicine and the manufacture of a renowned eye medicine. And, because of its large markets, the city carried on extensive banking operations. All these details explain the allusions made by the faithful and true Witness.

Two other details are also significant. An aqueduct brought warm water from Hierapolis, some 6 kilometers away (3.7 miles) to furnish water for the lukewarm baths that people found so pleasing. Then, in A.D. 60, some 35 years before the Revelation was written, the city

suffered a devastating earthquake; but the Laodiceans refused the help offered them by Rome, claiming that they were in “need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17).

At the time that Paul wrote to the Colossians, about A.D. 62, there was a Christian church in Laodicea. Apparently Paul never visited Laodicea (Col. 2:1). It seems that Epaphras of Colosse founded the church (Col. 1:7). Paul mentions sending a letter to the Laodicean church at the time that he wrote to Colosse (Col. 4:16).

Laodicea was destroyed by the Turks in the thirteenth century. Today there are only ruins to mark the site; but the message that carries its name in the Revelation is of utmost interest to us today. This is the reason we should listen most attentively to what the faithful and true Witness says in this letter, more than to any other.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Message to Laodicea (Rev. 3:14)**
- 2. The Lukewarm Church (Rev. 3:15)**
- 3. I Have Need of Nothing (Rev. 3:17)**
- 4. The Lord’s Counsel (Rev. 3:18)**
- 5. “Be Zealous . . . , and Repent” (Rev. 3:19)**
- 6. Promise to the Overcomer (Rev. 3:20)**

Part 1
MESSAGE TO
LAODICEA

What titles does Jesus use to make Himself known to the Laodicean church? What are their significance?

"Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).

In this final message Jesus presents Himself as the personification of Amen (surely, indeed, truly), a title that the prophet Isaiah applies to God (Isa. 65:16, translated "truth"). As the faithful and true Witness He is the perfect expression of the thought, the will, and the character of God, and as the beginning or origin of God's creation, He is the Creator. (See John 1:3; Col. 1:15, 16; Heb. 1:2.) Under these titles Jesus claims equality with God and emphasizes the seriousness of what He is about to say. This role is consistent with the judgment era.

"Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. . . .

"There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 247, 248.

"He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son."—*Evangelism*, p. 615.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I more ready to listen to the testimony of the True Witness than I have been in the past?

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God's people.

"The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 181.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 186, 187.

Part 2
THE LUKEWARM
CHURCH

How did Jesus evaluate the works of the Laodicean church?

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15).

Unlike all of the previous churches, Laodicea received no commendation.

"The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 252.

"They are neither cold nor hot; they occupy a neutral position, and at the same time flatter themselves that they are in need of nothing. The True Witness hates this lukewarmness. He loathes the indifference of this class of persons. Said He: 'I would thou wert cold or hot.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 87.

What seriously threatens those who are lukewarm? Verse 16.

Like lukewarm water, lukewarm spirituality produces nausea. Of course, the threat of being rejected by the Saviour is not unconditional; if it were, the counsels that follow would be useless. It is a warning rather than a decision.

"Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 963.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways does the Laodicean message apply to me?

"The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to all who have had great light and many opportunities, and yet have not appreciated them."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 961.

"The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. . . . They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 87.

"The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. . . .

"The message to the Laodicean church applies most decidedly to those whose religious experience is insipid, who do not bear decided witness in favor of the truth."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 962.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 83-87.

Part 3
I HAVE NEED
OF NOTHING

Of what do the Laodiceans boast?

"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17).

This declaration explains the reason for the lukewarm condition of the Laodiceans. This can be understood in both the literal and the spiritual sense. The Laodiceans were affluent, as are a number of Christian societies today. At the same time, on the spiritual plane, the treasures of God's Word have never been more accessible.

It is always fatal to take pleasure in one's wealth, even in spiritual riches. Not to recognize all these blessings as unmerited favors from God leads to self-sufficiency, the taking of credit to oneself. (See Luke 12:16-21.) The Spirit of God can act only where there is poverty of spirit and a feeling of need. (See Matt. 5:3; Luke 18:13, 14.)

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

What is the true condition of the Laodiceans? Verse 17.

"What is it that constitutes the wretchedness, the nakedness, of those who feel rich and increased with goods?—It is the want of the righteousness of Christ. In their own righteousness they are represented as clothed with filthy rags, and yet in this condition they flatter themselves that they are clothed upon with Christ's righteousness. Could deception be greater?"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 7, 1894.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I see my spiritual condition as God sees it?

"In my last vision I was shown that even this decided message of the True Witness had not accomplished the design of God. The people slumber on in their sins. They continue to declare themselves rich and having need of nothing. Many inquire: Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the *Testimonies* continually charge us with backsliding and with grievous sins? We love the truth; we are prospering; we are in no need of these testimonies of warning and reproof. But let these murmurers see their hearts and compare their lives with the practical teachings of the Bible, let them humble their souls before God, let the grace of God illuminate the darkness, and the scales will fall from their eyes, and they will realize their true spiritual poverty and wretchedness."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 254.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 252-254.

Part 4
THE LORD'S
COUNSEL

What counsel does the True Witness give to the Laodicean Christians?

"I counsel thee to buy of me" (Rev. 3:18).

Instead of the transitory possessions of the Laodiceans, Jesus offers the eternal riches that He alone can give. The fact that the Lord counsels the Laodiceans to buy does not mean that they are to make the purchase with money (Isa. 55:1), but rather that they must negotiate an exchange of Laodicean poverty for the riches of Christ. Although salvation is a free gift of God, it costs man a great deal—all that he has. He must come to the point that he esteems "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:26).

What is the significance of each one of the remedies the Laodiceans are admonished to buy? The remedies counseled by Jesus, like the many other symbols He used, are in the language of the people He was addressing, here the commerce that enriched the Laodiceans. Ellen White gives us this explanation:

"The True Witness counsels us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eyesalve. The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His church eyes which He requires them to anoint with wisdom, that they may see clearly."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 88, 89.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are we in a hopeless condition spiritually?

"The counsel of the true Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm as in a hopeless case. There is yet a chance to remedy their state, and the Laodicean message is full of encouragement; for the backslidden church may yet buy the gold of faith and love, may yet have the white robe of the righteousness of Christ, that the shame of their nakedness need not appear. Purity of heart, purity of motive, may yet characterize those who are halfhearted and who are striving to serve God and mammon. They may yet wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Ellen G. White *Comments*, S.D.A. *Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 966.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 214-216.

Part 5
"BE ZEALOUS
. . . , AND
REPENT"

What prompts God to reprove and chasten?

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19).

Our Lord's actions are always motivated by love, even when He has to administer punishment. "The Lord reproves wrongs in His people, but is this an evidence that He has rejected them?—No. There are errors in the church, and the Lord points them out by His own ordained agencies, not always through the testimonies. Now shall we seize these reproofs and make capital of them, and say that God is not imparting to them His light and love?—No. The work that God is trying to do for them shows that He loves them, and wants to draw them away from paths of danger."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 81, 82.

What should be the objective of reprimand or chastening?
Verse 19.

After the counsel, the fatherly warning, God expects positive results. (See Rom. 2:4.)

The call here is in the imperative: "Be zealous therefore, and repent." In the original the word translated as "zealous" is from the same root as the word "hot," which the Laodicean church had failed to be. "The Laodiceans are called upon to experience the warmth and enthusiasm that comes with true repentance, consecration, and devotion to Christ."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 763.

"Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do I need to make a personal application of this appeal?

"I saw that this call to the Laodicean church will affect souls. A becoming zeal is called for by God on our part. We must repent, throw away our whole feelings, feel our destitution, buy gold that we may be rich, eyesalve that we may see, white raiment that we may be clothed."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 966.

"Let us make an application of the words of Christ to our own individual cases. Are we poor, and blind, and wretched, and miserable? Then let us seek the gold and white raiment that He offers. The work of overcoming is not restricted to the age of the martyrs. The conflict is for us, in these days of subtle temptation to worldliness, to self-security, to indulgence of pride, covetousness, false doctrines, and immorality of life."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 966.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 141-143.

**Part 6
PROMISE TO
THE OVERCOMER**

What urgent invitation is Jesus still extending? How should it be understood?

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

Here Jesus crowns His love for Laodicea. Indifferent to counsel, to threat, and to command; perhaps His people will respond to the personal, loving approach. As a humble traveler, going from door to door, Jesus comes to offer His remedies to whoever is willing to open to Him. The promised supper symbolizes personal communion with Christ, without which spiritual life is impossible.

However, this spiritual interpretation does not exclude the possibility of applying this verse to last-day events. The expression “I am standing at the door” (Jerusalem) also calls to mind the end of time. (See Matt. 24:33; James 5:9.) Also a meal with Jesus reminds one of the promised supper of the Lamb that the elect will eat with Jesus in the kingdom of heaven. (See Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:30; Rev. 19:9).

What particular promise does Jesus make to the overcomer in the last church? Verse 21.

This promise is in direct relation with the preceding one. It gives a logical conclusion to the letter and to all seven epistles. The cycle ends with a promise of victory for Christ and His church. The Lord is anxious to share with the victorious of all ages the royal home that He will occupy for all eternity with His Father. It is the greatest honor offered to the overcomer. (See Dan. 7:27; Matt. 25:31-34; Rev. 20:4.)

THINK IT THROUGH

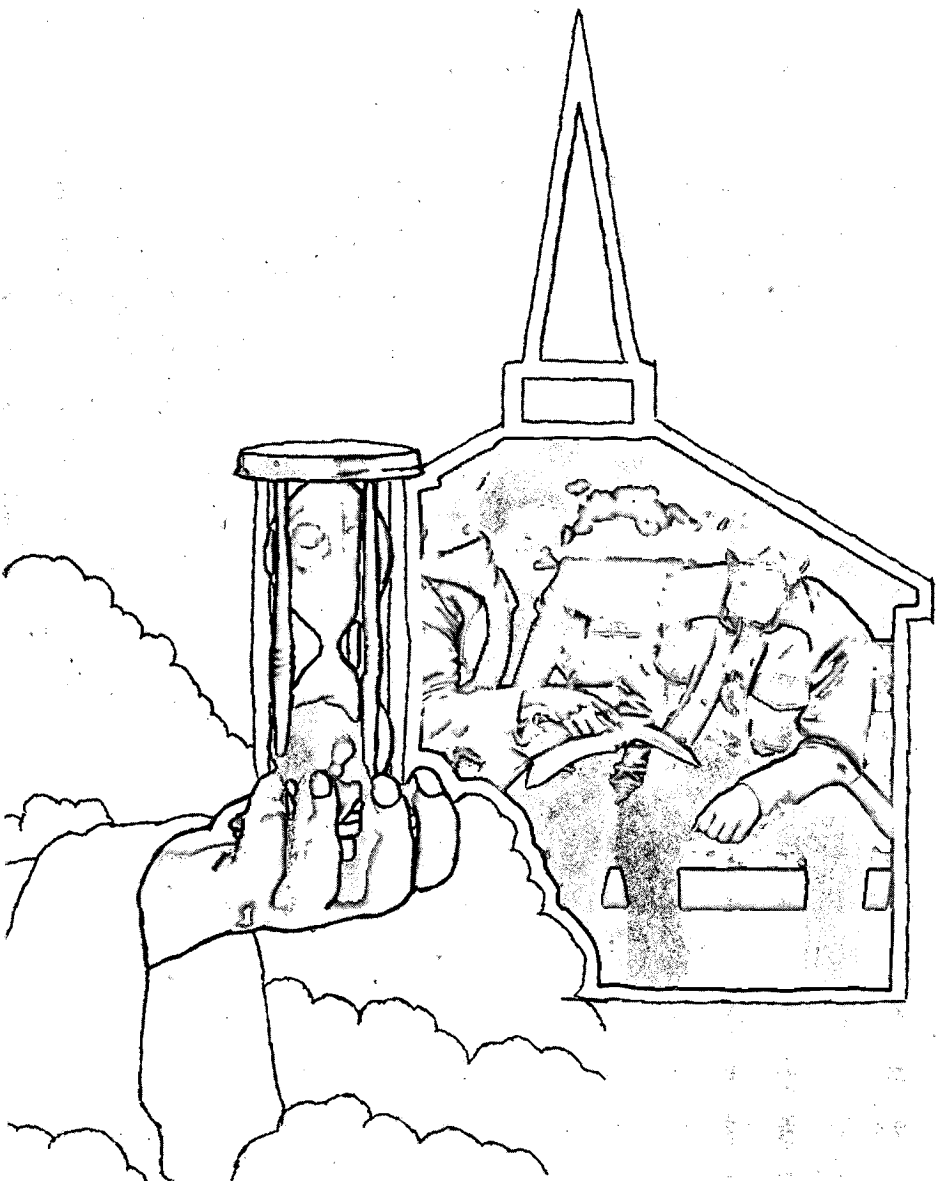
Although every church received a promise, and all are called to victory, there is, in reality, only one way to be victorious. Do you know what it is?

“The example of Christ shows us that our only hope of victory is in continual resistance of Satan’s attacks. He who triumphed over the adversary of souls in the conflict of temptations understands Satan’s power over the race, and has conquered him in our behalf. As an overcomer, He has given us the advantage of His victory, that in our efforts to resist the temptations of Satan we may unite our weakness to His strength, our worthlessness to His merits. And sustained by His enduring might under the strength of temptation, we may resist in His all-powerful name, and overcome as He overcame.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 50.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 324, 325.

7. "You Know What Hour It Is"



“Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand” (Rom. 13:11, 12, RSV).

The advent movement was born following an awakening, a new awareness of the time in which man was living. The study of prophecies in Daniel and Revelation clearly showed that a time had been appointed as “the time of the end,” and that during that time a special message would be proclaimed to the world by the remnant church.

For 182 years now we have been living in the time of the end. It is 136 years since we first proclaimed God’s last message for man. It is not surprising that attention has relaxed, that interest in knowing the day and the hour is no longer so keen as during the days of the pioneers of our church. But it is sad to note that the spiritual life of the church has tragically suffered the consequences, because there is a direct relationship between hope in the soon return of Jesus and seriousness about making the required preparation. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).

We know that a revival will take place before the preaching of the last message can be finished. We realize too that there are many among us who long for this spiritual renewal. But

there must be a new awareness of the hour in which we are living. This is not only important, but it is also prerequisite to stimulation of our zeal and our capacity to discern the signs of the times. Heralds of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, awake!

“While we are not to know the hour of our Lord’s return, we may know when it is near. ‘Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.’ 1 Thess. 5:6.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 235.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Signs of the Times**
(Matt. 16:3)
- 2. In the Fullness of Time**
(Mark 1:14, 15; Gal. 4:4)
- 3. The Time Appointed for the End**
(Dan. 8:19; 11:27, 35)
- 4. A Sealed Book**
(Dan. 12:4, 9)
- 5. Knowledge Shall Increase**
(Dan. 12:4, 10)
- 6. High Time to Awake**
(Rom. 13:11, 12)

Part 1
SIGNS OF
THE TIMES

What reproach did Jesus make to the religious leaders of His day concerning their discernment of the time in which they were living?

"Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Matt. 16:3).

From the evidence given us, when Jesus spoke of the "signs of the times," He was referring to specific signs foretold by the prophets to enable His people to discern Messianic time. Therefore, these signs had chronological value and were given to mark the arrival of events foretold.

Jesus gave public proof of His Messiahship, which the Gospel writer reported thus: "The throng wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matt. 15:31, RSV). Then, having witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the 5000, the people said to one another, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14), and they wanted to proclaim Him King (verse 15).

What biblical proof do we have that the Jews knew that the time of the Messiah had come? Luke 3:15, 16; 2:25, 26.

"The waning power of Israel testified that the Messiah's coming was at hand. The prophecy of Daniel pictured the glory of His reign over an empire which should succeed all earthly kingdoms; and, said the prophet, 'It shall stand forever.' Dan. 2:44. While few understood the nature of Christ's mission, there was a widespread expectation of a mighty prince who should establish his kingdom in Israel and who should come as deliverer to the nations."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 34.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I have greater discernment of the signs of the time in which I live than did those who lived during Christ's first advent?

"Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning. 'My Lord delayeth His coming' is not only said in the heart, but expressed in words and most decidedly in works. Stupidity in this watching time is sealing the senses of God's people as to the signs of the times. The terrible iniquity which abounds calls for the greatest diligence and for the living testimony, to keep sin out of the church. Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree, and it is only by exercise that it can increase."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 255, 256.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 260-263.

Part 2
IN THE
FULLNESS
OF TIME

How does the New Testament confirm that Jesus came "in the fulness of the time"?

"Now . . . Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:14, 15).

"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4).

"As the message of Christ's first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second advent announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based on the prophecies."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

Which of Daniel's prophecies permitted Israel to know the time of the Messiah's advent? Dan. 9:24-27.

"The natural method of calculating these weeks is to consider them consecutive, that is, the 62 weeks begin where the 7 weeks end. These divisions are components of the 70 weeks mentioned in verse 24 thus: $7+62+1=70$

"Beginning with the autumn of 457 B.C., when the decree went into effect, 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years, reach to the baptism of Jesus in 27 A.D. . . .

" . . . When these figures are applied to Christ, His ministry and death, and the gospel to the Jews, perfect synchronism is achieved."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 853, 854.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have you been impressed by the exactness of timing in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy?

William Miller was. "'Another kind of evidence that vitally affected my mind,' he says, 'was the chronology of the Scriptures. . . . I found that predicted events, which had been fulfilled in the past, often occurred within a given time. The one hundred and twenty years to the flood (Genesis 6:3); the seven days that were to precede it, with forty days of predicted rain (Genesis 7:4); the four hundred years of the sojourn of Abraham's seed (Genesis 15:13); the three days of the butler's and baker's dreams (Genesis 40:12-20); the seven years of Pharaoh's [dream] (Genesis 41:28-54); the forty years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:34); the three and a half years of famine (1 Kings 17:1); . . . the seventy years' captivity (Jeremiah 25:11); Nebuchadnezzar's seven times (Daniel 4:13-16); and the seven weeks, threescore and two weeks, and the one week, making seventy weeks, determined upon the Jews (Daniel 9:24-27),—the events limited by these times were all once only a matter of prophecy, and were fulfilled in accordance with predictions.'—Bliss [*Memoirs of William Miller*], pages 74, 75."—Quoted in *The Great Controversy*, p. 323.

**Part 3
THE TIME
APPOINTED
FOR THE END**

What certainty do we have that there is a time appointed for the end?

"At the time appointed the end shall be" (Dan. 8:19).

"The end shall be at the time appointed (Dan. 11:27).

"The time of the end . . . is yet for a time appointed" (Dan. 11:35).

These verses should be considered along with Daniel 8:17; 11:40; 12:4, 9 where the expression "the time of the end" is also used. These words are synonymous with the expression "the last days." The time appointed for the end must be considered in the frame of Daniel's prophecies, which establish the exact beginning of the period in human history that the prophets and the apostles call "the last days."

What prophecy in the book of Daniel allows us to determine the exact year of the beginning of "the time of the end"? Dan. 7:25; 12:7.

This prophecy is mentioned seven times in the Bible: twice in the book of Daniel, and five times in the Revelation (11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5), revealing how important it was to God that man know and understand His plan. The time period is reported in three different ways: in prophetic days, in prophetic months, and in prophetic years. Twice the period is given as 1260 days, twice as 42 months, and three times as three years and a half; all of which give exactly the same period of time—1260 literal years.

"The periods here mentioned . . . are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. . . . At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 266.

THINK IT THROUGH

Of what significance is it to me that we are living in the very end of time?

"We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 11.

"Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 10.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 4, pp. 833, 834.

Part 4
A SEALED
BOOK

When Daniel desired to know the meaning of the prophecy of the last days, what did the angel tell him?

"Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end."

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

"This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel's prophecy that dealt with the last days. (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies, be proclaimed."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 879.

"The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

"That part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal. . . . Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfillment of these prophecies."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 356.

What contrary order was given to John concerning his visions? Rev. 22:10.

"In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.

"The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John, and carries us forward to the last scenes of this earth's history."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 115.

THINK IT THROUGH

Since the opportunity is now mine, why do I not apply myself more diligently to the study of prophecies concerning the time of the end?

"The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.'"
—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 116, 117.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 115-119.

Part 5
KNOWLEDGE
SHALL INCREASE

What marvelous promise was made to Daniel concerning the sealed prophecies in his book?

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

"The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:4, 10).

"Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased. . . . At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century a new interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was awakened in widely separated places of earth. The study of these prophecies led to a widespread belief that the second advent of Christ was near. Numerous expositors in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manuel Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States, together with a host of other students of the prophecies, declared, on the basis of their study of the prophecies of Daniel, that the second advent was at hand."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 879.

In what does true wisdom consist? Job 28:28; Dan. 12:3.

The wise man with intelligence and understanding is happy, not only to fear God and isolate himself from evil; he also desires to teach others, to share what he has been privileged to receive. "Whosoever shall do and teach them [these least commandments], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19).

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I have that intelligence which, according to the Bible, is powerful enough to overcome evil?

Imitate the apostle Paul, who, we are told, after Jesus, was "the most illustrious teacher that this world has known."—*Education*, p. 51.

"While he possessed high intellectual endowments, the life of Paul revealed the power of a rarer wisdom. Principles of deepest import, principles concerning which the greatest minds of this time were ignorant, are unfolded in his teachings and exemplified in his life. He had that greatest of all wisdom, which gives quickness of insight and sympathy of heart, which brings man in touch with men, and enables him to arouse their better nature and inspire them to a higher life."—*Education*, p. 66.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 547, 548.

**Part 6
HIGH TIME
TO AWAKE**

What should be the logical consequence of being aware of the day and the hour in which we are living?

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:11, 12).

This is the reasoning logically followed by all who have preached the coming of God's kingdom. Matthew summarizes the message of John the Baptist in these words: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2), Jesus preached the same message (Mark 1:15), and the risen Christ urges the Laodicean community to repent.

How did Jesus describe the condition of the believers while they await His return? Matt. 25:5, 6.

"All who wait for the heavenly Bridegroom are represented in the parable as slumbering because their Lord delayed His coming; but the wise roused themselves at the message of His approach, and responded to the message, and their spiritual discernment was not all gone, and they sprang into line."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1099.

According to the apostle Paul, what should a person do because "the day is at hand"? Rom. 13:12-14.

"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 121.

But what is revival? "Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 128. Revival should lead to reformation; that is, "reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 128.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should I do to help bring a revival in the church?

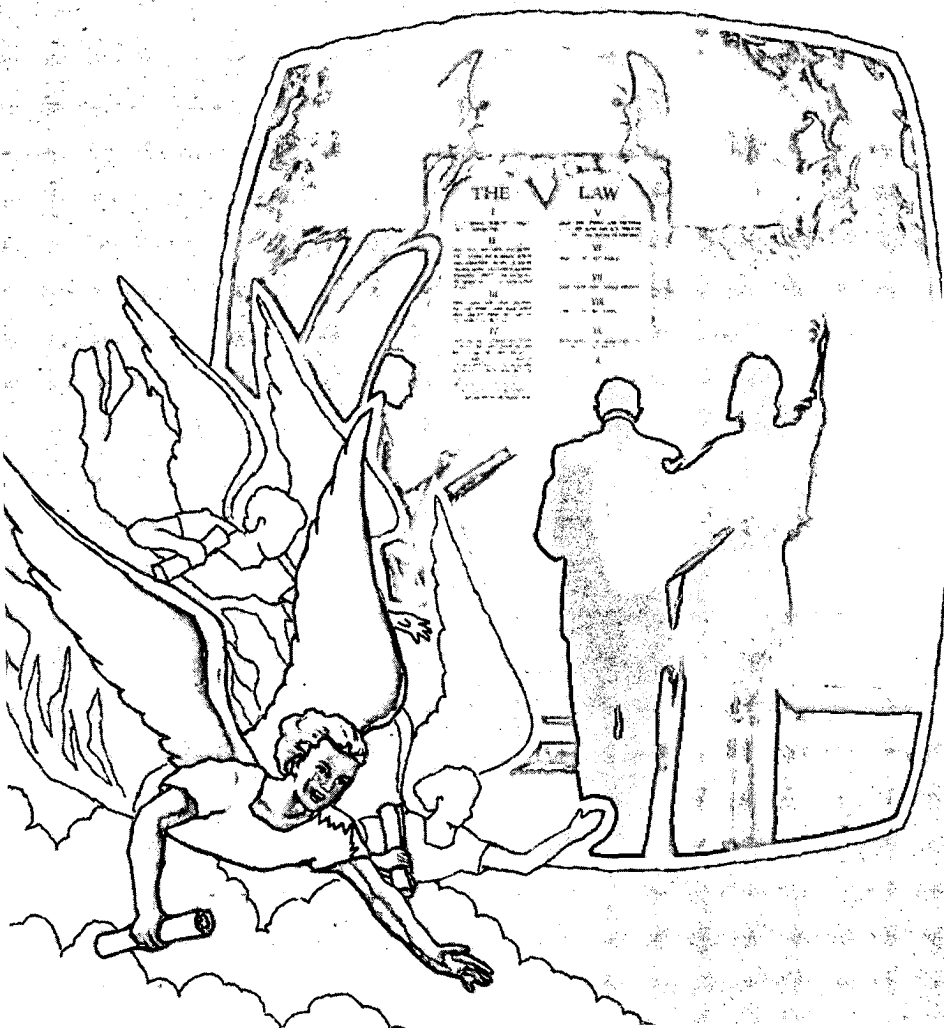
"Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come.

"There are persons in the church who are not converted, and who will not unite in earnest, prevailing prayer. We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 122.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 121-128.

8. "The Hour of ... Judgment Is Come"



"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 . . . , for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6, 7).

If there is a time appointed for the end—and there is—we also know, according to the Bible, that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Moreover, the message in Revelation 14 teaches that "the hour of his judgment is come." This is why God sends His angel to "preach unto them that dwell on the earth" and to beseech them to prepare to meet their God.

"Since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 356. However, it was not until 1844 that the pioneers truly understood the meaning of the prophecy in Daniel 8:14 concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary and its relation to the judgment, whose beginning had been foretold for that year. Divine providence had synchronized perfectly the understanding of the 2300-day prophecy, the beginning of the advent movement, the opening of the investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary, and the proclamation of the everlasting gospel on the earth.

"The message itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the 'everlasting gospel;' and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last

days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had come*. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal 'to the time of the end.' Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfillment of these prophecies."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 355, 356.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. A Universal Judgment**
(2 Cor. 5:10)
- 2. The 2300 Days**
(Dan. 7:9, 10, 25, 26)
- 3. The Cleansing of the Sanctuary**
(Dan. 8:14)
- 4. The Investigative Judgment**
(1 Peter 4:17)
- 5. A Worldwide Witness**
(Matt. 24:14)
- 6. The Millennium**
(Rev. 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3)

Part 1
A UNIVERSAL
JUDGMENT

How does the Bible confirm the certainty of a universal judgment?

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). (Compare Eccl. 3:17; 12:14.)

The entire Bible positively affirms the fact that at the end of human history every man will have to pass before the judgment bar of God. No one will be able to escape; every man's works will be judged. God will "render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6).

What other facts does Paul give concerning the judgment? Acts 17:30, 31; 24:25.

The proclamation of a "judgment to come" was the basis of apostolic preaching. How much more should it be the subject of today's preaching, now that "the hour of . . . judgment is come"!

"This judgment does not take place at death. Mark the words of Paul: 'He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.' Acts 17:31. . . . Here the apostle plainly stated that a specified time, then future, had been fixed upon for the judgment of the world. . . .

"But if the dead are already enjoying the bliss of heaven or writhing in the flames of hell, what need of a future judgment?"—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 548, 549.

THINK IT THROUGH

What should be the result of my belief that I must give account one day of my actions, words, and thoughts?

"In the judgment the use made of every talent will be scrutinized. How have we employed the capital lent us of Heaven? Will the Lord at His coming receive His own with usury? Have we improved the powers entrusted us, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our time, our pen, our voice, our money, our influence? What have we done for Christ, in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan, or the widow? God has made us the depositaries of His holy word; what have we done with the light and truth given us to make men wise unto salvation? No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value. Whatever is done from love, however small it may appear in the estimation of men, is accepted and rewarded of God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 487.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 384-387.

Part 2 **What description does Daniel give of the judgment?**
THE 2300 DAYS **Chronologically, what event does it follow? Dan. 7:9, 10, 25, 26.**

These verses give the chronological order of two events of utmost importance: first, the judgment takes place at the time that a prolongation of life is accorded to the earthly powers for "a season and a time" (verse 12) and "one like the Son of man" appears before "the ancient of days" (verse 13); second, this judgment follows the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 1260 years of papal supremacy which ended in 1798 (verse 25).

"It is He [God the Father], the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' attend this great tribunal."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

What other prophecy should we study diligently, because of its close relation to the "time of the end"? Dan. 8:14, 17.

Paul clearly stated that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). God appointed that day, and it was He who revealed the precise date of the 2300-day prophecy, a prophetic period spanning 2300 years, whose starting point was the same as that of the 70-week prophecy which fixed the date of the Messiah's first advent. The starting point for both was 457 B.C., when Artaxerxes authorized the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem.

"Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25-27. . . . The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. 'Then,' said the angel, 'shall the sanctuary be cleansed.' All the preceding specifications of the prophecy had been unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 410.

THINK IT THROUGH **How much importance do I give the year 1844? As much as prophecy gives it?**

"Such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days . . . , are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future."—*Early Writings*, p. 63.

FURTHER STUDY *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 850, 851.

Part 3
THE CLEANSING
OF THE
SANCTUARY

What event was to mark the end of the 2300 years? Of what sanctuary is the prophet speaking?

"He said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14). (See also Heb. 8:1, 2; 9:11, 24.)

"The term 'sanctuary,' as used in the Bible, refers, first, to the tabernacle built by Moses, as a pattern of heavenly things; and, secondly, to the 'true tabernacle' in heaven, to which the earthly sanctuary pointed. At the death of Christ the typical service ended. The 'true tabernacle' in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant. And as the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 is fulfilled in this dispensation, the sanctuary to which it refers must be the sanctuary of the new covenant. At the termination of the 2300 days, in 1844, there had been no sanctuary on earth for many centuries. Thus the prophecy [of the 2300 days] unquestionably points to the sanctuary in heaven."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 417.

What does the cleansing of the sanctuary mean?
"Christ's daily ministration as our high priest was typified in the daily services. The annual Day of Atonement typified a work that Christ would undertake at the close of the age. For a detailed discussion of these two phases of service see . . . GC 418-423. The prophecy of Dan. 8:14 announces the time for the beginning of this special work. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary comprehends the entire work of final judgment, beginning with the investigative phase and ending with the executive phase, which results in the permanent eradication of sin from the universe."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 844, 845.

"The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 422.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my condition in this fearful and solemn time?

"Shall we not search the Scriptures, that we may know where we are in this world's history? Shall we not become intelligent in regard to the work that is being accomplished for us at this time, and the position that we as sinners should occupy while this work of atonement is going forward? If we have any regard for our souls' salvation, we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 125.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 417-422.

Part 4
THE
INVESTIGATIVE
JUDGMENT

With whom does the investivative judgment begin?

"The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

"In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. 'Judgment must begin at the house of God.'"—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

"Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

Why does the investigative judgment take place before the return of Jesus? (See Matt. 25:31-33; 13:47-50.)

A previous judgment must take place in order that a separation can be made between the just and the wicked at the return of Jesus. In effect, "when the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended for a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

"It is for the benefit of all created beings that the facts with respect to each person's fate should be known, as an assurance to all that justice has been done and as a guarantee of the eternal stability of the divine government."—*S.D.A. Encyclopedia*, art. "Investigative Judgment."

THINK IT THROUGH

If my case were to be examined today, would I be justified by my faith in Jesus Christ?

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Revelation 3:3."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 479-491.

Part 5
A WORLDWIDE
WITNESS

What is God's plan for the world just before the end of time?

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14).

Because God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), He has periodically sent special messengers into the world. What He did in times past—for the antediluvians, for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Nineveh, and for Jerusalem—God also wishes to do for the world just prior to the end of its history.

The progress of the spread of the gospel throughout the world, from the beginning of the nineteenth century until our day, constitutes a sign of the times of great significance. The good news has been preached in most of the world. And, as for the written testimony, no other book has known such widespread distribution throughout the world, nor has any other been translated into so many languages as the Bible. Only a few people in the world today do not have access to at least some part of Scripture in their own tongue.

At the time of the investigative judgment, what special message was to be given to the world? Rev. 14:6.

"The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19.

"In the prophecy [referring to the first angel of Revelation 14] this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 227.

THINK IT THROUGH **Since God has greatly favored me by giving me the everlasting gospel, what is my responsibility in its proclamation?**

"The work of preaching the gospel has not been connected to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 312.

FURTHER STUDY *The Great Controversy*, pp. 355, 356; *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 324.

Part 6
THE MILLENNIUM

Which phase of the judgment will take place during the millennium? Who will take part in it?

"I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

"SDA's understand that the great final judgment involves three steps: (1) an investigative judgment, by which those eligible to eternal life are separated from those who are not eligible in a pre-Advent investigation; (2) an examination of the individual cases of the wicked by the righteous, during the millennium, to assure the latter that justice is being done in each case and to determine the sentence to be meted out in each case; and (3) the executive judgment, which takes place at the close of the millennium, when sentence is executed in the fires of hell."—*S.D.A. Encyclopedia*, art. "Judgment."

The judgment in which the saints take part involves two sets of records: first, the cases of men who loved the world more than God; and, second, those of "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6).

What is the last phase of God's judgment? Rev. 20:11-15.

After everyone's case has been decided—first, those of the household of God (investigative judgment); then, those of the world and of fallen angels (during the millennium)—comes the solemn moment of the judgment proclamation.

"In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 666.

"The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

What promise is addressed to those who inherit eternal life? Rev. 20:6.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 666-673.

9. A Message for Our Time



“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:7).

The advent movement was providentially called into being to bear testimony to the truth at the end of time, during the hour of God’s judgment in the heavenly court. The Lord entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist Church the proclamation of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 to the world. That is the reason for the existence of this church, why it should be different from other Christian bodies.

To what extent is the everlasting gospel the message for our time? Besides being an offer of grace and salvation, it is a call to fear God, to give glory to Him, and to worship Him as He should be worshiped—in spirit and in truth. Before it is too late, God extends a last invitation to mankind. He pleads, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

“The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish. Heavenly angels

conduct this search, and spiritual activity is demanded of all who believe present truth, that they may join the angels in their work. . . .

“The fourteenth chapter of Revelation is a chapter of the deepest interest. This scripture will soon be understood in all its bearings, and the messages given to John the revelator will be repeated with distinct utterance.”—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Everlasting Gospel**
(Rev. 14:6)
- 2. Fear God**
(Rev. 14:7)
- 3. Give Him Glory**
(Rev. 14:7)
- 4. Worship the Creator**
(Rev. 14:7)
- 5. Worship—False and True**
(Rom. 1:21, 25)
- 6. The Sign of True Worship**
(1 Sam. 15:22)

Part 1
THE
EVERLASTING
GOSPEL

Under what symbol is the bearer of the first angel's message presented to us?

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6).

"This is a symbolic vision. The angel represents God's saints engaged in the task of proclaiming the everlasting gospel, especially the features mentioned in this verse, at a time when the 'judgment is come' (v. 7). It is, of course, also true that literal angels assist men in the task of proclaiming the gospel, but this is not the predominant idea here. . . .

" . . . The area of flight indicates the worldwide nature of the angel's work and message. The work grows and develops until it is brought to the sight and hearing of all mankind.

" . . . Only here is the word 'everlasting' used in connection with the gospel of the grace of God. There is but one gospel to save men. It will continue as long as there are men to be saved. There never will be another gospel."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 827.

For what purpose is the everlasting gospel given, and how should it be proclaimed? Rev. 14:6, 7.

Literally, this means "an everlasting gospel to evangelize." The gospel of salvation has been given to man through evangelization. Just as there is no other gospel by which man can be saved, so there is only one means provided by God for the proclamation of the gospel on earth.

"The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it. And the angel's flight 'in the midst of heaven,' the 'loud voice' with which the warning is uttered, and its promulgation to all 'that dwell on the earth,'—'to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,'—give evidence of the rapidity and worldwide extent of the movement."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 355.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way am I to be a bearer of the everlasting gospel?

"The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels. Through men His blessings are to be conveyed to the world. Through them His glory is to shine forth into the darkness of sin. In loving ministry they are to meet the sinful and the needy, and lead them to the cross. And in all their work they are to ascribe glory, honor, and praise to Him who is above all and over all."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 330.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 114-116; *My Life Today*, p. 305.

Part 2
FEAR GOD

What is the first requirement for the believer who wishes to respond to God's call?

"Fear God" (Rev. 14:7).

The first angel's message of Revelation 14 contains three commands. The first expresses the basic condition for reconciliation with God: Fear God. This call is particularly appropriate in our day—the time of the end, the judgment hour—because most men no longer fear God, nor do they even care to know Him. (See Rom. 1:28.) "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32).

The word "fear" is used here not in the sense of being afraid of God, but in the sense of coming to Him with reverence and awe. It conveys the thought of absolute loyalty to God, of full surrender to His will. . . .

"The message to fear God is especially timely in the period represented by the preaching of this angel, for men are worshipping gods of materialism and pleasure and many others of their own devising."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 827.

Give several examples that justify giving a positive meaning to the expression "fear of God." Ps. 111:10; 25:14; Acts 10:2; Rev. 11:18.

The word "fear" in the Bible is used with varied meanings, from that of fright to reverence and love for God. Thus the judgment, an event that will make sinners tremble with fear, will also be a time when God will reward them that fear His name. Fear can also express unbelief. And while it is true that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18), it is also written that we should perfect "holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). And finally, the Scripture reports, "the churches . . . walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts 9:31).

THINK IT THROUGH

In a world that no longer fears God, how do I regard God in the privacy of my soul?

"Christ's followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures teach men how they should approach their Maker—with humility and awe, through faith in a divine Mediator. . . .

"True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 48.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 423, 424.

Part 3
GIVE HIM
GLORY

What second command is contained in the first angel's message?

"Give glory to him" (Rev. 14:7).

It is man's duty to recognize and extol the glory of God. Man was created to be in "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:7). Likewise, God purchased a people "unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:14). And when the Lord enters into His kingdom, the redeemed will exclaim to one another, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him" (Rev. 19:6, 7). "Give glory to him" should be the lifelong objective of God's creatures. It was that of Jesus (John 7:18), and at the end of His earthly ministry He was able to say, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Following the example of Jesus, how can we glorify God on earth? Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; 1 Peter 2:12.

"The good works of the children of God are the most effectual preaching that the unbeliever has."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 193.

"In the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 718.

"As Sabbathkeeping Adventists we profess to obey all God's commandments and to be looking for the coming of our Redeemer. A most solemn message of warning has been entrusted to God's faithful few. We should show by our words and works that we recognize the great responsibility laid upon us. Our light should shine so clearly that others can see that we glorify the Father in our daily lives; that we are connected with heaven and are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, that when He shall appear in power and great glory, we shall be like Him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 16.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways do my life, my words, my actions give glory to God?

"Christ declares: 'Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' John 15:8. God has endowed us with faculties and has entrusted us with talents in order that we may use them for Him. To every man is given his work—not merely work in his fields of corn and wheat, but earnest, persevering work for the salvation of souls. Every stone in God's temple must be a living stone, a stone that shines, reflecting light to the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 246.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 58-60.

Part 4
WORSHIP
THE CREATOR

What is the purpose of the first angel's call?

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

"The worship of God is in contrast with the worship of the beast (ch. 13:8, 12) and that of its image (v. 15). In the crisis soon to come, the inhabitants of the earth will be called upon to make their choice, as did the three Hebrew worthies in days of old, between the worship of the true God and that of false gods (Dan. 3). The message of the first angel is designed to prepare men to make the proper choice and to stand firm in the time of crisis.

" . . . The appeal to worship God as Creator has become especially timely in the years following the initial preaching of the first angel's message, because of the rapid spread of the theory of evolution. Furthermore, the call to worship the God of heaven as Creator of all things implies that due heed be given to the sign of God's creative works—the Sabbath of the Lord. . . . If the Sabbath had been kept as God intended, it would have served as a great safeguard against infidelity and evolution (see Acts 14:15; PP 336). The Sabbath will be a point especially controverted in the closing crisis."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 828.

To which temptation is today's world particularly subjected? How did Jesus meet it? Matt. 4:8-10.

"With the same temptation Satan approaches men, and here he has better success than with Christ. To men he offers the kingdom of this world on condition that they will acknowledge his supremacy. He requires that they sacrifice integrity, disregard conscience, indulge selfishness. . . . Satan walks by their side and says: Whatever may be true in regard to life eternal, in order to make a success in this world you must serve me. I hold your welfare in my hands. I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 130.

THINK IT THROUGH

If I looked upon the world as it really is, would not the temptation to worship false gods be less enticing?

"Before His [Christ's] sight the tempter held the kingdoms of the world. As Satan saw them, they possessed great external grandeur. But Christ saw them in a different aspect, just as they were—earthly dominions under the power of a tyrant. He saw humanity full of woe, suffering under the oppressive power of Satan. He saw the earth defiled by hatred, revenge, malice, lust, and murder. He saw fiends in the possession of the bodies and souls of men."—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1083.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 436-438.

Part 5
WORSHIP—
FALSE AND
TRUE

What has been the attitude of sinners toward the Creator?

“When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Rom. 1:21, 25). (Compare Rom. 1:18-25; 2 Peter 3:5.)

“A terrible picture of the condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now.

“I was referred to Romans 1:18-32, as a true description of the world previous to the second appearing of Christ.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 440.

What instructions did our Lord give concerning the proper way to worship God? John 4:21-24.

“Not by seeking a holy mountain or a sacred temple are men brought into communion with heaven. Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. . . . For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 189.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do you worship God? What feelings do you experience in your worship?

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

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 295.

Part 6
THE SIGN OF
TRUE WORSHIP

From a practical viewpoint, what constitutes worship?

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). (Compare verse 23; Matt. 7:21-23.)

"The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. 'Believe, believe,' is their cry; 'only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.' While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1073.

By what sign can we know that one truly worships "him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters"? (See Ex. 31:16, 17; 20:8-11; Eze. 20:12, 20.)

"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. 'The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten.'—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.

THINK IT THROUGH

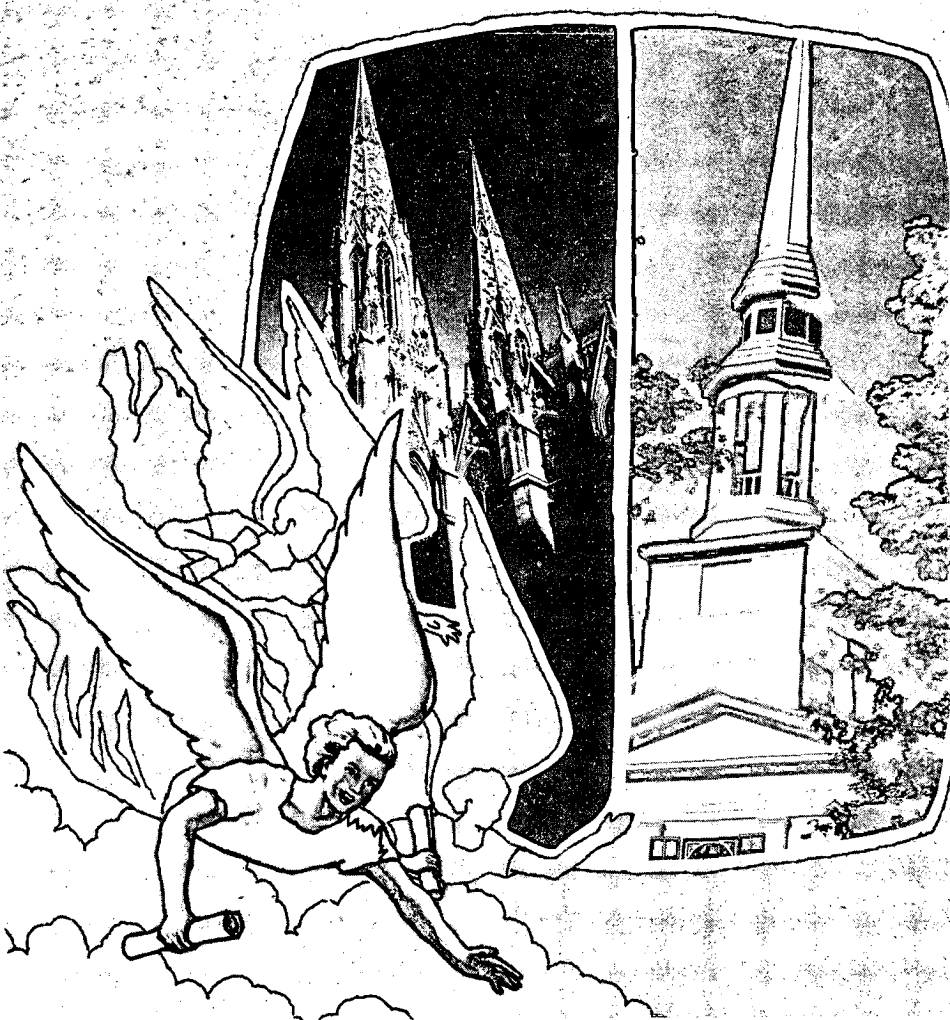
"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

This is the question asked by the rich young ruler. The Master's response left no doubt: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17). "Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. 'Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.' 1 John 2:3."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 307-310.

10. Come Out of Babylon, My People



“There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).

The message of the second angel of Revelation 14 reveals a new aspect of the everlasting gospel. At first it may appear to be a simple condemnation of the religious world in the time of the end. However, when considered in connection with the message of Revelation 18—a repetition of the second angel’s message to be proclaimed just before the end of probation—it unfolds as the ultimate call of divine mercy. Once again God clearly shows that He does not wish the death of the sinner, but rather that “the wicked turn from his way and live” (Eze. 33:11). Or, as the apostle Paul expressed it, “God, our Saviour . . . will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4).

To achieve this objective it was essential for God to lay His finger on the sore and uncover the evil. In the second message God reveals the actual condition of the religious world in these last days. Iniquity has so increased that the love of many has grown cold. The canker is general; the evil is beyond remedy. Only “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13).

In truth, although Babylon is condemned, there are men and women in Babylon whom God considers as belonging to Him. He wishes to lead His scattered sheep

back to His fold. To help them find Him He will make the light of the everlasting gospel to shine brighter than ever before; that they may hear His call, He will send His angel to cry “mightily with a strong voice, . . . Come our of her, my people” (Rev. 18:2-4).

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Message of the Second Angel (Rev. 14:8)**
- 2. Babylon the Great (Rev. 14:8)**
- 3. Babylon Identified (Rev. 17:18)**
- 4. Babylon’s Sin (Rev. 14:8)**
- 5. The Earth Lighted With His Glory (Rev. 18:1)**
- 6. The Last Call (Rev. 18:4)**

Part 1
THE MESSAGE
OF THE
SECOND ANGEL**At what moment does the second angel appear on the scene?****"There followed another angel" (Rev. 14:8).**

The Greek word used here, *akoloutheō*, may be translated either as "to follow" or "to accompany." "It seems to have both meanings in this text. In point of time the second angel follows the first, but it is also true that the first angel continues his ministry when the second angel joins him. In this sense the second angel's message accompanies that of the first."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 828.

What historical explanation is given us concerning the preaching of the second angel's message? "The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that 'Babylon is fallen, . . . because she made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'

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

THINK IT THROUGH**What should I do to guard against the seductions of the evil one, so cleverly disguised under the cloak of religion?**

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 625.

FURTHER STUDY*Early Writings*, pp. 237-240.

Part 2
BABYLON
THE GREAT

What solemn declaration is made by the second angel?

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city" (Rev. 14:8).

The city of Babylon was originally founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:10; 11:1-9) and reached the zenith of its glory under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar during the time of Daniel. At the time that John was writing the Revelation the city lay in ruins; therefore, this text cannot apply to the historical city.

In Revelation the name "Babylon" is used figuratively. It is first mentioned in the message of the second angel. It is interesting to note that Babylon is mentioned six times in the Revelation (chap. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) and that six is the symbolic number of the city, and the number used in worship in ancient Babylon.

"During the early Christian centuries the cryptic designation Babylon for the city and empire of Rome appears commonly in both Jewish and Christian literature. . . .

"Babylon, both literal and mystical, has thus long been recognized as the traditional enemy of God's truth and people. As used in the Revelation the name is symbolic of all apostate religious organizations and their leadership, from antiquity down to the close of time."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 830.

What adjective qualifies the name "Babylon" whenever it is mentioned in the Revelation? What meaning must one attribute to it? Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21.

The adjective "great" fits perfectly what Babylon represents, the example par excellence of a powerful city ruling the world and hostile to God. Her grandeur was built on negative values; great was her sin. (See Rev. 18:5.)

In both the Old and the New Testaments, Babylon is consistently in opposition to Jerusalem. While the former is symbolic of self-glory and false worship, the latter symbolizes the glory of God and divine worship. The first means "confusion"; the second "peace." In Revelation mystical Babylon is called "the great whore" (Rev. 17:1), whereas Jerusalem is described as "a bride adorned for her husband" (chap. 21:2).

THINK IT THROUGH

To what degree have I made my choice between the two symbolic cities, Babylon and Jerusalem?

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; . . . For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10).

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 866-869.

**Part 3
BABYLON
IDENTIFIED****What other biblical symbol enables us to identify mystical Babylon as Christian Rome?****"The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). Compare verses 1-6, 15.)**

"In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman—a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church. . . .

" . . . The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared 'drunken with the blood of the saints' as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with 'the kings of the earth.' It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation.

"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. 381-383.

To what precisely does the second angel's message announcing the fall of Babylon apply? "The message of Revelation 14, announcing the *fall* of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. . . .

"Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome's example of iniquitous connection with 'the kings of the earth'—the state churches, by their relation to secular governments; and other denominations, by seeking the favor of the world. And the term 'Babylon'—confusion—may be appropriately applied to these bodies, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 383.

THINK IT THROUGH**What assurance do I have that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will not end as other churches have? (See *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 380, 397.)****FURTHER STUDY***The Great Controversy*, pp. 384-388.

Part 4
BABYLON'S SIN

Of what is Babylon accused?

"She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8).

"This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 388.

"This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 61, 62.

What figures are used of Babylon when she came to the end of her moral degradation? Rev. 18:2, 3.

"A terrible condition of the religious world is here described. With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. . . . As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 603, 604.

"The sins of the popular churches are whitewashed over. Many of the members indulge in the grossest vices and are steeped in iniquity. Babylon is fallen and has become the cage of every foul and hateful bird! The most revolting sins of the age find shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 13.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what degree have I avoided worldly influences?

"Our position in the world is not what it should be. We are far from where we should have been had our Christian experience been in harmony with the light and the opportunities given us. . . . But many of those who have had special light are so conformed to the world that they can scarcely be distinguished from worldlings."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 247.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 67, 68.

**Part 5
THE EARTH
LIGHTED WITH
HIS GLORY**

What does God purpose to do before the final destruction of Babylon?

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" (Rev. 18:1).

"Power. Gr. *exousia*, 'authority.' . . . This angel comes forth from the throne room of the universe, commissioned to proclaim God's last message of mercy and to warn the inhabitants of earth of the imminent fate awaiting 'Babylon the great.'

Lightened. Or, 'illuminated.' Despite satanic efforts to shroud the earth in darkness, God now sets it ablaze with the glorious light of saving truth."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 860.

In what special manner does God in mercy have the second angel's message repeated? Rev. 18:2.

"This scripture [Rev. 18:1, 2, 4] points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 603.

What does God demand that we be for all the world to be lighted? Matt. 5:14-16.

This text is referred to 264 times in the writings of Ellen White. Few other scriptures did she mention so often, confirming the importance that it should have in our thinking.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I prepare for participation in God's final work?

"As the time comes for it [message of the third angel] to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be open. . . . By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 383; vol. 9, p. 40; *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 52.

Part 6
THE LAST CALL

To whom is God's last appeal particularly addressed?

"I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

"God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and 'receive not of her plagues.' Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard, 'Come out of her, My people.' These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

At a time when confusion and iniquity reign in the world, what does the Lord demand of His people? Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Peter 2:9.

"We are living in the last days of this earth's history, in an age of sin and corruption, and like Noah we are to so live that we shall be a pleasure to God, showing forth the praises of Him 'who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light' (1 Peter 2:9)."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 90.

"God requires His people to shine as lights in the world. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. And while they enjoy communion with God they will wish to have intercourse with their fellow men in order to express by their words and acts the love of God which animates their hearts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 122, 123.

THINK IT THROUGH

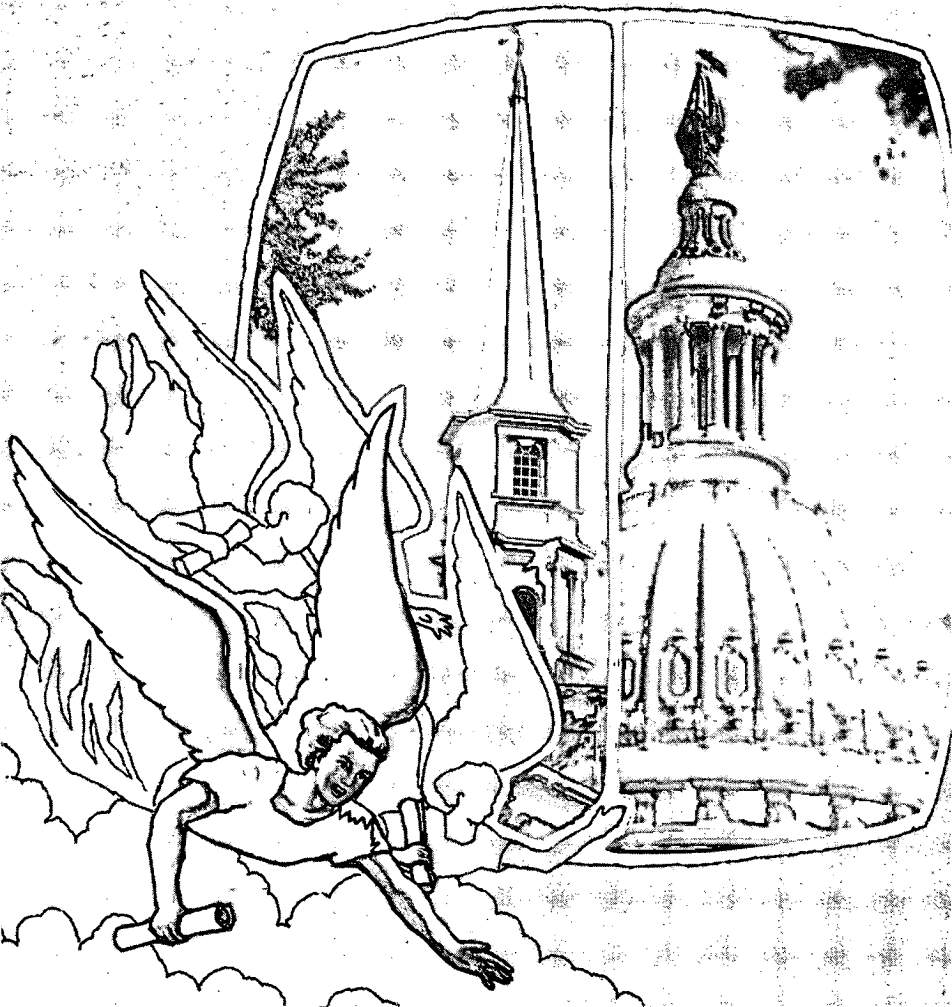
How can I cooperate more effectively with heavenly agents in carrying out the work of God?

"The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled: During the proclamation of the third angel's message, 'another angel' is to 'come down from heaven, having great power,' and the earth is to be 'lightened with his glory.' The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 390, 611, 612.

II. The Third Angel's Message



“The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:9, 10).

Through the first angel’s message the Lord invites “them that dwell on the earth, . . . every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” to “fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” (verses 6, 7). Then, after announcing the fall of Babylon by the proclamation of the second angel’s message, the Lord calls those of His children who are still scattered, again inviting them to come out of the great city of perdition in order not to participate in her sins or have a part in her plagues.

To the third angel God entrusts the task of warning all men by pointing out the tragic consequences which follow the turning of a deaf ear to the Lord’s calls of mercy. “The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 383.

“This message [Rev. 14:6-12] is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that ‘believed not the

truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness,’ (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: ‘Come out of her, My people’ (Revelation 18:4).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 390.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Third Angel**
(Rev. 14:9)
- 2. The Beast and His Image**
(Rev. 14:9)
- 3. The Mark of the Beast and the Seal of God**
(Rev. 14:9, 10)
- 4. True and False Worship**
(Rev. 14:11)
- 5. The Time of the Final Crisis**
(Rev. 13:16, 17)
- 6. Recompense and Punishment**
(Rom. 8:18)

Part 1
THE THIRD
ANGEL

What is told us about the third angel, and what do we know about the time of his operation?

"The third angel followed them saying with a loud voice" (Rev. 14:9).

The Greek word translated "followed" here means that the third angel came after the first and the second angels and then accompanied them. Thus the three angels carry on their work together until the end.

"When we began to present the light on the Sabbath question, we had no clearly defined idea of the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-12. The burden of our testimony as we came before the people was that the great second advent movement was of God, that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given. We saw that the third message closed with the words: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' And we as clearly saw as we now see that these prophetic words suggested a Sabbath reform; but as to what the worship of the beast mentioned in the message was, or what the image and the mark of the beast were, we had no defined position.

"God by His Holy Spirit let light shine forth upon His servants, and the subject gradually opened to their minds. It required much study and anxious care to search it out, link after link. By care, anxiety, and incessant labor has the work moved on until the great truths of our message, a clear, connected, perfect whole, have been given to the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 78, 79.

The first and the third angels' messages are to be proclaimed "with a loud voice." This indicates that they are to be given in a way that all the world will hear. This type of communication also emphasizes the importance of the messages to be proclaimed.

"The message of the third angel is to prepare a people to stand in these days of peril. It is to be proclaimed with a loud voice and is to accomplish a work which few realize."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 94.

THINK IT THROUGH

How will I escape if I neglect the study of this important prophecy?

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pp. 254-258.

**Part 2
THE BEAST
AND HIS IMAGE**

What earthly power is implicated with the beast spoken of in the third angel's message?

**"If any man worship the beast and his image" (Rev. 14:9).
(See also Rev. 13:2-8.)**

"In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, . . . to which the dragon gave 'his power, and his seat, and great authority.' This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire. . . .

" . . . This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.' " —*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

"After this, says the prophet, 'his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.' Paul states plainly that the 'man of sin' will continue until the second advent. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. To the very close of time he will carry forward the work of deception. And the revelator declares, also referring to the papacy: 'All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.' Revelation 13:8."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 579.

What is the image to the beast spoken of in the third angel's message? Rev. 14:9; 13:12-17.

"By this first beast is represented the Roman Church, an ecclesiastical body clothed with civil power, having authority to punish all dissenters. The image to the beast represents another religious body clothed with similar powers. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States. Here is to be found an image of the Papacy. When the churches of our land, uniting upon such points of faith as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions, then will Protestant America have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy."—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 381, 382.

THINK IT THROUGH

It is time to understand that the fight of faith, soon to come, will be something different from doctrinal disputes or from the struggle against the carnal man. (Read Eph. 6:10-12.)

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 439-445.

**Part 3
THE MARK OF
THE BEAST
AND THE SEAL
OF GOD**

What mark will distinguish those who worship the beast and his image just before the end of time?

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:9, 10). (Compare 13: 16, 17.)

"Adventist interpreters understand this mark to be not a literal brand but some sign of allegiance that identified the bearer as loyal to the power represented by the beast. The controversy at that time will center on the law of God, and particularly on the fourth command. . . . Hence the observance of Sunday will constitute such a sign, but only at the time when the beast's power will be revived and Sunday observance becomes a matter of compliance with civil law. Adventists hold that simultaneously the third angel's message will warn against the reception of the mark (ch. 14:9-11). This message, swelling into a loud cry (ch. 18:1-4), will enlighten men as to the issues involved. When the issues are thus clearly before them, and men nevertheless choose to support an institution of the beast, knowing it to be in direct opposition to the command of God, they thereby show their allegiance to the power and receive the mark of the beast."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 822.

In contradistinction to the mark of the beast, what sign will God's children receive? Rev. 7:3; 2 Cor. 1:22.

"As in ancient times a seal on an object testified to its ownership, so the seal of God upon His people proclaims that He has recognized them as His own (see 2 Tim. 2:19; cf. TM 446).

"The seal to be affixed upon God's faithful servants is 'the pure mark of truth,' the 'mark' of His 'approval' (3T 267). It attests 'likeness to Christ in character' [EGW RH May 5, 1895]. . . . 'The seal of God, the token or sign of His authority, is found in the fourth commandment' (EGW ST Nov. 1, 1899; cf. GC 640)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 782.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are you sure of your passport to enter the Holy City?

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City. But there are many who take upon themselves responsibilities in connection with the work of God who are not wholehearted believers, and while they remain thus cannot receive the seal of the living God. They trust in their own righteousness, which the Lord accounts as foolishness."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 210-214.

Part 4
TRUE AND
FALSE WORSHIP

The worship of the beast and his image implies hostility to God's law. What result naturally follows this open hostility?

"They have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Rev. 14:11).

"When Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshiping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—'the mark of the beast.' And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'"—*The Great Controversy*, p. 449.

**What sign distinguishes those who worship the true God?
Isa. 56:1, 2, 6, 7.**

"While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment,—since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage,—the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 446.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are you doing to prepare for that final test?

"Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

"Now is the time to prepare."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 216.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 445-450.

Part 5
THE TIME OF
THE FINAL
CRISIS

What laws will be enacted by the religiopolitical power symbolized by the image to the beast at the time of the final crisis?

"He causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13:16, 17).

"A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people be brought into great peril. When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 977.

What extreme measure will be taken as regards those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast or to worship the image to the beast? Rev. 13:15.

"In the issue of the conflict all Christendom will be divided into two great classes, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 16.

"This is the story of the ages. Legislation in matters of religion has ever been followed by persecution. It was so during the Middle Ages: witness the massacre of the Waldenses and others, at the hands of the civil power, to be sure, but prompted by the dominant church of the day. In its attempt to make all earth's inhabitants give allegiance to the first beast . . . the second beast will issue a decree threatening with death all who maintain their loyalty to God."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 822.

THINK IT THROUGH

When will Sunday keeping become the mark of the beast?

"Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but that time has not come yet."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 977.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pp. 975-977.

**Part 6
RECOMPENSE
AND PUNISHMENT**

What does the apostle Paul teach concerning the sufferings of this present life?

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). (Compare 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.)

"The anticipation of this future glory should sustain Christians in their afflictions here below. The sufferings may seem great, but they are 'light' compared with that 'eternal weight of glory' which the afflictions are working out (2 Cor. 4:17). They are for only a moment, but the glory will be eternal. They will soon pass away, but the glory will never dim or diminish forever and ever (1 Peter 1:14)."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 569.

What terrible future awaits those who refuse to listen to the solemn message of the third angel? Rev. 14:10, 11.

When the time of probation is past, God's judgments will be poured out without mercy. The torments mentioned will probably be twofold: first, during the plagues when the enemies of God's law will have "no rest day nor night" (verse 11), the end of which will be the first death at the time of the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:19-21); and, second, the final destruction at the time of the "second death" (Rev. 20:14).

"The figure of the smoke ascending forever is doubtless drawn from Isa. 34:10, where the desolation of Edom is described. That the ancient prophet did not envision unending fires is seen from the fact that following the conflagration, concerning which he says, 'The smoke thereof shall go up for ever,' the country becomes a desolate waste inhabited by wild beasts (vs. 10-15). The figure denotes complete destruction."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 832.

"The theory of eternal torment is one of the false doctrines that constitute the wine of the abomination of Babylon."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 536.

THINK IT THROUGH

What will be my position during the time of crisis?

"Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 622.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 535-537.

“They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Isa. 58:12).

“Who is it that shall build the old waste places, and raise up the foundation of many generations? Where are the people who have had light from heaven to see that a breach has been made in the law of God?

“In the Revelation, John says, ‘The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.’ Rev. 11:19. John saw in vision the Lord’s people looking for His coming and searching for truth. As the temple of God was opened unto His people, the light of the law of God, which was in the ark, shone forth. Those who receive this light are brought to view in the proclamation of the third angel’s message.

“This is the people that are repairing the breach in the law of God. They see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been supplanted by a spurious sabbath, a day that has no sanction in the Word of God. Amid great opposition they become loyal to their God, and take their position under the standard of the third angel. . . .

“As the end approaches, the testimonies of God’s servants will become more decided and more powerful, flashing the light of truth upon the systems of error and oppression that have so long held the supremacy. The Lord has sent us messages for this time to establish Christianity upon an eternal basis, and

all who believe present truth must stand, not in their own wisdom, but in God; and raise up the foundation of many generations. These will be registered in the books of heaven as repairers of the breach, the restorers of paths to dwell in. We are to maintain the truth because it is truth, in the face of the bitterest opposition. God is at work upon human minds; it is not man alone that is working. The great illuminating power is from Christ; the brightness of His example is to be kept before the people in every discourse.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1152.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Patience of the Saints**
(Rev. 14:12)
- 2. The Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus**
(Rev. 14:12)
- 3. The Law and the Fourth Commandment**
(1 Cor. 7:19; 1 John 2:4)
- 4. The Law and Grace**
(Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24)
- 5. To the Law and to the Testimony**
(Isa. 8:20)
- 6. In the Spirit and Power of Elijah**
(Mal. 4:5)

Part 1
THE PATIENCE
OF THE SAINTS

What Christian virtue does the angel mention first? Why?

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

"Here the translation 'steadfast endurance' would be a more suitable rendering. The context calls attention to the fearful struggle with the beast and his image. Every attempt will be made to force the remnant to join the movement promoted by the second beast, including the threat of boycott and death. (Rev. 13:11-17). At the same time Satan will work with all 'deceivableness of unrighteousness' (2 Thess. 2:10; cf. Matt. 24:24), making it appear that the power of God is manifest in the movement. Through all this the faithful remnant steadfastly endure and maintain their integrity. Their steadfastness merits special commendation."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 832.

**What part does endurance play in the work of salvation?
Matt. 24:9-13; Heb. 10:35-39.**

In these texts Jesus places the endurance of the saints in its proper relation to the terrible conditions prevalent in the last days—affliction, deception, iniquity, and general apostasy—obstacles set up by the enemy to cause the saints to stumble and fall. The children of God will meet every temptation and emerge victorious. Salvation is promised only to those who endure to the end, remain faithful in spite of general apostasy, and preserve their purity in a rising flood of iniquity.

"That this admonition [Heb. 10:35-39] is addressed to the church in the last days is evident from the words pointing to the nearness of the Lord's coming: 'For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.' . . . The instruction here given is especially adapted to the experience of Adventists at this time. The people here addressed were in danger of making shipwreck of faith. . . . Their only safe course was to cherish the light which they had already received of God, hold fast to His promises, and continue to search the Scriptures, and patiently wait and watch to receive further light."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 408.

THINK IT THROUGH

Has patience completed her perfect work in me? (See James 1:2-4.)

"Faith, patience, forbearance, heavenly-mindedness, trust in your wise, heavenly Father, are the perfect blossoms which mature amidst clouds and disappointments and bereavements."—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 934.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 465-468; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 437.

Part 2
THE COMMANDMENTS
OF GOD AND THE
FAITH OF JESUS

What characteristics identify those who accept the third angel's message?

"Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

"Keep the commandments of God. This statement is particularly significant in its context. Led captive by Satan's delusions, the world will bow to the beast and its image, and carry out its dictates and decrees. . . . The saints, on the other hand, refuse to comply with its demands. . . . In this dark hour the children of God will cling to the Bible and refuse to give homage to any power besides Christ. Among the many identifying features that might have been mentioned, the prophet was directed to point out two predominant ones, the keeping of the commandments of God and of the faith of Jesus."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 832, 833.

Why should the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus be the distinctive features of the remnant church? The patience of the saints is characterized by the keeping of the commandments of God and by the faith of Jesus because these two requirements are essential to Christian living. A second reason for emphasizing these essential features is that false teaching has long placed emphasis on salvation by works without faith, and on faith without works.

Through the third angel's message, the Lord desires to reestablish the truth, and it falls to the church of the remnant to proclaim it by word and deed. The Christian religion has always been a matter of both faith and obedience. Luke reports, "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). And speaking of his work, Paul said that his goal was to lead to "obedience to the faith among all nations" (Rom. 1:5).

"The enemy has ever labored to disconnect the law and the gospel. They go hand in hand. . . .

"The law of Jehovah is the tree, the gospel is the fragrant blossoms and fruit which it bears."—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1073.

"It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 478.

THINK IT THROUGH

"In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 468.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 466-468.

**Part 3
THE LAW AND
THE FOURTH
COMMANDMENT**

What are some of the statements made by the apostles proving that it is important for a Christian to keep the commandments of God?

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God” (1 Cor. 7:19).

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). (Compare ch. 5:2-4.)

“By the first angel, men are called upon to ‘fear God, and give glory to Him,’ and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: ‘Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’ Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ ‘He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.’ 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

Of all the Ten Commandments, why do we give so much importance to the fourth? Ex. 31:17; Dan. 7:25.

There are at least two essential reasons for giving great importance to the fourth commandment: First, observance of the true day of rest in harmony with the law of God is a proof of our fidelity to God’s authority as Creator. Second, the fourth commandment is the one that the adversary has particularly attacked, hoping to be able to “change times and laws.”

“The seal of God’s law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator’s memorial and the sign of His authority.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I among those who keep the commandments of God as they should be kept?

“Our work as believers in the truth is to present before the world the immutability of the law of God. . . . We are to be distinguished as a people who keep the commandments.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 199, 200.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 436-438.

**Part 4
THE LAW
AND GRACE**

What is the role of the law in the work of salvation?

"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). (Compare ch. 7:7.)

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

"Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life. Thus superficial conversions abound, and multitudes are joined to the church who have never been united to Christ."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 468.

How does faith in Jesus complement the work of the law in the salvation of men? Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 5:5, 6.

The knowledge of sin is possible only by the law of God, and justification is obtainable only "by faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3:22, RSV). Through the law the sinner is made conscious of his guilt in the sight of God; through faith in Jesus he is freely forgiven.

How does genuine faith express itself? James 2:14-26.

"The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but what saith the word of God? . . .

"The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted, it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 472.

THINK IT THROUGH

Until now, how have I shown my faith to be genuine? In what ways have I proclaimed the third angel's message?

"The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 6, pp. 1070-1073.

**Part 5
TO THE LAW
AND TO THE
TESTIMONY**

What is the basic prerequisite for all claims to be teaching the truth?

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). (Compare Luke 16:29-31.)

“To the law and to the testimony” has the same meaning as the expression used by Jesus to designate Scripture, “Moses and all the prophets” (Luke 24:27), or that used by Paul, “the law and the prophets” (Rom. 3:21). “Isaiah directs men away from the words and wisdom of devils and men to the revealed wisdom of God. . . . Isaiah here directs men to the Word of God as the standard of truth and the guide to right living.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 144.

“‘To the law and to the testimony.’ While conflicting doctrines and theories abound, the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all opinions, doctrines, and theories are to be tested. Says the prophet: ‘If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

According to the prophet Isaiah, what particular restoration must repairers of the breach make? Isa. 58:12-14.

“This prophecy [Isa. 58:12-14] also applies in our time. The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 453.

“Here [Isa. 58:8-14] are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel’s message, those who avow themselves God’s commandment-keeping people, and who honor God, and are earnestly engaged, in the sight of all the universe, in building up the old waste places.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1151.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I also be a repairer of the breach?

“Let everyone be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach. Let all be careful not to make an outcry against the only people who are fulfilling the description given of the remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus, who are exalting the standard of righteousness in these last days.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 57, 58.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 451-456.

**Part 6
IN THE SPIRIT
AND POWER
OF ELIJAH**

What did the Lord promise through the prophet Malachi concerning the first and the second advents of Jesus?

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5).

Even though this prophecy has already been fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, the context clearly shows that it will have another fulfillment before “the great and dreadful day of the Lord,” “that shall burn as an oven” (Mal. 4:5, 1). “John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord. . . . He was a representative of those living in these last days to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 61, 62.

What did Malachi state was the work to be accomplished, and what explanation did the angel give Zacharias concerning this message? Mal. 4:6; Luke 1:16, 17.

The work of John the Baptist, like that of the prophet Elijah, was to lead the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God, “the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

“The very work accomplished by Elijah and John the Baptist is needed today. In these days of moral corruption and spiritual blindness there is need of voices that will fearlessly proclaim the coming of the Lord to the people of earth. The call of this hour is for men and women who will order their lives as did John and Elijah of old, and who will call upon others to do the same. There is needed a work of earnest reform, not only without the church, but within it as well. God calls upon all who would love and serve Him to go forth ‘in the spirit and power of Elijah’ (3T 61, 62).”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 675.

THINK IT THROUGH

How deep is my concern for the unfinished task before us?

“In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ’s first advent, called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.’ With the earnestness that characterized Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ’s second advent.”—Ellen G. White *Comments*, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1184.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 61-64.

13. "Behold, He Cometh With Clouds"



“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22:20).

The Apocalypse opens with the words “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” “In Greek, as in English, this phrase may be understood . . . to be either a revelation from Jesus or one that reveals Him.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 728. In reality, the Apocalypse is both a revelation of God given by Jesus Christ as the intermediary and one that reveals Jesus Christ Himself, Him “which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Rev. 1:4). Certainly, as Ellen White so aptly stated, “All revelation to men comes through Christ, and all centers in Him.”—*Ellen G. White Comments*, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 953. This is particularly true in this marvelous book where we have “the testimony of Jesus Christ” revealed to His church and the revelation given by the “faithful and true witness.”

Like the prophet on Patmos, we now await the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, as foretold from the first page to the last of the Apocalypse. This time the revelation will not be made through the intermediary of witnesses or visions, but in reality and face-to-face. His promise is certain: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. . . . Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22:16, 20).

“The Lord . . . 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.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Son of Man in Glory**
(Rev. 14:14)
- 2. The Harvest of the Earth**
(Rev. 14:15, 16)
- 3. The Vintage**
(Rev. 14:18)
- 4. On the Sea of Glass**
(Rev. 15:2)
- 5. The Song of the Redeemed**
(Rev. 15:3)
- 6. “Even So, Come, Lord Jesus”**
(Rev. 22:17)

Part 1
THE SON OF
MAN IN GLORY

What is John's description of the coming of the Son of man in glory?

"I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle" (Rev. 14:14). (Compare 1:7; 19:11-16.)

The fact that the glorious return of Jesus Christ is to follow immediately after the proclamations of the three angels shows that their messages constitute God's last call, His final warning.

In Revelation 1:7 the prophet of Patmos affirmed that "every eye shall see him," even "they also which pierced him." In chapter 14, verses 14 to 18, the reason for His return is evinced: He comes to "reap; for the harvest of earth is ripe," to "gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." Finally, in the vision of chapter 19 Jesus appears with His triumphal retinue as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In what points do these descriptions of our Lord's return reaffirm the promises made previously? Matt. 24:30, 31; 26:64; Acts 1:9-11.

"No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. . . . [Hab. 3:3, 4 quoted.] As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. 'And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*' Revelation 19:16."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the promise of our Lord's return the "blessed hope" for me personally?

"We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world."—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 299-303.

Part 2
THE HARVEST
OF THE EARTH

What order was given by the angel to Him that was seated upon the cloud having "in his hand a sharp sickle"?

"Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Rev. 14:15, 16).

"Verses 15-20 [of Revelation 14] describe the great harvest at the end of all things. The harvest comprehends two distinctive events. One is described in vs. 16, 17, and the other in vs. 18-20. The first refers to the gathering of the righteous, represented here by ripened grain, as shown in the Greek by the word translated 'ripe.' The second refers to the wicked, represented by the clusters of 'fully ripe' grapes."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 834.

What figure did Jesus use to illustrate the harvest of the world? What did He warn would happen at that time? Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

"'The field,' Christ said, 'is the world.' But we must understand this as signifying the church of Christ in the world. The parable is a description of that which pertains to the kingdom of God, His work of salvation of men; and this work is accomplished through the church. True, the Holy Spirit has gone out into all the world; everywhere it is moving upon the hearts of men; but it is in the church that we are to grow and ripen for the garner of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 70.

What will the Lord do before His return to cause the harvest to ripen? Joel 2:23, 28, 32.

"If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles [Acts 2:17, 18], we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1175.

"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest, 'in the time of the latter rain.'"—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I assure that I will be among the harvest of the saved?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Tares," pp. 70-75.

Part 3 Besides the harvesting of ripened grain, what other event is
THE VINTAGE to take place at the time of Christ's return?

"Another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (Rev. 14:18).

In former times there were two harvests in Israel, that of ripened grains in late spring, and the vintage in the fall when the grapes were ripe on the vines. Jesus is pictured here using a sickle for both crops. Here the two harvests are recalled to represent, on the one hand, the gathering of the redeemed whom God will take to His celestial granary and, on the other, the sinners who will be cast "into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (v. 19).

Then what is the significance of the vintage? Rev. 14:19, 20; Joel 3:13, 14.

Whereas the harvest is entrusted to Him who is seated upon the clouds—the Son of man—it is to an angel that the negative work of condemnation is ascribed, represented by the vintage. The angel who gives the order to gather the grapes has power over the fire, by which the judgments of God will be poured out on the earth. He comes out from the altar, under which are found "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," who question impatiently, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9, 10).

Whereas details of the harvest of ripened grain can hardly be described more briefly, those given of the vintage make one shudder. This is because these awesome particulars must serve as a forceful warning to them who have not yet taken the messages of the three angels seriously.

With what figures did Jesus describe this same scene in His parables? Matt. 13:41, 42, 47-50.

THINK IT THROUGH

Everyone will reap exactly what he has sown.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7, 8).

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Net," pp. 122, 123.

**Part 4
ON THE SEA
OF GLASS**

Where did John see gathered those who were victorious over the beast and his image?

"I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Rev. 15:2).

"Christ's true disciples follow Him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence. Partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church. . . .

" . . . The vision of the prophet pictures them as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven must first have followed Him on earth, not fretfully or capriciously, but in trustful, loving, willing obedience, as the flock follows the shepherd."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591.

Who are they who stand before the throne and before the Lamb? From where do they come? Rev. 7:13-15.

"The heirs of God have come from garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains, from deserts, from the caves of the earth, from the caverns of the sea. On earth they were 'destitute, afflicted, tormented.' . . . They stand before the throne clad in richer robes than the most honored of the earth have ever worn. They are crowned with diadems more glorious than were ever placed upon the brow of earthly monarchs."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 650.

For what reason are the redeemed of earth clad in white robes before the throne and before the Lamb? Rev. 7:14.

"The reason for the purity of the robes is given. The saints are triumphant, not on their own account, but because of the victory won by Christ on Calvary. . . . The battle is against sin; righteousness is the victory; Christ's righteousness has won the victory; and upon accepting His righteousness sinners become both righteous and victorious."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 785.

"Those whom the Lamb shall lead by the fountains of living waters, and from whose eyes He shall wipe away all tears, will be those now receiving the knowledge and understanding revealed in the Bible, the Word of God."—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

Part 5
THE SONG OF
THE REDEEMED

What is the title of the song to be sung by the redeemed of earth? Why is it appropriate?

"They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3). (See also ch. 14:3.)

"The experience is of such a personal nature that only those who pass through it can appreciate its significance. To them the song is a treasured and comprehensive summation of the experiences through which they have passed in the closing stages of the conflict between good and evil."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 826.

"Song of Moses. This is undoubtedly a reference to the song of deliverance after Israel crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1-21). That song celebrated the deliverance from Egyptian oppression; the new song, deliverance from the tyranny of 'Babylon the great' (Rev. 17:5). . . .

"The deliverance of the saints was wrought by Christ, the Lamb of God . . . , and it is but natural that He should be adored and exalted in the song of deliverance."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 836.

What are the words of the song of Moses and the Lamb?
Rev. 15:3, 4.

"God carries with Him the sympathy and approval of the whole universe as step by step His great plan advances to its complete fulfillment. . . . It will be seen that all who have forsaken the divine precepts have placed themselves on the side of Satan, in warfare against Christ. When the prince of this world shall be judged, and all who have united with him shall share his fate, the whole universe as witnesses to the sentence will declare, 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.' Revelation 15:3."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 79.

THINK IT THROUGH

"Then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

"When the redeemed stand in the presence of God, they will see how shortsighted were their conclusions as to what heaven records as success. As they review their efforts to achieve success they will see how foolish were their plans, how petty their supposed trials, how unreasonable their doubts. They will see how often they brought failure to their work by not taking God at His word. And one truth will stand out in clear lines: that position does not prepare a man for entrance into the heavenly courts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 28.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 648-652.

Part 6
"EVEN SO, COME,
LORD JESUS"

In view of the wonderful promises given us, what should we say and do?

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

"Everyone who hears is to repeat the invitation [of Rev. 22:17]. Whatever one's calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. To them he can communicate the instruction received from his Lord. Ministry does not consist alone in preaching. Those minister who relieve the sick and suffering, helping the needy, speaking words of comfort to the desponding and those of little faith."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

"Christ presents to us who are athirst the water of life, that we may drink freely; when we do this we have Christ within us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Then our words are full of moisture. We are prepared to water others."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 51.

What assurance does Jesus give to His church at the close of His testimony? What should be our response? Rev. 22:20.

"**Come, Lord Jesus.** This exclamation is John's response to the testimony of Jesus, who assures the apostle that He is coming quickly. . . . John was probably reminded of that night in the upper room, more than half a century before, when he heard Jesus declare, 'I will come again' (John 14:3). . . . Now, while in holy vision, John is given one last assurance that his blessed Lord is to return, and that, quickly. This assurance comes from the lips of his Master Himself, the faithful and true witness. His heart thrills at the words, and with eager anticipation he looks forward to the day when in reality, not in vision, he will see his blessed Lord face to face."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 898, 899.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is my response to the Saviour's declaration, "Behold, I come quickly"?

"Everyone who heareth is to say: Come. Not only the ministers, but the people. All are to join in the invitation. Not only by their profession, but by their character and dress, all are to have a winning influence. They are made trustees for the world, executors of the will of One who has bequeathed sacred truth to men."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 207.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 302, 303.

Lessons for 3rd Quarter / 1980

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the third quarter of 1980 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Job, Pain, and Healing."

First Lesson

A MAN GOD TRUSTED. Memory Text, Job 1:1.

1. *A Man Respected (Job 29:8-11)*
2. *Humble and Honest (Job 31:5-8)*
3. *Faithful to His Wife (Job 31:9, 10)*
4. *Concerned About the Poor (Job 31:16-22)*
5. *Not Ruined by Riches (Job 31:24-28)*
6. *Loving His Enemies (Job 31:29, 30)*

Second Lesson

WHEN DISASTER STRUCK. Memory Texts, Job 1:21, TEV; Job 2:10, TEV.

1. *Before the Storm (Job 1:2, 3)*
2. *Trouble Brewing (Job 1:9-11)*
3. *Tragedy Strikes (Job 1:18, 19)*
4. *Initial Response (Job 1:20-22)*
5. *Three "Friends" (Job 2:11, 12)*
6. *A Light Grows Dim (Job 3:2-7)*

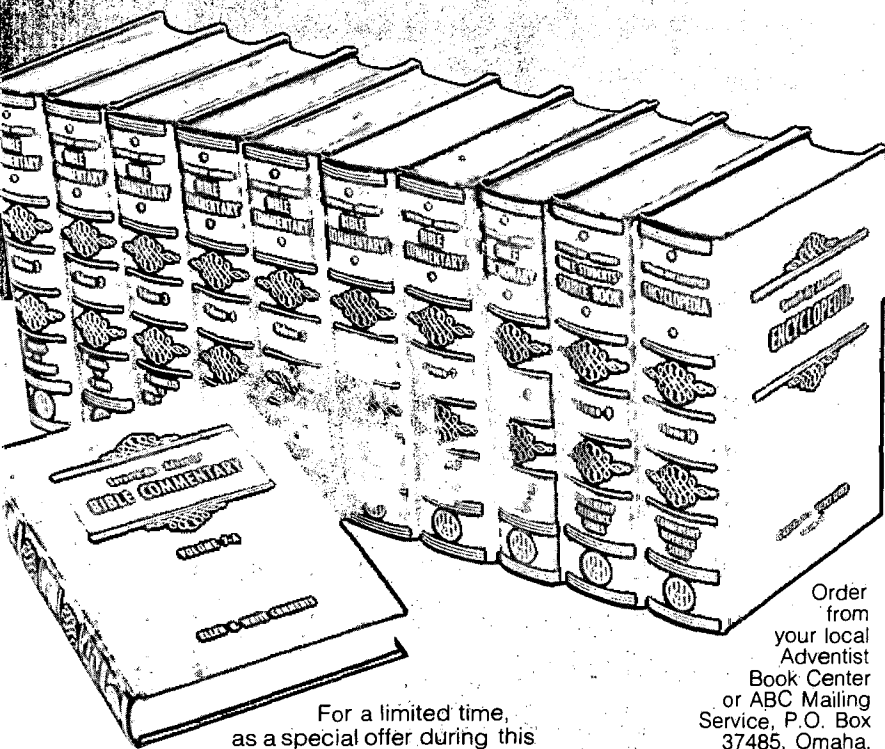
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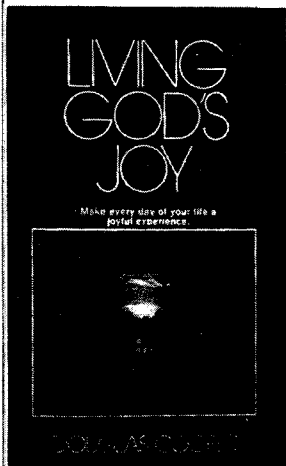
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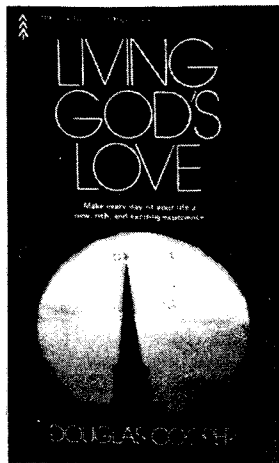


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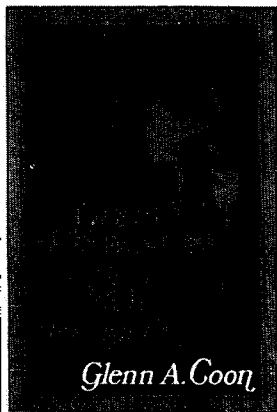
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Canadian	22,983,474	247	29,009	26,126
Central	12,320,352	297	36,400	26,405
Columbia	57,625,265	502	65,915	58,908
Lake	32,977,379	446	54,891	47,223
North Pacific	7,927,700	343	58,107	49,276
Northern	7,914,128	195	15,397	12,404
Pacific	26,082,778	505	131,091	102,564
Southern	31,855,540	626	89,226	70,091
Southwestern	24,347,735	362	36,695	26,269
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(Figures as of September 1978)

