

Sabbath School Lessons

God Reveals His Love

What Seventh-day Adventists Believe



October, November, December 1988



You need to have something in order to share it,

whether it be our daily bread or the bread of life.

In order to give the "Living Bread" we need to have a constant association with its author.

The more we have, the more we can share.

Our daily lesson study will keep our supply fresh and ready for use.

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**Editorial Offices: 6840 Eastern Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20012**

**Lesson Authors: Erwin R. Gane
J. Robert Spangler
Leo R. Van Dolson**

**Editors: Erwin R. Gane
Leo R. Van Dolson**

Assistant Editor: Charlotte Ishkanian

Pacific Press Editor: Lincoln E. Steed

Marketing: Bob Gorton

Sales Office: Shirley Sayers

Design: Paul B. Ricchiuti; Cover photo: Duane Tank

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Meet the Writers Of This Quarter's Lessons

Dr. Erwin R. Gane is the new editor of the Adult Sabbath School Lessons. While he has pastored several churches on two continents, most of his service has been in the field of education. He taught at Avondale College in his native Australia, and at Union and Pacific Union Colleges in the United States. He received his M.A., M.Div., and M.Th. degrees from Andrews University, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Nebraska. Dr. Gane and his wife, Winsome, have two grown sons.



Elder J. Robert Spangler is associate secretary of the Ministerial Department at the General Conference and is editor of *Ministry Magazine*. He received his B.A. from Columbia Union College and his M.A. from Andrews University. He served as pastor and conference evangelist for eleven years before moving to the Far East Division, where he worked as ministerial secretary for eight years. Elder Spangler has written three books, *First Things First, Marked!* and *Healthy, Happy, Holy*, which he co-authored with Leo R. Van Dolson. The Spanglers have two grown daughters.

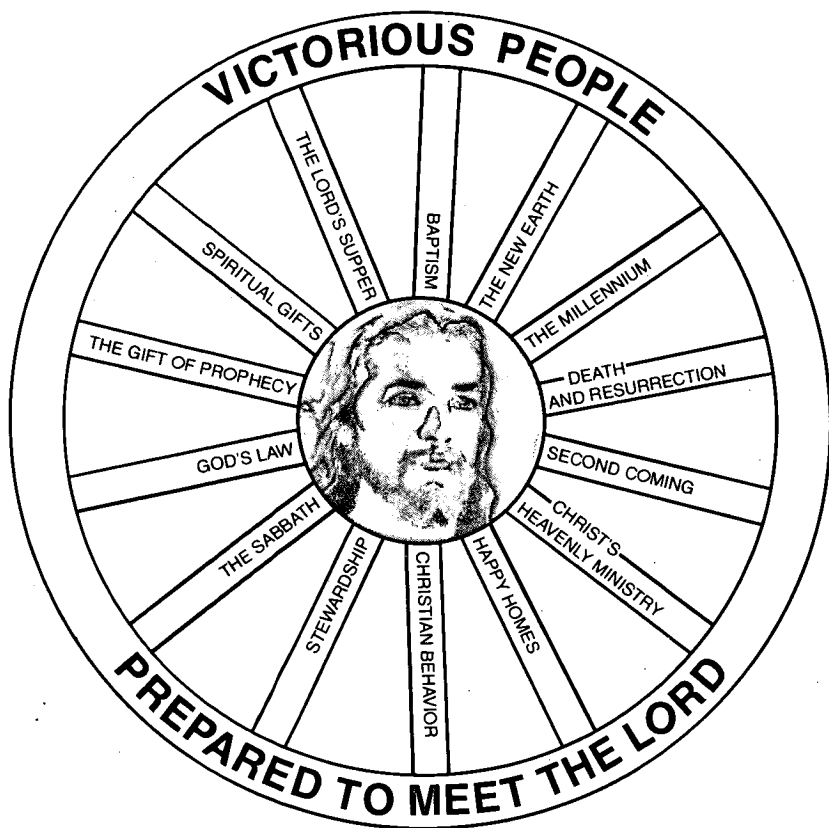


Leo R. Van Dolson has recently retired as editor of the Adult Sabbath School Lessons. His career has included pastoral work in the U.S. and Japan, teaching at Pacific Union College and the Loma Linda University School of Health. He holds a Ph.D. in educational administration from Claremont College. Dr. Van Dolson has served as an editor on *Ministry, Life and Health*, and the *Adventist Review* magazines. He has authored or co-authored 18 books and has written several adult teachers' aids. He and his wife, Bobbie Jane, have two grown sons.



Acknowledgment: Others whose contributions have been used in preparing these lessons are Dr. Norman Gulley, Kenneth McFarland, and the writers of the articles that appeared in the special doctrinal issue of the *Adventist Review* published in 1981.

Christ the Center of Truth



These lessons conclude two quarters of study dealing with the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

It is important to understand that every teaching of the church centers in Jesus Christ. "Christ, His character and work, is the center and circumference of all truth, He is the chain upon which the jewels of doctrine are linked. In Him is found the complete system of truth."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 15, 1893.

As each doctrine is studied we need to ask ourselves how this doctrine centers in Christ. Another question that should be addressed is, "How does belief in this doctrine affect me today?" These two questions will require meditation, prayer, and discussion if we are to receive a rich reward from our study. Watch for the supplementary book at your local Adventist Book Center.

How To Study These Sabbath School Lessons

Pray for the Holy Spirit's enlightenment. Jesus has not left us to seek alone for an understanding of His Word by ourselves. He stated, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Time and mental effort are essential to understand the meaning of the Bible. But only the Author Himself can impart to us the message that He intends us to receive.

Read through the entire lesson. At the beginning of the week read through the lesson. Doing so provides an overview of the subject presented. It is easier to grasp and remember part of any topic when you see it in relation to the whole. In this first rapid reading of the lesson, do not stop to master every point. Look for the main thrust and the key points.

Study one section of the lesson each day. Look up the Bible verses, studying their wording in context until you are clear what they are teaching. If you encounter problem words, phrases, or concepts, go to a good Bible commentary or Bible dictionary for clarification. Remember that factual information is interesting and important, but spiritual light and truth are vital. Your study should not just inform; it should draw you closer to Jesus.

Compare your conclusions with Ellen White's explanations. Her writings contain a wealth of interpretation designed to throw light on the Biblical message. Because the Lord gave these messages, it is exciting to discover the meanings that He attaches to His own Word. In North America, a Spirit of Prophecy supplement entitled *Sabbath School Lesson Comments By Ellen G. White* (Hartland Institute Publications) is available from the Adventist Book Center. Check the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* for additional Spirit of Prophecy comments.

Apply the message to your own life. Ask yourself, What is the relevance of this Bible truth to my experience? Every Bible doctrine is intended to be a Christ-centered means of uplift to the struggling believer. Seek to understand how each doctrine relates to the affairs of your daily life—your home life, your marriage or marital plans, your fellowship with the church, your associations with people of the world, your work situation, your goals in life, and your plans for eternity. Ask yourself what the particular subject has to do with your eternal salvation. Finally, talk to the Lord about each subject as you are studying it. Ask Him to use your Bible study to bring conviction, forgiveness, comfort, and spiritual power to your heart. Ask Him to draw you into the closest possible union with Himself as you allow Him to speak through His Word.

Erwin R. Gane, Ph.D., Editor.

Daily Lesson Study Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve my knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Lord to whom they point, I pledge to carefully and prayerfully study some portion of the Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

God Tells Us About Baptism



MEMORY TEXT: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3, 4).

CENTRAL TEACHING: “**Baptism.** By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings.”—Fundamental Belief No. 14.

OUTLINE:

I. What Baptism Is:

1. A Confession of faith.
2. A testimony of death to sin and newness of life in Christ.
3. A prerequisite for joining the church.

II. What Baptism Does:

1. It acknowledges Christ as Lord of our lives.
2. It acknowledges that we belong to the body of Christ.

III. What Baptism Symbolizes:

1. Forgiveness of and death to sin.
2. Newness of life in Christ.
3. Reception of the Holy Spirit.

IV. What Baptism Involves:

1. Immersion in water.
2. Essentials to baptism.
3. The question of rebaptism.

V. How We Prepare for Baptism:

1. Instruction in the Scriptures.
2. Acceptance of Bible teaching.

INTRODUCTION: One well-known preacher used to say, “Sitting in a church house no more makes you a Christian than sitting in a hen house makes you a chicken.” Neither does baptism make us Christians. Baptism testifies that the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode with us. Through His

guidance and work we have acknowledged and repented of our sins and desire to live a new life in Jesus. Baptism has no meaning unless it is the public testimony of what the Holy Spirit already has done in us to enable us to become members of the family of God. But neither should we seek to become members of the church without baptism. Baptism attests to our union with Christ in the same way that the wedding service acknowledges publicly that a couple has decided to devote their lives to each other.

Where did baptism originate? As a religious rite it “originated in pre-Christian times. It was practiced by the Jews as a means of receiving proselytes to Judaism. . . . The legal status of such a proselyte was that of a newborn child. . . .

“It is significant that the Jewish leaders did not question John concerning the validity of the rite of baptism, but only his authority to administer it (see John 1:19-28). Baptism was also practiced by the Essenes in connection with their religious rites. In *Khirbet Qumran*, which was probably the center of the Essenes, several tanks with steps leading into them have been discovered. . . . These may have been used for baptismal rites, which apparently involved immersion, as did Jewish proselyte baptism.”—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, pp. 118, 119.

SUN

I. WHAT BAPTISM IS.

What adaptation of the rite of baptism did John the Baptist make in order to help the people of his day identify with the work of cleansing necessary to prepare for the coming of Christ? Mark 1:4, 5.

Although there were Old Testament antecedents that John the Baptist would have known about—ritual washings and cleansings, and the story of Naaman—he taught that the rite would involve spiritual cleansing. Thus it was to be more than a mere ritual or physical cleansing. He asked the people to demonstrate by their baptism that they recognized their sinfulness and were repentant. The step he asked them to take was a dramatic one. Those whom he baptized undoubtedly did not take the step lightly. John’s call to baptism indicated that a drastic change was necessary to prepare people for Jesus’ coming.

1. A Confession of Faith.

Why was Jesus baptized? Matt. 3:15.

Acts 2:38 contains Peter’s admonition to new converts to the Christian faith to be baptized as a symbol of the remission of sins. Having never sinned, Jesus did not need to be baptized as a symbol of confession for sins He had committed. By being baptized He identified Himself with the sinner who needs God’s righteousness. He set an example for those who desire to be united with Him.

What do we learn about the Christian practice of baptism from the instruction that Jesus gave in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15, 16.

What evidence do we have that the early church understood and followed this instruction? Acts 10:47, 48; 22:12-16.

2. A Testimony of Death to Sin and Newness of Life in Christ.

Baptism attests not only to our death to sin but to our resurrection to a new life in Christ. (See Rom. 6:4, 5.)

What relationship to sin characterizes the new life in Christ? Col. 2:12; 3:1.

3. A Prerequisite for Joining the Church.

How did Jesus indicate that baptism is the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom? John 3:5.

THINK IT THROUGH: Jesus indicated that we are to be baptized not only by water but also by the Spirit. What does this experience have to do with my becoming a member of the body of Christ? (See Acts 10:47, 48; 1 Cor. 12:12-14.)

ILLUMINATION: "Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

MON

II. WHAT BAPTISM DOES.

Ancient baptistries attest to the vital importance of baptism to the early church. The significance is not in the rite itself, but in what it acknowledges to both the church and the world regarding our death to sin and new life in Christ.

1. It Acknowledges Christ As Lord of Our Lives.

Paul writes: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:27, NASB).

How is confession of faith in God and acceptance of Jesus as Lord of our lives tied into the rite of baptism? Rom. 10:9; Acts 16:30-34.

Baptism by immersion beautifully symbolizes a person's conversion experience. Involved in that experience are sorrow for sin and turning away from it. The confessing sinner is forgiven and given new life in Christ. All these steps should precede baptism.

In addition to bringing the Christian into a richer and closer relationship with God, baptism brings him into a new relationship with Christ's church on earth, a group of believers known for their love of God and one another. It is the door to church fellowship, as well as the door to discipleship.

2. It Acknowledges That We Belong to the Body of Christ.

Baptism publicly identifies us as Christians—members of the body of Christ. (See Acts 2:41, 47; Gal. 3:27-29.)

TUE III. WHAT BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES.

The New Testament presents baptism within the context of Calvary, thus giving much more meaning and significance to this rite.

1. Forgiveness of and Death to Sin.

Complete the following analysis chart of Romans 6:3-10 in order to recognize the fullness of the symbolic aspect of baptism:

Symbol of	Jesus	Us
Crucifixion	Crucified for our sins	Old man (body of _____) crucified
Death	Died for us	Buried with Him by _____
Resurrection	Raised from the dead	Raised in the _____ of His resurrection
New Life	Lives unto God	_____ from sin; _____ with Him

Repentant sinners identify themselves with Jesus through the rite of baptism. By the sinless life He lived, and by His death on behalf of sinners, Jesus made His righteousness available to all. By taking part in this ceremony that symbolizes death to sin, burial of the old life of sin, and resurrection to new life in Jesus, believers demonstrate their acceptance of that righteousness.

2. Newness of Life in Christ.

What kind of relationship with Jesus is implied in such expressions in Romans 6:3, 4 as "baptized into Jesus Christ" and "buried with him by baptism"?

“The postbaptismal life is to be a new life, a different life, a life dead to sin and alive to God ([Romans 6:] verse 11, RSV). It is the life of one who has entered into a covenant relationship with God, who shares covenant fellowship with like believers and has pledged to adhere to the covenant stipulations. ‘I will be their God, and they shall be my people’ (Jer. 31:33, RSV).”—George Rice, *Adventist Review*, Dec. 11, 1986, p. 15.

3. Reception of the Holy Spirit.

What phenomena accompanied Jesus’ baptism? How do these events relate to what happens when we are baptized? Matt. 3:16, 17.

We may not see the dove descending or hear the voice of God proclaiming “This is my beloved son [or daughter] in whom I am well pleased” when we are baptized, but in faith we know that God does for us what He did for Christ at the time He was baptized.

What do we learn from Titus 3:5-7 about the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to baptism?



IV. WHAT BAPTISM INVOLVES.

1. Immersion in Water.

The Bible teaches baptism by immersion. In Romans and Colossians Paul compares the rite to Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. (See Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13.) This symbolism would have had no such significance if the apostolic church had practiced a mode of baptism other than immersion.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Study the passages that follow, indicating how the incidents described support baptism by immersion.

- Matt. 3:16 _____
- John 3:23 _____
- Acts 8:38, 39 _____

ILLUMINATION: “That immersion was the mode employed in NT times is clear from the meaning of the Greek term, from Bible descriptions of the performance of the ceremony, and from the spiritual applications made in the Bible respecting the rite. The term *baptizo* was used anciently to describe the immersing of cloth in dye, and of the submerging of a vessel in order to fill it with water. Its most obvious meaning when applied to Christian baptism is “to immerse.”—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 119.

2. Essentials to Baptism.

What is the spiritual significance of being baptized in the names of the members of the Trinity? Matt. 28:19, 20.

What experience must precede baptism? Acts 2:37, 38. How does this exclude infant baptism?

Infants are incapable of repentance, of being disciples, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, or obeying God's will. Only baptism of adults is mentioned in the New Testament. There is not one mention of infant baptism.

(See Acts 8:12, "both men and women"; Acts 8:13, Simon; Acts 8:29-39, the Ethiopian eunuch; Acts 9:17, 18, Saul; 1 Cor. 1:14, Crispus and Gaius.)

3. The Question of Rebaptism.

What one Bible precedent do we have for rebaptism? Acts 19:1-5.

ILLUMINATION: "Those who have conscientiously taken their position upon the commandments of God, will, if rightly dealt with, accept all essential truth. But it needs wisdom to deal with human minds. Some will be longer in seeing and understanding some kindred truths than others, especially will this be the case in regard to the subject of rebaptisms, but there is a divine hand that is leading them—a divine spirit impressing their hearts, and they will know what they ought to do and do it."—*Evangelism*, pp. 373, 374.



V. HOW WE PREPARE FOR BAPTISM.

"When a person acknowledges his lost state as a sinner, sincerely repents of his sins, and experiences conversion, he may, when properly instructed, be accepted as a proper candidate for baptism and church membership."—*SDA Church Manual* (1986), p. 42.

1. Instruction in the Scriptures.

What are we to teach people in connection with Christ's commission to baptize them? Matt. 28:20.

Every teaching that is based on the authority of Christ is to be taught. (See *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 557.)

2. Acceptance of Bible Teaching.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What reactions to Bible teaching must precede baptism?

- Acts 8:12 _____
- Acts 8:35-38 _____
- Acts 18:8 _____


3. Relationship to Christ.

Jesus made it clear that baptism is not an option nor is it to be taken lightly. Baptism indicates a dramatic change in the direction of a person's life. (See Acts 8:36-38.)

Just as baptism by water in the days of John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus' coming, baptism by water and the Spirit helps prepare Jesus' loved ones for His second coming.

When the armies of the Roman Empire invaded Britain they were commanded to burn their ships behind them. A soldier asked the commander, "Sir, how will we retreat if we burn the ships?" The commander's reply was, "That's the whole point; there will be no retreat!"

As we enter into water baptism we commit ourselves never to turn back to our old way of life. Now Jesus is supreme in our hearts. There will be no retreat. Joyfully and courageously we will advance to the gates of the eternal city of God.

 **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 11, "The Baptism," pages 109-113.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Arguments over the meaning of baptism and the age of the candidate go back to the early Christian church. Through the centuries many Christians have taught that infants must be baptized in order to be relieved of original guilt inherited from Adam. It is believed that if the unbaptized infant dies he is confined to "limbo," a halfway place in which he experiences neither the full joys of heaven nor the full terrors of hell. Others believe that by baptism the infant is incorporated into one "body" (1 Cor. 12:13) and clothed with Christ (Gal. 3:27). Seventh-day Adventists reject the concept of original guilt and practice believer's baptism rather than infant baptism. We find ourselves in agreement with those churches that teach and practice immersion of believers.

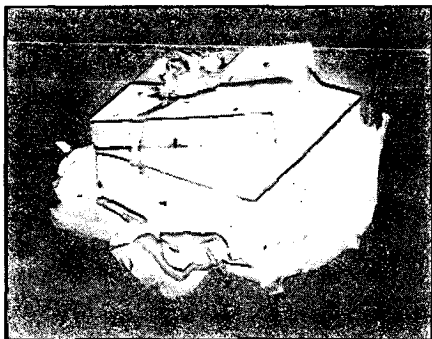
HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: A basic principle in teaching any truth is to avoid criticism or ridicule of the beliefs and practices of others. This is especially true of the doctrine of baptism. Your approach to this subject will depend upon the experience of the one with whom you are sharing your faith. If the person has never been baptized, as an infant or otherwise, your primary task is to lead him or her to Christ preparatory to introducing the subject of baptism by immersion. If the person has been baptized, but not by immersion, your task is to show the beauty and meaning of Bible baptism. The supreme proof of both the necessity and method of baptism is the example of Jesus, who in love was baptized to fulfill all righteousness and who endured an unparalleled baptism of suffering.

SUMMARY: When by faith a person experiences the new birth he or she is clothed with Christ's righteousness. The new believer then accepts baptism by immersion as a demonstration of the union with Christ that has been entered into. He or she becomes part of His body, the church. Understanding that baptism focuses on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit the believer dies to self and the world. He or she makes a full surrender to Christ and His will.

APPLICATION

- Do I realize that my sinless Lord, who did not need baptism, was baptized as an example for me to follow?
- Have I followed in Christ's footsteps by being baptized by immersion?
- Am I daily experiencing the burial of sinful living and a resurrection walk with Christ?

This Christmas Give a Hospital



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 19, you're giving medicine, beds and Christian care to people living along Brazil's Amazon river.

**Help Build a Hospital
at Manaus, North
Brazil.**

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

God Tells Us About the Lord's Supper



MEMORY TEXT: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians."—Fundamental Belief No. 15.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Importance of Humble Service.
- II. The Ordinance of Humility.
- III. The Institution of the Lord's Supper.
- IV. The Spiritual Meaning of the Lord's Supper.
- V. The Lord's Supper in the Heavenly Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION: How do Christian believers, separated from the time of Christ by almost two thousand years, keep constantly in mind the significance of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven? How do we enter into the spiritual experience enjoyed by Jesus' first disciples?

The celebration of the Lord's Supper was designed by Christ as one means by which those who believe might receive regular spiritual renewal. In everyday life, one very effective way to get to know people is to eat with them. In the Lord's Supper not only do Christians eat together but also we commune with the Lord Jesus Christ. As we partake of the symbols of His sacrifice, we receive by faith the spiritual nourishment that only Jesus can supply.

Our concern in this lesson is to discover from the Bible what Jesus intends that the Lord's Supper should mean to every Christian believer. We also need to know how He would have us prepare our hearts to take part in this important service.

SUN

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMBLE SERVICE.

What problem kept recurring among Jesus' disciples? Mark 9:33, 34; Matt. 20:20-24; Luke 22:24-27.

There were only a few hours left before Jesus would be cruelly crucified. Yet pride ruled in the upper room. The disciples were vying with one another for the highest place in the kingdom. They had not learned the lesson of unselfish service. When group photographs are taken some stand to one side while wishing for a center position in the front row. So with the twelve; questions of status and personal importance were supreme. They wanted to be served instead of being servants. Try to imagine the feelings of Jesus in this situation.

How did Jesus emphasize the importance of humility? Matt. 18:1-4; 20:25-28; 23:8-12.

Before honor is humility. Love for reward, position, or distinction has no place in Christ's kingdom. Rank, wealth, beauty, or intellectual greatness can never substitute for union with the humble Christ. There are no "Miss Universe" contests in heaven. Only those with changed hearts can understand these principles—"Except ye be converted" (Matt. 18:3). In God's sight, the greatest person in the church is the one who renders the most humble service.

ILLUMINATION: "Had Christ come in the majesty of a king, with the pomp which attends the great men of earth, many would have accepted Him. But Jesus of Nazareth did not dazzle the senses with a display of outward glory and make this the foundation of their reverence. He came as a humble man to be the Teacher and Exemplar as well as the Redeemer of the race. Had He encouraged pomp, had He come followed by a retinue of great men of earth, how could He have taught humility?"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 253.

MON

II. THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY.

The night before Jesus' death the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest. Jesus could not lead them into a deeply spiritual service while sin was in their hearts. He did something very special to teach them humility, and He urged them to copy Him in the future.

What demonstration of love and humility did Jesus give His disciples at the last supper? John 13:4, 5.

While contention for the highest place waged in the upper room, Jesus knelt down and washed twenty-four dirty feet. He stooped to serve. What an

insight into His journey from His Father's throne, "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28, RSV). The great descent of Christ from God to man is given in Philippians 2:5-8. The ultimate humility is revealed in the words "He humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, to the point of death, and the death He died was the death of a common criminal" (verse 8, Phillips):

Think of the emotions that must have surged through Judas' mind as Jesus washed his feet. For thirty pieces of silver Judas was about to hand Jesus over to the Jewish authorities. Nevertheless, the Messiah, who knew what Judas had done, instead of exposing him, stooped to wash his feet. The power of Christ's love brought powerful conviction for Judas to confess his sin. Tragically he rejected it. In his estimation, no one who would adopt the position of an unimportant servant was worthy of his adoration. He determined to go through with his plan to betray Jesus and thereby lost eternal life.

Peter's reaction was different. He was overwhelmed by His Lord's bending so low as to wash his feet. He was ashamed that he was not doing what Jesus was doing. He sensed that his personal pride had kept him from being a servant. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 645, 646.)

Of what is the washing of feet a symbol? John 13:8-10; 15:3; Titus 3:5-7.

"Christ is . . . speaking of the higher cleansing as illustrated by the lower. He who came from the bath was clean, but the sandaled feet soon became dusty, and again needed to be washed. So Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace. When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from their feet, he desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

What did Jesus urge His followers to do for one another? John 13:12-17.

Foot washing is a vital preparation for the communion service. Jesus said, "You also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14, 15, RSV).

ILLUMINATION: "Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ, yet often through contact with evil the heart's purity is soiled. We must come to Christ for His cleansing grace. Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in contact with the hands of his Lord and Master; but how often we bring our sinful, polluted hearts in contact with the heart of

Christ! How grievous to Him is our evil temper, our vanity and pride! Yet all our infirmity and defilement we must bring to Him. He alone can wash us clean. We are not prepared for communion with Him unless cleansed by His efficacy. . . .

"Now, having washed the disciples' feet, He said, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 646-650.



III. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

After He had washed the disciples' feet, what service did Jesus institute? Matt. 26:26-28.

The last supper that Jesus ate with His disciples on the final Thursday evening of His life was the celebration of the Passover. (See John 13:1.) The Last Supper was the last Passover. The Passover pointed forward to the sacrifice of the Messiah for the sins of the world. (See 1 Cor. 5:7.) The day after the Passover supper Jesus was crucified. Then the Old Testament sanctuary services that pointed forward to His death lost their significance. Animal sacrifices were replaced by the true Sacrifice, and earthly ministry gave place to the heavenly High Priestly ministry of Jesus. (See Heb. 10:11, 12; 7:25.) This is why at the Last Supper Jesus instituted another service, the Lord's Supper, to take the place of the Passover. The communion service spans the gulf between Calvary and the Second Advent. The Passover pointed *forward* to Calvary, while the Lord's Supper points *back* to Calvary. Thus the Lord's Supper commemorates three events: (1) The completed sacrifice on the cross; (2) the coming of Jesus the second time; (3) the final triumph of God's people in the heavenly kingdom.

How do we know that Jesus wants His followers to celebrate the Lord's Supper until He comes the second time? 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

What danger is there in partaking of the Lord's Supper if your heart is not right with God? 1 Cor. 11:27-30.

ILLUMINATION: The following quotations reveal the Seventh-day Adventist attitude to and manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper:

1. The Lord's Supper is to be a joyous, blessed occasion (see 1 Cor. 10:16):

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

2. Believers should be present and partake of the Supper as members of the body of Christ (see 1 Cor. 10:17):

“All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

3. All who wish to take part should be invited to (see Matt. 26:27):

“Christ’s example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord’s Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches (1 Cor. 5:11). But beyond this none are to pass judgment. . . . There may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They should not be forbidden. . . . None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

4. Only unfermented wine is to be used (Prov. 20:1):

“The unfermented wine that He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. This is the wine that was used by our Saviour and His disciples in the first Communion. It is the wine that should always be used on the Communion table as a symbol of the Saviour’s blood. The sacramental service is designed to be soul-refreshing and life-giving. There is to be connected with it nothing that could minister to evil.”—*Temperance*, p. 97.

5. Only unleavened bread should be used (1 Cor. 5:7, 8):

“Bread that is leavened must not come on the Communion table; unleavened bread is the only correct representation of the Lord’s Supper.”—Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090. (See 1 Cor. 5:6-8.)

WED **IV. THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

What does it mean to partake of the body and blood of Christ? John 6:51, 53-57, 63; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

In His great sermon on the Bread of Life (John 6), Jesus clarified beyond doubt what it means to partake of His body and blood. The fact that He was using a metaphor becomes abundantly clear when we read John 6:63 (RSV): “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have

spoken to you are spirit and life." We partake of Christ's body and blood when we receive His Word into our hearts. This we do by receiving the Holy Spirit to live within us. (See Rom. 8:9, 10; Eph. 3:16-21.)

When we partake of the Lord's Supper we receive Jesus spiritually into our hearts. The literal bread and grape juice symbolize our spiritual reception of the Lord, by the Holy Spirit. Christ is not literally present in the bread and wine. (See "What Others Teach" at the end of the lesson to capture the significance of this statement.) But Christ is present in the heart of the true believer who partakes of the bread and wine.

How many times was Jesus sacrificed for our sins? Is the Lord's Supper a repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary? Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:14.

Only once was it necessary for Jesus to be sacrificed for human guilt. The suffering that atoned for sin was not primarily physical. It was the suffering of the Deity caused by the separation of God the Father from God the Son. This separation broke the heart of the Son of God. That one sacrifice was sufficient to cover all sin for as long as this old world continues. The punishment Christ bore is adequate for every sinner no matter how degraded — if he will open his heart and accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord. (See Rom. 5:17.)



V. THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM.

When did Jesus say the next occasion would be on which He would celebrate the Lord's Supper with His followers? Matt. 26:29

What are the qualifications necessary for those who will feast with Jesus in the heavenly Kingdom? Rev. 19:7-9.

Jesus looked forward to the day when He would celebrate the Lord's Supper with His redeemed people. It could well be that Jesus is waiting to drink of the fruit of the vine at the "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9), when the triumph of His plan of salvation will be celebrated. He wants us to plan expectantly for that wonderful heavenly feast. Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, Christ is with us by the Holy Spirit. But our sights are to be set on the future when God's people will be free from sin and all its results. Then we will give eternal praise to our Lord for His infinite love.

Those who by faith receive the free gift of Christ's righteousness will be taken to the kingdom to enjoy the heavenly Lord's Supper. Christ's righteousness will dwell within believers as they allow the Holy Spirit to reign within. (See 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; Rev. 3:20.)

Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we receive Jesus by faith, and He becomes our indwelling righteousness, our qualification for the heavenly kingdom.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: What similarities do you see between the significance of the manna and the shewbread in ancient Israel and the bread and wine partaken of by New Testament Christians? See Lev. 24:5-9; Deut. 8:3, 16; Neh. 9:19-21; Psalm 78:24, 25; John 6:27-63; Rev. 2:17. Read "A Servant of Servants" in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 642-661.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Most churches do not practice foot washing. The Pope once a year seeks out a poor person and washes his feet. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only worldwide denomination that practices this simple but beautiful service.

There are three major beliefs regarding the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper. For centuries many have accepted the doctrine of transubstantiation. This doctrine teaches that, when the priest pronounces the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and the wine become the physical substance of Christ's body and blood. Each mass thus becomes a repetition of Calvary. By contrast, the Scriptures teach that there was only one sacrifice for sin. (See Hebrews 7:27; 9:24-28; 10:12.)

Others believe the doctrine of consubstantiation, which teaches that, even though the substance of the bread and wine remains unchanged, the substance of Christ's physical body and blood are added to it. On Scriptural grounds Seventh-day Adventists agree with those Protestant churches that view the bread and wine as symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: Invite your friends to attend a quarterly Communion service. Make sure that they understand that if they are Christians they are welcome to participate, but that if they would prefer they may simply observe. The preparatory service of foot washing profoundly affects the observer. It becomes apparent that sinners are saved by Christ's life, as well as His death. The foot washing commemorates His life, and the bread and wine His death. The Holy Spirit can use this service in a powerful way to impress people with the correctness and beauty of the Scriptural message.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists believe that the spiritual preparation for the Lord's Supper is to take place prior to and during the foot washing service. This is a time for humble self-examination, repentance, and reconciliation between brethren. The Lord's Supper is the sacred service in which unleavened bread and unfermented wine are partaken of as a memorial of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. As believers receive the bread and wine, by faith accepting Christ into their hearts, they are spiritually renewed. The Lord's Supper is also a foretaste of the heavenly feast that the redeemed will enjoy with Christ in His kingdom.

APPLICATION

- Do I understand that the service of foot washing constitutes a renewal of the life commitment to Jesus that I made when baptized?
- What is my attitude toward my Lord and other people when I participate in this sacred service?
- Do I absent myself from Communion services, and if so, why?
- Have I invited any nonmember to visit this impressive service with me?

God Tells Us About Spiritual Gifts



MEMORY TEXT: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "Spiritual Gifts and Ministries. God bestows on all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love."—Fundamental Belief No. 16.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Promise Fulfilled.
- II. What Are the Gifts?
- III. What Is the Purpose of the Gifts?
- IV. How Do the Gifts Rank in Importance?
- V. Discovering Your Gifts.

INTRODUCTION: Circumstances sometimes make it necessary for families to be separated for long periods. Often the separation is occasioned by the necessity for the husband and father to travel in the interests of his profession, even being away from his homeland for many months. If he is a responsible person, he will make certain that his family is well cared for during his absence. In the final moments at the airport before takeoff, he is likely to say, "If you need more money be sure to take some out of savings." He also may review briefly some of the other provisions he has made for the family's welfare. "I put new tires on the car." "I ordered enough heating oil to last until I get back."

Nineteen centuries ago, after establishing His church on earth, Jesus returned to heaven. With anxious hearts the disciples watched Him ascend

(Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9). Would they be able to represent Him adequately? Would they be able to carry forward successfully the work He had assigned them? Would they have the talents needed to carry the gospel to all the world?

With the same kind of compassion and consideration that characterized His entire life, Jesus had foreseen their needs and made full provision for them. Just before He ascended He said, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus provided for the needs of His disciples and church from the time of His ascension until He would return again. In fact, the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit is yet to be received by His people. This will take place as soon as the church is ready to facilitate the finishing of God's work in the world.

SUN

I. THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

Summarize in your own words Jesus' last promise to the disciples. Acts 1:5, 8.

When was Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit realized by the infant church? Eph. 4:8; Acts 2:1-4.

While remaining in the upper room where they had partaken of the Last Supper with Christ, the disciples prepared for the reception of the promised Holy Spirit. Study the steps in preparation as outlined in *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 37.

"They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised."—Page 37.

What was the result of their preparations?

"The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38.

In what spectacular way was the prayer of the disciples for power to win souls answered? Acts 2:41.

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of the promise of the outpouring of the latter rain, what do you think would happen if we today followed the same steps in preparation that the disciples took in the upper room?



II. WHAT ARE THE GIFTS?

How did Paul indicate that it is important for us to understand all we can about spiritual gifts? 1 Cor. 12:1.

STUDY the chart that follows in order to gain a fuller understanding of what Paul includes in his listing of spiritual gifts:

Rom. 12:6-8	Eph. 4:7-11	1 Cor. 12:4-11	1 Cor. 12:28-31	1 Cor. 13:1-3
1. Prophecy 2. Ministry 3. Teaching 4. Exhorting 5. Giving 6. Ruling 7. Showing mercy	1. Apostles 2. Prophets 3. Evangelists 4. Pastor-Teachers	1. Wisdom 2. Knowledge 3. Faith 4. Healing 5. Miracles 6. Prophecy 7. Discerning Spirits 8. Tongues 9. Interpretation of tongues	1. Apostles 2. Prophets 3. Teachers 4. Miracles 5. Healings 6. Helps 7. Governments 8. Tongues	1. Martyrdom 2. Sacrifice 3. Faith 4. Knowledge 5. Prophecy 6. Tongues

In the Greek, Ephesians 4:11 indicates that when Paul listed "pastors and teachers" he was not talking about two separate gifts, but one. That is why these are listed on one line in the chart and hyphenated.

Notice that Paul's lists seem to vary because of the different reasons that he had in mind for listing the gifts in each passage mentioned. In Romans 12 his emphasis is on the *usefulness* of the gifts listed. In Ephesians 4 there seems to be an attempt to list the order of *importance* to the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Paul stresses the *communication* factor involved. Later in this same chapter he apparently lists the gifts in order of importance once again. When we put the list found in 1 Corinthians 13 in inverted order (as in the chart) a listing of order of importance also becomes apparent, although his emphasis in this chapter is on the *lasting effects* of the gifts.

THINK IT THROUGH: Which gift appears in each of these lists? Why is that significant to us today?



III. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS?

What major purpose for the spiritual gifts do you see in Ephesians 4:2, 3, 12, 13?

The gifts are not presented in order to build up the recipient, but to build up the body—the church—and to enable church members better to serve their community.

ILLUSTRATION: “Some time ago my wife led a church youth group that wanted to do something significant for the community. Someone suggested that since several wealthy people lived in the community along with many others with needs, it might be possible to match the needs with some of that affluence.

“The youth divided into two groups. One went door-to-door to the wealthy section of town asking what the people had that they might be willing to give away. The other half went to the less privileged part of the city to ask what the people needed.

“A couple of hours later the two groups reconvened at the church and compared notes. What were the needs? What were the resources? Excitement reigned. Here was a mother in need of food for her baby, and here a family that had baby food left over after the visit of grandchildren. Here was a family who had no kitchen table, and another who had replaced theirs and had no room to store the old one.

“Although the story is true, I see it also as a parable of what God wishes to accomplish in His church through the miracle of spiritual gifts. The Christian church is a place where people can come to get help—of whatever kind.”—Don Jacobsen, “What Spiritual Gifts Mean to Me,” *Adventist Review*, Dec. 25, 1986, pp. 11, 12.

LIST as many purposes for the gifts as you can from Paul’s discussion in Ephesians 4:12, 14, 15:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What indication does Paul give that the gifts still are necessary in our day? Eph. 4:13.



IV. HOW DO THE GIFTS RANK IN IMPORTANCE?

Why does the Spirit give different gifts to the members of the body of Christ? 1 Cor. 12:11-25.

Although Paul shows the value of each distinct gift, there is a sense in

1 Corinthians 12 through 14 in which some gifts are said to be more important than others. (See 1 Cor. 12:31.) Refer to the chart under section II of the lesson to review the way Paul ranks the gifts. One reason why he does so is to demonstrate that the tongues phenomenon that was taking place in the Corinthian church should not be given undue importance. (See chapter 14.)

Notice that when it comes to the gift of tongues, it rates rather low on the scale of importance Paul assigns. Instead of condemning the manifestation of tongues in Corinth, Paul points out that there is a "more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31). He then explains in 1 Corinthians 13 that none of the gifts have real value unless they are combined with the gift of love. That Paul is not referring to sentimental or natural human love becomes quite clear in his development of chapter 13.

COMPARE Paul's lists of what love is and what it is not in 1 Corinthians 13 in order to understand more fully the kind of love about which he is talking. The terms used will be clearer if you use a newer translation.

What contrast is drawn between love and such gifts as prophecy, knowledge, and tongues in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12?

There are three particularly valuable and abiding gifts given to all who accept Christ: (1) faith, (2) hope, and (3) love. Which is the most important and significant gift of all? 1 Cor. 13:13. Why?

In the last days it is this gift that brings in its train the greatest and fullest outpouring of the Holy Spirit on God's people in the latter rain.

Adventists believe that there are two major outpourings of the Holy Spirit. The first was given to the church at Pentecost and has never been taken away. It was Christ's special gift of love supplied in full measure in order to meet the needs of His church throughout time.

Paul testified in Romans 5:5, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." He expands on this thought in Ephesians 3:17. After describing the power of the Holy Spirit to change the inner life of those Christians to whom he was writing, he prayed that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" so that they would be "rooted and grounded in love."

This is primarily what the early rain experience is all about. It involves the daily, hourly work of the Spirit in our lives, bringing about transformation and victory over sin, covering us with Christ's righteousness. But the "indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419), and when the lovely character of Christ is fully reproduced in His people, the latter rain will be poured out as a means of calling the attention of the world to the love of God evidenced in His church.

We are told: "We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 399.



V. DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS:

What indicates that every church member has a gift or gifts? 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

Two facts are worth noting: (1) The Spirit decides which gifts to bestow. He takes this responsibility because He alone knows which gifts are needed by the church. He alone knows which gifts each Christian will utilize. (2) Not everyone receives the same gift, nor are all the gifts available to everyone. Thus, for example, we do not have the right to insist that the Spirit give us the gift of prophecy, the gift of healing, or the gift of tongues. Instead, we will surrender fully to Christ, lay our natural talents on the altar, and ask God to give us the specific gifts of the Spirit that He knows it is best for us to have (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10, 11). Whatever gifts God gives us He expects us to use in witnessing to others.

How do we discover which gift or gifts God has given us?

“The following suggestions have been helpful to me in seeking to discover God’s gifts in myself and in others.

“1. Walk closely with Jesus each day. Spiritual gifts are for spiritual people. Sometimes I have felt like doing nothing in Christ’s service because I have grown careless in my walk with Him.

“2. Gather a group of fellow believers, perhaps including your pastor, and carefully study the biblical topic of spiritual gifts.

“3. Be willing to venture and experiment. If you sense a gentle nudge of the Spirit, or are asked to undertake a new and unfamiliar task in your church or community, don’t immediately say ‘No.’ If it frightens you, ask if you could try it for a month rather than a year, as an associate rather than the leader.

“4. After you have some experience, consult your own feelings. God-appointed service, done in His way, will bring great satisfaction. While you may not feel adequate or capable, you should find a sense of accomplishment in knowing that you are using tools crafted especially for you.

“5. Look for affirmation from other Spirit-led Christians. If God has called and gifted you for some area of service, others of His family will notice. Often in this setting God will confirm your gift. On the other hand, if you receive no response, see no fruit, and feel constant drudgery in the task, perhaps God wishes to call you to a different area of ministry.

“God equips His Spirit-filled people to be the channels through whom He can pour the rich resources of heaven upon those in need—in the church and out. One of the most thrilling discoveries a Christian can make is to see God’s kingdom extended and humbly acknowledge, ‘God used me there.’”—Don Jacobsen, “What Spiritual Gifts Mean to Me,” *Adventist Review*, Dec. 25, 1986, pp. 12, 13.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled "The Gift of the Spirit" in *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 47-56; —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: During the past few years the subject of spiritual gifts has been a dominant theme in the evangelical world. It is a common subject taught in numerous church seminaries. Seminars dealing with spiritual gifts are being conducted constantly, teaching what spiritual gifts are and how to use them. In some groups, spiritual gifts seem to focus mainly on speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues, however, is not limited to any one group. It forms what might be termed a religious cross-cultural phenomenon. Not all manifestations of "tongues" are from heaven. In a world where the supernatural is promoted, Christians must be certain to base their beliefs about spiritual gifts exclusively on the Scriptures.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: One of the fastest growing religious movements that crosses denominational barriers is the charismatic movement. Adherents to this theology believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is proven initially by speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Christ is our example for the Christian life. For instance, He was baptized although He did not need it in order to set us an example. It is interesting that there is no record that He ever spoke in tongues, but His Jordan baptism did include the Spirit baptism (Matt. 3:16).

With our emphasis on spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy, Seventh-day Adventists certainly believe in such gifts. But we do not believe that the gift of speaking in tongues is the sign that we have been baptized by the Spirit. Not all are given the same gifts and, as has been developed in this lesson, even the genuine tongues is one of the lesser gifts in the order of importance Paul presents. We need to set an example in using our gifts to help to encourage others. We also need to help them recognize the gifts God has given them and encourage them to put their gifts to work for Him.

SUMMARY: In two or three brief sentences, summarize what you have learned from this lesson:

APPLICATION

- Do I realize that all of the gifts of the Spirit emanate from the one Supreme Gift, Jesus Christ?
- Am I making a study of the gifts of the Spirit in order to understand how they relate to me personally?
- Do I daily pray for God to give me the gift of fitness to meet others in a redemptive way?
- Do I understand that gifts do not come for the elevation of self but rather to send me out in sacrifice for others?
- Do I realize that the remnant church, as the body of Christ, will be known not so much for what it teaches as for how it lives?

God Tells Us About the Gift of Prophecy



MEMORY TEXT: “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chron. 20:20).

CENTRAL TEACHING: “**The Gift of Prophecy.** One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”—Fundamental Belief No. 17.

OUTLINE:

- I. What Was the Work of Inspired Bible Prophets?
- II. How Did the Prophets Receive Their Messages?
- III. How Can We Identify a True Prophet?
- IV. Will There Be True Prophets in the Last-Day Church?
- V. Has the Prophetic Gift Been Manifested in the Last-Day Church?

INTRODUCTION: Jesus predicted that in the last days there would arise “false Christs, and false prophets” (Matt 24:24). Whatever fulfillments there may have been of that prediction in past centuries, no one can doubt that we are seeing it dramatically fulfilled today. False religious teachers, people claiming to be Christ, and others claiming to have received direct communications from God are prevalent in our contemporary world. It is important that every Christian be able to distinguish the false from the true. None of us wishes to be deceived in these last days before the second advent of Jesus. The Bible has much to say about the work of prophets, and the means by which the genuine prophetic gift can be identified.

Since God gave special messages through the prophets in past ages for the encouragement and spiritual enlightenment of His people, why can He not use someone in that way in the twentieth century? Is God’s power to communicate with His people any less today than it was in the time of Elijah or Jeremiah? Why should we accept the reality of miraculous prophetic inspiration in earlier ages but deny it for our age? If we should discover that the tests of a true prophet are fulfilled in the ministry of a modern individual, then how unwise we would be not to accept the messages as coming from God! To reject the counsel of a true prophet is to insult the Holy Spirit.



I. WHAT WAS THE WORK OF INSPIRED BIBLE PROPHETS?

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following Bible passages tell us about the work of Bible prophets?

- Luke 24:27 _____
- 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 _____
- 1 Peter 1:10, 11 _____
- Jer. 28:9 _____
- 1 Chron. 29:29, 30 _____

The primary purpose of all divine prophecy is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. God gave prophetic messages to lead lost souls to the Saviour. Sometimes the instruction given had timeless relevance. It was intended not only for the prophet's day but also for every subsequent age. In such cases the messages were recorded for future generations. Sometimes the messages were intended especially for the prophet's own contemporaries. In such cases, the messages were not preserved for future ages. The writings of such prophets as Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, and Jehu are not in the sacred canon (the collection of Bible books) because they did not have special application for future generations. Some problems in God's church are local as to time and place. The Lord has sometimes chosen special prophets to meet such local situations. For instance, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, who prophesied before the people of Judah during the reign of Jehoshaphat. He assured them of victory over their enemies the next day. He uttered the famous words "For the battle is not your's but God's" (2 Chron. 20:15).

An inspired prophet is not necessarily a canonical prophet. The messages of inspired non-canonical prophets came directly from God, just as did the messages of canonical prophets. The only difference was that the writings of the canonical prophets were selected by God for inclusion in the Bible. The messages of non-canonical prophets may have been a repetition of counsels already included in the written Scriptures, or they may have been designed to meet some local situation.

Women as well as men were called to the prophetic office. Name some of them:

- Ex. 15:20, 21 _____
- Judges 4:4, 5 _____
- 2 Kings 22:14 _____
- Luke 2:36 _____
- Acts 21:9 _____

The Lord does not discriminate on the basis of sex when choosing persons to communicate His special messages to the people. Often He has chosen godly women as instruments of His special revelations.



II. HOW DID THE PROPHETS RECEIVE THEIR MESSAGES?

In what main ways did God's messages come to the prophets?

- Hosea 12:10 _____
- Dan. 7:1 _____
- Dan. 8:16, 17 _____
- Eze. 2:2, 3 _____
- 2 Sam. 23:1-3 _____

The direct communications of the Holy Spirit were sometimes heard audibly, and sometimes recognized as an unmistakable inner command. The messages given inaudibly were not the same as the conviction of the Holy Spirit that every believer experiences. There was direct communication from the mind of God to the mind of the prophet, so that a specific divine message was communicated. The prophet knew that his responsibility was to pass on this message to the people.

ILLUMINATION: "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 21.

"We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed."—General Conference Proceedings, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883.

What physical state did the prophet sometimes experience when in vision? Dan. 10:7-9, 16-19; Num. 24:3, 4, 16; 2 Cor 12:1-4.

The Bible does not teach that the physical state of the prophet while in vision was always the same. Nor are we told that the physical phenomena are to be used as a test of the genuineness of a prophet's claims. The physical state of the prophet in vision can be counterfeited. If the physical phenomena are present when other Bible tests of a true prophet give positive results, they can be regarded as supporting evidence of the genuineness of the gift.

In what two ways did prophets pass on God's messages to the people? Isa. 6:9-11; Jer. 36:1, 2.



III. HOW CAN WE IDENTIFY A TRUE PROPHET?

With what teachings will the true prophet's messages be consistent? Isa. 8:20; Rev. 22:18, 19 (compare Jer. 23:16, 21, 22, 28).

Isaiah 8:20 may be translated as the New International Version renders it: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn." If they do not teach according to the Bible, then you know that their message did not come from God.

ILLUMINATION: "The word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."—*The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

"The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 416.

What will be the spiritual results of a true prophet's teaching in his own life and in the lives of those he influences? Matt. 7:15-20.

One of the major signs of the end will be false prophets whose main work is deception. (See Matt. 24:4, 11, 24.) Christ has given His true followers the right to be fruit-inspectors: " 'By their fruit you will recognize them' " (Matt. 7:20, NIV).

How reliable are the predictions of a true prophet of God? Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 28:9.

Some divine predictions are conditional upon man's response. Nineveh was saved, despite Jonah's predictions that it would be destroyed. The people fulfilled the condition for the divine sentence to be waived. (See Jonah 3:10.) Many of the divine promises to literal Israel could not be fulfilled because of the people's continuing apostasy. (See Jer. 18:7-10.) Nevertheless, the test is valid; true prophets do not make false predictions.

What will the true prophet teach in regard to Jesus Christ? 1 John 4:1-3.



IV. WILL THERE BE TRUE PROPHETS IN THE LAST-DAY CHURCH?

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the Bible passages that follow reveal about the gift of prophecy in the last-day church?

- Joel 2:28-32 _____
- Eph. 4:11-14 _____
- Rev. 12:17 _____
- Rev. 19:10 _____

Joel's prophecy establishes that in the last days some faithful ones will receive visions and dreams from the Lord.

The "testimony of Jesus Christ" that John refers to in Revelation 12:17 is defined in Revelation 19:10. The angel clearly meant that, like John, he had prophetic messages from Christ.

The point is that "the testimony of Jesus Christ" in the book of Revelation refers to more than the work of the Holy Spirit in every believing heart. It refers to the work of inspired prophets who, like John, have received visions, dreams, and special verbal communications to be given to humanity. The Lord promised through Joel and John that He would give prophetic messages in the last days to lead people back to the Bible and back to Jesus.

What should be our attitude to the work of genuinely inspired prophets? 1 Thess. 5:19-21; 2 Chron. 20:20; compare Matt 23:37, 38.



V. HAS THE PROPHETIC GIFT BEEN MANIFESTED IN THE LAST-DAY CHURCH?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that the true gift of prophecy was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. The questions that follow are suggested by the foregoing Bible study:

1. What did Ellen White claim for herself?

"I have had no claims to make, only that *I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger*; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus. . . .

"Why have I not claimed to be a prophet? — Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word 'prophet' signifies."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 32.

2. Did Ellen White claim to have had visions and dreams from the Lord?

Many times in her writings she refers to visions and dreams given to her by God. See *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 58-61, 67-71, 72, 74, 76-77, 79, 83.

3. Does Ellen White measure up to the tests of a true prophet?

• **The consistency of her writings with Scripture.** Ellen White's writings teach no doctrine that cannot be substantiated solely from Scripture. Her writings lead us back to the Bible. They provide simple explanations of Bible truths, that should have been understood by those professing to believe Scripture.

Ellen White did not teach that her writings should be used as another Bible, or that they should be added to the sacred canon: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the 'last days'; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."— *Early Writings*, p. 78.

"Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."— *Review and Herald*, Jan. 20, 1903, p. 15.

• **The fruitage of Ellen White's work.** The noble Christian character of Ellen White was attested to by many of those who knew her. (See Arthur L. White's biography entitled *Ellen G. White*, 6 volumes. These volumes are a rich source of information regarding the beginning and development of the Advent movement as well as the work of Ellen White. See also F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*.) The fruitage of Ellen White's work in the lives of others is demonstrated in two ways:

The growth of the Seventh-day Adventist work and institutions around the world: No other denomination the size of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has educational, medical, and publishing work as large and widespread. This is mainly attributable to Ellen White's work as God's messenger.

The spiritual impact of her writings: Millions have been drawn to Christ and the Bible through her published works. The only way to test her influence for yourself is to read her works.

• **Ellen White's predictions have been accurate.** All of the unconditional predictions applying to the period prior to our day have been fulfilled. Current events reveal the gradual fulfillment of her predictions for the last days. (See the final chapters of *The Great Controversy*.)

In 1848 she correctly predicted the amazing growth of the Seventh-day Adventist publishing work. (See *Life Sketches*, p. 125.) In the earliest stages of spiritualism's growth in America, she predicted that it would become a world religion. (See *Early Writings*, pp. 43, 59, 87.)

In 1890 she predicted the destruction that we have seen in two world wars. (See *Messages to Young People*, pp. 89, 90.)

Arthur L. White's six-volume biography of Ellen G. White provides convincing evidence that her predictions regarding the lives of individuals and the circumstances of the church have been remarkably fulfilled.

• **Ellen White exalted Christ.** Her writings constantly exalt Christ as the only Source of salvation, the Head of the church, the all-sufficient Sacrifice, the forgiving Mediator, and the merciful Judge. She depicts Christ as Deity

in the highest sense, and human in every respect except sin. (See *The Desire of Ages*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*.) Her book *Steps to Christ* is a superb commentary on the Bible teaching of righteousness by faith in Jesus.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Are later inspired prophets authoritative interpreters of earlier prophets? See Rom. 10:5-10 (compare Lev. 18:5; Eze. 20:11, 13, 21; Neh. 9:29; Deut. 30:11-14); Rom. 1:16, 17 (compare Hab. 2:4); 1 Cor. 9:9 (compare Deut. 25:4); Gal. 4:22-24 (compare the Old Testament account); Matt. 24:15 (compare Dan. 8:13; 9:27); Acts 2:17-21 (compare Joel 2:28-32); Acts 2:25-28 (compare Ps. 16:8-11).

Did Ellen White regard her writings as providing inspired interpretations of Scripture? See *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 126; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 236; *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 402; *Gospel Workers*, p. 302; *This Day With God*, p. 317.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Christian churches in general do not deny that prophets have existed since apostolic times. Even so, their description of this spiritual gift is usually quite broad and indefinite. There are those who consider great leaders such as Luther, Wycliffe, and Calvin to have been prophets. Several TV evangelists, who may not claim to be prophets, testify to having visions, dreams, or special communications from God. Others teach that, in a sense, every Christian is a prophet, because the Spirit of Christ has come upon all flesh. Some churches claim that the prophetic gift is manifested in their midst. How important it is to apply the principles of this lesson in order to avoid deception.

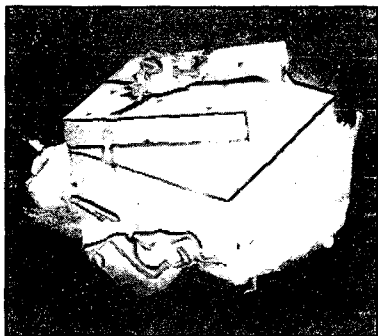
HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: Many find that the best way to share this truth with others is the "taste and see method." Share a book written by Ellen G. White, such as *The Desire of Ages*, *The Ministry of Healing*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, or *Steps to Christ*. Before presenting the book, give a warm personal testimony as to the blessing you have received by reading it and following its principles. Do not reveal any details about the author until after they have read the work for themselves. If their response is positive share with them who Ellen White was.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists believe that the genuineness of a professed prophet can be determined by the application of the tests given in Scripture. When these tests are applied to Ellen White, she is found to be an inspired modern prophet.

APPLICATION

- Am I grateful for the counsel God has given through both the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White?
- Do I spend as much time daily with these messages as I do watching television?
- Am I making efforts to share Ellen White's books with others who need to receive their special inspiration and guidance.

This Christmas Give a School



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 19, you're giving desks, chalkboards and the chance for a brighter future to children in Curitiba, Brazil.

**Help Build a School in
Curitiba, Brazil.**

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

What God's Law Tells Us About God



MEMORY TEXT: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "The Law of God. The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard of God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness."—Fundamental Belief No. 18.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Law Reveals God's Love.
- II. The Law Measures Christian Growth.
- III. The Law in the New Testament.
- IV. A Faith That Works.
- V. The Results of Faith at Work.

INTRODUCTION: A man journeying by foot was puzzled yet amused by a sign he came across in front of a convent. It read:

KEEP OUT

SISTERS OF MERCY

As he continued his travels he meditated on the apparent inconsistency.

Some see an inconsistency between the Bible's emphasis on combining law with grace, faith with works, and justice with mercy. But there is no inconsistency.

God thundered His love at Mt. Sinai. He expanded its meaning in the Sermon on the Mount. But He displayed its depth and fullness at Mt. Calvary. Sinai still symbolizes law and Calvary symbolizes grace. Yet one is not complete without the other. Sinai shows us what God's love is like and how far we are removed by nature from living a life that reflects His love. Calvary shows us that God's law could not be changed, thus God Himself

had to pay the price for our sins. Because the Christ who died on the cross spoke the law on Sinai (see *Evangelism*, p. 616) both carry the message of God's love in a consistent fashion.

Because "God is love" (1 John 4:8), we live in a universe characterized by law and order. Not only did the Creator set in operation the laws that govern the clockwork-like movements of the heavenly bodies but He also instituted laws that regulate the life and health of the human beings He placed on this planet. These laws are intended to enhance rather than inhibit life. The "more abundant" life Jesus promised in John 10:10 to those who follow Him comes when by His grace we conform to the laws of life and health.

These laws hold before us an ideal and imply a promise that, through Christ, we can measure up to the ideal.



I. THE LAW REVEALS GOD'S LOVE.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that God's law is eternal in principle. As the transcript of His character, it demonstrates what His love is like.

COMPARE the attributes of God with the law's inherent qualities by studying the comparisons that follow:

God	Attribute	Law
Ezra 9:15	Righteous	Psalms 119:172
Matt. 5:48	Perfect	Psalms 19:7
Lev. 19:2	Holy	Rom. 7:12
Psalms 34:8	Good	Rom. 7:12
Deut. 32:4	Truth	Psalms 119:142

How does Matthew 22:36-40 sum up the essence of the law?

Jesus made it clear that He did not come to change the law of God. The first four of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3-11 deal with our relationship to God. The last six in Exodus 20:12-17 are concerned primarily with our relationships with people about us.

ILLUMINATION: "If man love God in all the breadth and beauty suggested by the words 'with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' he cannot possibly find room for another God, and so the first word is kept. If man love God supremely, he will not suffer anything to stand between him and God, thus the graven image is broken to pieces, and swept away by the force of a stronger affection. Out of love will spring that hallowing of the name of God which will dry the springs of blasphemy, and make the double dealing of the hypocrite an impossibility. The Sabbath will be eagerly welcomed, and all its privileges earnestly and gladly appropriated when it is a season in which love may find its way into the attitude of worship, and the acts of service following therefrom.

"Passing to the second table, and looking now at love in its working

toward others, it will at once be seen that the only sufficient power for obedience and honor rendered to parents is that of love. There will be no thought of murder until the awful moment has arrived in which the flame of love has died out upon the altar. Unchastity of every description is love's sure destruction, growing gross upon the very death of that which it so vilely personates. All theft is rendered impossible by true love for one's neighbor. Love sits as a sentinel at the portal of the lips, and arrests the faintest whisper of false witness against a neighbor; nay, rather dwells within the heart, and slays the thought that might have inspired the whisper. It is love and love alone that, finding satisfaction in God, satisfies the heart's hunger, and prevents all coveting."—G. Campbell Morgan, *The Ten Commandments*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), pp. 120, 121.

In Romans 13:10 Paul succinctly summarizes in a single statement what it takes to keep the law: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."



II. THE LAW MEASURES CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

One outstanding feature of God's laws often overlooked is that, although they set minimum boundaries, there are no maximum limits. We are told not to kill or hate. But there is no limit to our expressing God's kind of love. Although we are not to steal from either God or those about us, there is no limit to how much of what we have can be given to bless God's work or others.

What is new about Jesus' new commandment? John 13:34.

The new commandment was not intended to add to or transcend the Ten Commandments. It was intended to enhance them by a new and unique example of how they could be kept. Jesus came to give us a new perspective of the purpose, power, and promise of God's law. Jesus came to this world not only to show us how to live according to the laws of God but to provide the transforming grace that alone can enable us to surrender fully to God's will for us as it is expressed in His laws. Rather than being requirements for getting into heaven, God's laws become to the consecrated Christian a measure or yardstick of his growing experience as well as a challenge to keep on growing in grace.

The Ten Commandments express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and are just as binding and meaningful to people today as they were when they were first given. Although most are expressed in negative "Thou shalt nots," they are not restrictions so much as they are word pictures of the kind of character God's children will reflect when they choose to live as He would have them live. They can be expressed in the positive sense as follows:

1. *Loyalty*—God will be first. If we are Christ's our thoughts are of Him. We will seek the spiritual, not the material. We will long to bear His image, breathe His Spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things because we love Him.
2. *Worship*—We worship the unseen, not the seen. The things we once hated we now love, and the things we once loved we now hate.
3. *Reverence*—The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Our conversation, affections, and sympathies are in heaven. Our

hearts are kept tender and subdued by the Spirit of Christ.

4. *Sanctification*—Christ is recognized as Creator and Re-Creator, not only by our keeping the seventh part of time but in our full acceptance of the rest of redemption. His holiness is evidenced in our lives, and the works of holiness, which previously seemed dull, uninteresting, and wearisome, are now our delight.

5. *Respect for Authority*—This begins in the home between parents and children, but extends to all relationships, with both God and man. Disobedience and rebellion are replaced by obedience and cooperation.

6. *Respect for Life*—Truly converted persons respect their own lives as well as those of others. Love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Our souls are imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. The fruit of the Spirit—love—is evidenced in the life.

7. *Purity*—There is a complete transformation—passion, appetites, and will are brought into perfect submission to God. The former life appears disgusting and sinful. Sinful thoughts are put away, and evil deeds are renounced because of our love for God and respect for His will.

8. *Honesty*—This involves our relationships and the way we carry on business affairs with our fellow humans. It also characterizes our relationship with God. Instead of robbing God of such things as our health, time, tithe, and offerings, we gladly dedicate all we have to Him. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure.

9. *Truthfulness*—By our words we shall be justified or condemned. When the heart is right our words and deeds will be right, and we will become men and women of strict integrity.

10. *Contentment*—The practice of holiness will be pleasant when there is perfect surrender to God. Joy takes the place of sadness and covetousness. The countenance reflects the peace and happiness of heaven.

THINK IT THROUGH: As I measure my current state of Christian development by the ten positive principles of God's law, in what specific area or areas do I need the Holy Spirit's help in order better to represent the character of God to those about me?

III. THE LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.



What was Christ's attitude toward and relationship to the law? Matt. 5:17-19; John 14:15.

Christ fulfilled the moral law by living the principles of the law in His love for God and for humanity. Such love fired His mission. He did not come to destroy the law. How could He destroy His love by loving? His entire life exemplified what God's love is like. It included being willing to go to the cross for the undeserving. When Jesus hung helpless on Calvary—lonely and hated—He took all the mockery, jeers, taunts, and rejection, gasping, "Father, forgive them." As He hung there, He gave the greatest demonstration of the law's eternal principles. Any idea that what happened on the cross changed the law comes from a superficial understanding of

what took Jesus to and kept Him on the cross. If there was any way that God could have saved the world and also spared His Son this utter ignominy and devastating anguish He would have done it. But salvation's plan demands love for the undeserving. It involves loving the unworthy, loving them for their sake and not for one's own sake. God went to the cross willingly in an utter self-abandonment for others. This selfless act opens up the very meaning of the law.

The unchangeable principles that constitute the basis of God's nature are the basis of His government in heaven and on earth. Both Old and New Testaments reveal the inextricable union of God with his law.

MATCHING: Discover for yourself how the Ten Commandments can be found in the New Testament by matching the texts in the column at right with the Ten Commandments listed at the left:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ First commandment | a. Heb. 4:4-6 |
| ___ Second commandment | b. Eph. 6:2 |
| ___ Third commandment | c. 1 Thess. 1:9 |
| ___ Fourth commandment | d. Matt. 5:21 |
| ___ Fifth commandment | e. Matt. 5:27 |
| ___ Sixth commandment | f. Acts 17:22-25 |
| ___ Seventh commandment | g. Rom. 7:7 |
| ___ Eighth commandment | h. Mark 10:19 (4th in list) |
| ___ Ninth commandment | i. Matt. 5:33-37 |
| ___ Tenth commandment | j. Rom. 13:9 (5th in list) |



IV. A FAITH THAT WORKS.

Analyze Hebrews 11:6. What is the proper balance between faith and works?

Faith is the absolute essential. If it is missing, then nothing else will ensure our salvation. Hebrews 11:6 implies that when we live the life of faith it will be possible for us to please God.

What was the result of Enoch's faith? Heb. 11:5.

Through Enoch God proved to the world and to the universe that sinful, fallen human beings can achieve perfect characters by God's grace through faith.

ILLUMINATION: Enoch "was a light amid the moral darkness, a pattern man, a man who walked with God, being obedient to God's law—that law which Satan had refused to obey, which Adam had transgressed, which Abel obeyed, and because of his obedience was murdered. And now God would demonstrate to the universe the falsity of Satan's charge that man cannot keep God's law. He would demonstrate that though man had sinned, he could so relate himself to God that he would have the mind and spirit of God and would be a representative symbol of Christ. This holy man was

selected of God to denounce the wickedness of the world, and to evidence to the world that it is possible for men to keep all the law of God. . . .

“Enoch walked with God and ‘had the testimony that his ways pleased God.’ This is the privilege of every believer today.”—Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look*, p. 228.

ILLUSTRATION: The painting of the motto for the 1947 Washington Conference camp meeting was assigned to a local shop. The word *faith* was supposed to be placed on one side of the main theme and the word *works* on the other. Misunderstanding his instructions, the sign painter put these words at the center bottom portion of the banner so that it read, “Faith works.” Although that was not what was intended, it made a most appropriate motto, for faith does not stand alone, isolated by itself. Wherever genuine faith is manifested it is faith that works.

A faith without works is a faith that does not work. John Calvin put it this way: “We are saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone.”

What does Galatians 2:17-21 tell us about how faith works? .

“In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 366.



V. THE RESULTS OF FAITH AT WORK.

“Faith quickens the senses to work diligently to produce results.”—Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look*, p. 72.

Among the results of faith at work are the following:

1. Keeping the Commandments and Following God’s Will. Before Christ can come, God must demonstrate to the universe through a significant number of human examples that fallen humanity *can* keep His commandments through partaking the divine nature. (See 2 Peter 1:3, 4.)

How does Revelation 14:12 summarize what the three angels’ messages are about?

Last-day commandment keepers are motivated by love. They love God so much that they are willing to do whatever He says, no matter what the consequences to themselves.

What attitude characterizes true commandment keeping? 1 John 5:3.

The keeping of God’s law brings us the happiness and blessing that God intended His laws to bring to His people. Through disobedience we cheat ourselves of the blessings that harmony with God’s laws brings.

2. Heeding Christ's Commission. Hearts filled with the love of God naturally will do everything possible to save others. Commandment keepers do not have to be pushed into witnessing. It becomes their delight. Anytime we discover the thrill of something better we are eager to share it with others. Our loving service also is motivated by a sense of urgency in this final judgment hour when the close of probation is fast approaching. In witnessing it is not what we say that impresses others so much as the way we demonstrate the blessing of a commandment-keeping life-style.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: "He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. . . . All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God."—*Selected Messages*, bk 1, p. 364.

"This comparison between God and His law has always impressed me. Do I wish to know what God is like? Then I study what has been revealed in His law, for its attributes are His.

"Do I wish to know by what kind of law God governs His people? Then I need only to read what the Scriptures reveal about the character of my Father, for His character is revealed in His law.

"Do I wish to know what kind of behavior will result if I live in obedience? Then I need to consider Christ Himself. His life was the law transmuted into a radiant, vibrant experience!

"Thus, as a Christian, I do not see the Ten Commandments as an expression of an arbitrary or a self-seeking will. Rather, they are the revelation of the character of the heavenly Father, an expression of His gracious will for my happiness in the created order of things. In effect, He is saying 'This is the best and happiest way to live on Planet Earth.'"—Frank B. Holbrook, "What God's Law Means to Me," *Adventist Review*, January 15, 1987, p. 16.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: In general most Christian churches subscribe to the Ten Commandments. If you ask Christians about each individual commandment, as to whether they should be observed, most will agree in the affirmative. But when the fourth commandment is reached usually the response is that the Sabbath has been changed from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Some denominations teach that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross, but after Pentecost all but the fourth were reinstated for Christians to keep. Catholics and Lutherans follow the lead of St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) joining the first and second commandments together and dividing the tenth. Tragically, little thought is given to the Ten Commandments in Christendom, and few sermons are preached about the Law of God. The theological pendulum swings between legalism and antinomianism ("there is no law"). Adventists virtually stand alone in attempting to balance God's judgment with His mercy—His law with grace.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: The most effective way of teaching this truth is to make certain that through the power of the

Holy Spirit you are obeying God's law to the best of your knowledge. Then, and only then, can you testify to the benefits of obedience to God's will. Make certain that you have a thorough understanding of the relationship of law and grace, faith and works, in order to avoid a legalistic approach. Obedience must be taught within the framework of a love response. I obey God because I love Him and for what He has done for me. I do not obey Him thinking that this gives me merit towards salvation.

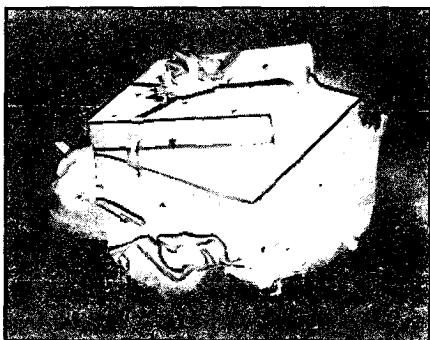
In addition, teach the law as a blessing. None of God's rules are arbitrary—there is a reason for every one of His commandments. When they are obeyed, life and blessings result. Also show how disobedience to any of God's laws carries with it an inherent penalty. God is not waiting to strike a violator of His law down. The violator will suffer the penalty that is inherent in disobedience to the commandments.

SUMMARY: God's remnant people believe in the perpetuity of the law of God. The law is the focal point of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. It is as eternal as God, being an expression of His character of love. Love to God and love to others make up the essence of the law.

APPLICATION

- Is the law precious to me and has the Holy Spirit written it on my heart?
- Do I understand that true lawkeeping is a love response to Jesus Christ?
- Do I understand that the Ten Commandments constitute God's character in words?
- Do I daily pray that the Commandments will become a part of my very being?

This Christmas Give a Hospital



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 19, you're giving medicine, beds and Christian care to people living along Brazil's Amazon river.

**Help Build a Hospital
at Manaus, North
Brazil.**

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

God Tells Us About the Sabbath



MEMORY TEXT: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day" (Matt. 24:20).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "The Sabbath. The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts."—Fundamental Belief No. 19.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Institution of the Sabbath.
- II. The Sabbath in the Old Testament.
- III. Christ and the Sabbath.
- IV. The Apostles and the Sabbath.

INTRODUCTION: How do we establish from Scripture that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath that the Lord wishes us to observe?

Why does He ask His believing people to keep the Sabbath day holy? Does the observance of the Sabbath have any bearing on our spiritual lives, or is it merely an option that God suggests because He knows that people would become over-tired if they worked seven days a week?

Seventh-day Adventist Christians are convinced that God's last-day seal is given to those who have entered into a special spiritual relationship with Christ. This relationship is the motivation and the power for obedience to all God's requirements, including Sabbath observance. In this sense, the Sabbath is the last-day seal of God.

What does the Bible teach about the manner in which we should observe the Sabbath? Committed Christians want to do just what Jesus asks of them. They choose to observe the day He specifies, in the manner He specifies.



I. THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.

What were the three distinct acts by which God created the Sabbath? Gen 2:1-3.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At the end of Creation week, when the world, its animal kingdom, and its two human inhabitants came forth in absolute perfection from the Creator's hand, God brought the Sabbath into existence. The Sabbath was not unknown prior to the giving of the law at Sinai, as many Christians believe. It is not a uniquely Jewish institution. Two institutions—marriage and the family and the seventh day Sabbath—date back to Creation.

God did not rest at the end of Creation week because He was weary in the human sense. (See Isa. 40:28.) Yet he “rested, and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:17). (See also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 47.)

Who was the Creator who rested on, blessed, and sanctified the Sabbath day? Col. 1:13-16; Heb. 1:1, 2.

If Christ the Son created all things, then He certainly created the Sabbath. Therefore the Sabbath is a Christian institution. He did not give the Sabbath only to the Jews as a part of a temporary ceremonial system of laws. He instituted the Sabbath for all humanity for all time. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 281.)



II. THE SABBATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Was the Sabbath observed by God's people before the giving of the law at Sinai? Gen. 26:5; Ex. 16:4, 5, 22-26.

Abraham's experience is presented in both Old and New Testaments as a great example of righteousness by faith in Christ. (See Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4; Gal. 3:6-14.) Yet Abraham obeyed God's laws. Sabbath observance was not a legalistic experience for him. It was a blessing because it was an act of faith in his Creator. (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 453.)

The Israelites were reminded of the Sabbath *before* the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. They were commanded to gather a double portion of manna on the sixth day in order to keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath. The period of slavery in Egypt had interrupted the practice of their religious observances. After the Exodus the Lord reintroduced the Sabbath. Note carefully the words “prove” and “law” in Exodus 16:4. They clearly indicate the existence of the law and the Sabbath as a test of loyalty before Sinai—“that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” (Ex. 16:4).

What statement of Paul establishes that the giving of the Ten

Commandments at Sinai was not the introduction of a system of works righteousness? Gal. 3:15-17.

The covenant given to Abraham involved righteousness and salvation by faith. In effect the Lord told Abraham, "You believe in the Messiah to come, and I will give you forgiveness for the past, power for the present, and the assurance of eternal life." Paul taught that the giving of the law at Sinai did not disannul the covenant given to Abraham. The purpose of the Ten Commandments was, not to introduce a system of works, but to point out sins and encourage Israel's faith in the Messiah who would atone for them (Gal. 3:19-24). The Sabbath, which is at the very heart of the Ten Commandments, was not part of a works system. It was a vital part of a righteousness by faith religion.

What kind of Sabbath observance is stipulated by the fourth commandment? Ex. 20:8-11.

God gave Adam and Eve the Sabbath as a day when they could enter into closer fellowship with Him and He with them. This highest level of companionship was the supreme purpose for the creation of humanity. We were made not merely for animal and human fellowship, but for fellowship with God, the Eternal Father of us all.

The fourth commandment forever establishes that Creation week consisted of seven 24-hour days. The Sabbath is not merely a symbol of rest. Any day of the week could be used as a symbol of rest. The Sabbath is a sign of a literal creation week—"for in six days the Lord made" (Ex. 20:11). The fourth commandment gives a clear testimony as to why God commanded us to "remember the sabbath day." Those who honor the seventh-day Sabbath have a bulwark against the error of the evolutionary theory, which teaches that life has evolved over long periods of time.

In the days when Israel was a theocracy, what did the Lord command should be done to the Sabbath breaker? Ex. 31:14; Num. 15:30-36.

The individual who broke the Sabbath "presumptuously," or "with a high hand" (Num. 15:30, RSV), was to be cut off from Israel. Presumptuous sins were those committed in a proud spirit of rebellion against the Lord. (See Ex. 21:14, 15; Deut. 1:43; 17:12, 13; 18:22.)

In their wilderness experience, Israel had been specifically commanded by the Lord: "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (Ex. 35:3).

In direct rebellion against this command, a man gathered wood for a fire on the Sabbath day. The Lord directed that he should be put to death.

Seventh-day Adventists are sometimes reminded that they do not put to death Sabbath breakers. This is said to be inconsistent because Adventists observe the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It should be pointed out that the death penalty was to be meted out in Israel for rebellious breaking of any divine commandment. (Compare Num. 15:30; Deut. 13:6-10; 21:18-21;

22:20-27.) No modern church puts to death members who are guilty of idolatry, immorality, disobedience to parents, or other sins of rebellion against God.

In view of Christ's glorious love made manifest at the cross, the New Testament makes willful disobedience extremely serious. The punishment is eternal loss. (See Heb. 10:26-31.)

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following Old Testament passages teach regarding the significance of Sabbath observance?

- Ex. 31:13, 17 _____
- Neh. 13:15-22 _____
- Isa. 56:1, 2, 6, 7 _____
- Isa. 58:13, 14 _____
- Isa. 66:22, 23 _____



III. CHRIST AND THE SABBATH.

What did Jesus do on the Sabbath day? Luke 4:16.

By what instruction did Jesus demonstrate His wish that His followers should observe the Sabbath after His death and resurrection? Matt. 24:20.

When "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" is set up (Matt. 24:15), Jesus' people are to pray that their flight from their persecutors will not be on the Sabbath day. Jesus was referring to Dan. 8:13 and 9:27. The little-horn power of Daniel 8 represents both pagan and papal Rome. It first set up the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15), or "the desolating sacrilege" (RSV) when the Roman armies threatened Jerusalem (A.D. 66-70). The context of Jesus' statement indicates that a second fulfillment came in the Middle Ages. (See Matt. 24:15-29.) Because Matthew chapter 24 is using historical events as a type of end-time events, we know that just prior to the Second Advent "the abomination of desolation" once more will become a threat to the religious liberty of the people of God.

The instruction of Matthew 24:20 applies as much to the end of time as it does to the first century and the Middle Ages. Therefore, the Lord intends His people to observe the Sabbath right down to His second advent. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 630, 631; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 26, 36, 37; *Testimonies*, vol 5, pp. 464, 465.)

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following passages reveal regarding Jesus' method of Sabbath observance?

- Mark 2:14-28 _____
- Mark 3:1-6 _____
- Mark 7:6-9 _____
- John 7:21-24 _____
- John 9:1-16 _____



IV. THE APOSTLES AND THE SABBATH.

What action of Christ's followers after His death establishes that the seventh day of the week is the true Bible Sabbath? Luke 23:54—24:1, 7; compare Mark 16:9; 1 Cor. 15:4.

Jesus died and was buried on the day of "preparation" for the Sabbath. The next day His followers rested "according to the commandment." Jesus rose from the dead the following day, the "first day of the week."

Paul indicates that Christ's resurrection day was "the third day." The picture is clear. Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon and rose on Sunday morning. The day between was the "sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). The true Bible Sabbath is the twenty-four hour period from sundown Friday till sundown Saturday. (See also Lev. 23:32; Neh. 13:19; Mark 1:21, 32.)

Creation Friday and crucifixion Friday were new beginnings for the human race. On the first, creation was completed; on the second, re-creation of fallen humanity was assured. The Sabbath that followed Creation Friday was a day of rest. How appropriate that Jesus should rest in the tomb after crucifixion Friday. His sacrificial work was complete. Redemption was provided for all who would believe. The Sabbath is a memorial of both creation and redemption.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How many Sabbaths observed by the Apostle Paul are recorded in the book of Acts? What does this tell us about the attitude of the apostolic Christian church to Sabbathkeeping?

- Acts 13:14, 15, 42-44 _____
- Acts 16:12-15 _____
- Acts 17:1, 2 _____
- Acts 18:1, 4, 11 _____

These Sabbath meetings took place over a period of ten years, from about A.D. 45 to 55. Why would Luke record all these Sabbath meetings of the apostles and not say one word about any change of the Sabbath? Surely if there had been any inspired counsel to worship on another day, or not to worship on any day Luke would have mentioned it.

Some Christians believe that Paul went to the synagogues on the Sabbath

day only because he could find there an audience of Jews ready to listen to the gospel. Undoubtedly Paul did use the synagogue as a ready-made evangelistic center. But he kept the Sabbath whether he went to the synagogue or not.

In Philippi Paul and his associates kept the Sabbath "by a river side" (Acts 16:13). They did not go there because it was a convenient place to meet with Jews. It was a place "where prayer was wont to be made." The Greek may be translated: "where we thought (supposed, assumed) there was a place of prayer."

The apostles looked for a quiet place to pray on the Sabbath day. Because they noticed other people nearby, they took the opportunity to present the gospel to them. The story establishes that the apostles observed the Sabbath.

The apostles honored the Sabbath because they understood its deep significance. Hebrews 4, written less than forty years after the cross, compares Israel with the church. (See Hebrews 4:4, 9.) Christians are urged to do what Israel failed to do, to enter into the spiritual rest of which the seventh-day Sabbath is the symbol and the means.

When John was a prisoner on the island of Patmos, on what day of the week did he receive a vision? Rev. 1:10; compare Mark 2:28.

John received his vision during the last decade of the first century A.D. In the second half of the second century some Christian writers used the Greek word for "Lord's day" to mean the first day of the week. They did this because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Certain modern scholars have, therefore, assumed that the Lord's day on which John received his vision must have been Sunday.

Words and phrases often change meaning over a period of time. It is not valid reasoning to read back a later meaning of a word or phrase into an earlier use of that word or phrase. John's understanding of the Lord's day must be considered in the light of his background experiences. As one of the twelve disciples, he had heard Jesus claim that He was "Lord" of the Sabbath. How natural it was for John to speak of the Sabbath as the Lord's day!

SEARCH AND LEARN: How would you deduce from the passages that follow that God's last-day seal is given only to those who keep His Sabbath day holy?

1. Rev. 7:1-3 _____
2. Rev. 14:1, 4, 5, 7 _____
3. Compare Rom. 4:11 with Ex. 31:13 _____
4. Heb. 8:10 _____

ILLUMINATION: "The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Those who obey this commandment take upon themselves His name, and all the blessings it involves are theirs."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 350.

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FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Study the following passages of Scripture that are sometimes used against the teaching of the Seventh-day Sabbath. By placing these passages in their context and comparing scripture with scripture discover their true meaning: Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Col. 2:14-17; Rom. 14:4-8, 13. Compare Lev. 23; Num 28, 29.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: History reveals that in the early Christian centuries there was a gradual transference of Sabbathkeeping to Sunday observance. Even so, in every century since the time of Christ there have been Christians who have faithfully observed the seventh-day Sabbath. For centuries Sundaykeeping was rigorously promoted by law and example. This rigid observance has been steadily eroding since the mid-nineteenth century. For all practical purposes, Sunday observance today is limited to church attendance. Orthodox Jews strictly observe the seventh-day Sabbath. Although several smaller Christian groups teach obedience to the fourth commandment, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest denomination in the world that does so.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: If you are experiencing the Sabbath as a day of delight your testimony to others will be contagious. Invite others to enjoy the Sabbath blessing by going to church with you. Show those with whom you are studying how the Sabbath focuses on the Lord's creative and redemptive power. Explain that the very heart of the Sabbath is resting in His love and work—not yours. Explain that when the evolutionary theory came into existence during the nineteenth century, God raised up the Advent movement to call people's attention to His creative work. (See Revelation 14, the three angels' messages.)

SUMMARY: The Sabbath as understood by Seventh-day Adventists was established by Christ at Creation. It is, therefore, a Christian institution. The Sabbath was kept from Creation to Sinai. It was not intended only for Jews, but for humanity in general. Jesus and the apostles kept the Sabbath, and Jesus instructed His followers to observe it after His death. He taught that the Sabbath should be kept until His second advent. The book of Revelation presents Sabbath keeping as a vital aspect of the spiritual experience of those who receive the end-time seal of God.

APPLICATION

- Do I believe that God expects me to observe His seventh-day Sabbath as an evidence of my faith in Jesus?
- Am I willing to keep the Sabbath day holy in the manner that is taught in Scripture?
- Am I doing all I can to share the blessings of the Sabbath with others?

God Tells Us About Stewardship



MEMORY TEXT: “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:23, 24).

CENTRAL TEACHING: “**Stewardship.** We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness.”—Fundamental Belief No. 20.

OUTLINE:

- I. Stewardship Recognizes God’s Ownership.
- II. Stewardship Is a Total Life Commitment.
- III. Stewardship Is a Privilege.
- IV. Stewardship Blesses the Faithful Steward.
- V. Stewardship Blesses Others.

INTRODUCTION: Seventeen years after the Babylonian captivity of the Jews had ended by a decree issued by Cyrus that they could return to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of God, the Jews were discouraged. Samaritan opposition to the building of the Temple had become fierce. Some of the Jews were wondering whether they had interpreted the 70-year prophecy correctly—perhaps it was not time to rebuild yet. Yet it “was a time of wonderful opportunity for the Jews. The highest agencies of heaven were working on the hearts of kings [see Daniel 10], and it was for the people of God to labor with the utmost activity to carry out the decree of Cyrus. . . . But in the day of God’s power many proved unwilling.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 572.

When they neglected the work on the temple and turned instead to building their own homes, God challenged them: “Is it time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains in ruins?” (Haggai 1:4, NIV).

Twice in the first chapter of Haggai God challenged the people to consider their ways—to stop and take a look at what was happening because of their neglect. “Ye have sown much, and bring in little. . . . he that earneth

wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. . . . Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it" (Haggai 1:6-9).

Why? Because in a time of great urgency for the work of the Lord they were caught up in a Laodicean sleeping sickness—even being unaware of their neglect. What about us today as individuals and as a church? Are we so caught up in our own priorities that we neglect God's?

He challenges us to consider our ways. Nothing other than total commitment to the Lord and His cause is worthy of these last moments of time.



I. STEWARDSHIP RECOGNIZES GOD'S OWNERSHIP.

God has given us everything that love could provide. His most loving gift is the power of choice. We alone decide how we will manage the gifts that love has given. In order to do so we must recognize that all we have and are comes from Him.

What makes God owner of all that we have? Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 1:15-17.

In what pointed language does God describe His ownership of the world? Psalm 50:10-12.

What did David indicate about the ownership of all he and his people had and about offerings to God? 1 Chron. 29:14.

ILLUMINATION: "Men whom God has blessed with His bounties clasp their arms about their earthly treasure and make these bounties and blessings, which God has graciously given them, a curse by filling their hearts with selfishness and distrust of Him. They accept the goods lent them, yet claim them as their own, forgetting that the Master has any claim upon them, and refusing to yield to Him even the interest that He demands. . . . "The earth is the Lord's, and all the treasure it contains. . . . He has entrusted His treasure to stewards, that with them they may advance His cause and glorify His name."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 652.

What God seeks in return for all that He has given us is total commitment to Him. God's people in Hosea's day repudiated the Owner-manager concept. They did not acknowledge that their material blessings came from the Lord. (See Hosea 2:8.) The committed Christian will accept the fact that God is the owner of everything and that His children are the managers of these gifts. (see Matt. 6:25-34.) There is no reason to worry about material things as long as we are faithful managers. True peace of mind is the fruitage of understanding and practicing the principles of this Owner-manager relationship.

II. STEWARDSHIP IS A TOTAL LIFE COMMITMENT.

What does Paul term our commitment to God? Why is it "reasonable?" Rom. 12:1-3.

In the fullest sense stewardship can be defined as the complete and unre-served giving of ourselves to Jesus Christ. Our responsibility to God and to our fellow human beings does not depend on the quantity or quality of our material possessions. Our stewardship is based on two facts brought out in the texts that follow. Study the texts, then list what the basis is for our stewardship:

- Isa. 44:24 _____
- 1 Cor. 6:20 _____

We cannot separate ourselves legitimately from God's plans for carrying out His work of salvation and restoration on earth. There is a sense in which He needs us. Most certainly we need the privilege of being used by Him.

What basic principle is outlined in 1 Corinthians 10:31?

What is the origin of true liberty? How do our gifts to God reveal our love for Him? 2 Cor. 8:1-5.

If the church members in Macedonia had withheld their material and financial resources, that would have been proof that they had not previously given themselves fully to God.

What attitudes characterized the Macedonian members when they gave to the glory of God?

"The troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so

(1) exuberantly happy that from the depth of their poverty they have shown themselves

(2) lavishly open-handed.

(3) Going to the limit of their resources, as I can testify, and even beyond that limit, they

(4) begged us most insistently, and on their own initiative, to be allowed to share in this generous service to their fellow-Christians" (2 Cor. 8:2-4, NEB).

ILLUMINATION: "Nearly all the Macedonian believers were poor in this world's goods, but their hearts were overflowing with love for God and His

truth, and they gladly gave for the support of the gospel. When general collections were taken up in the Gentile churches for the relief of the Jewish believers, the liberality of the converts in Macedonia was held up as an example to other churches. . . .

“The willingness to sacrifice on the part of the Macedonian believers came as a result of wholehearted consecration. . . . It was not necessary to urge them to give; rather, they rejoiced in the privilege of denying themselves even of necessary things in order to supply the needs of others. When the apostle would have restrained them, they importuned him to accept their offering. In their simplicity and integrity, and in their love for their brethren, they gladly denied self, and thus abounded in the fruit of benevolence.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 343, 344.

To whose example did Paul refer as being the motivating factor in the sacrificial spirit of the Macedonians? 2 Cor 8:9.

The basis of all stewardship is the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Stewardship is utter selflessness. It is giving oneself completely to God, as well as giving service to one's fellow human beings. When we see the simple life that Jesus lived and the horrible death that He died, how can we withhold that which He asks of us? Christ gave not merely what He had; He gave Himself. This is stewardship of the highest order.



III. STEWARDSHIP IS A PRIVILEGE.

If we love the Lord with our entire heart, mind, soul, and strength we will consider it a privilege to demonstrate our love in many practical ways that honor and please Him.

What sort of things are more important to God than our tithes and offerings? Matt. 23:23.

Stewardship of total life commitment consists of much more than financial giving. In fact, material gifts make up only a small part of what those who choose to follow God are privileged to bring to Him. But what we do with the means He has provided us becomes a good indication of whether we are committed fully to Him.

ILLUSTRATION: If you place before you all your check stubs, cancelled checks, charge accounts, and receipts, you see at a glance what the direction of your life has been. As you survey all the material possessions of which you have made use—clothes, lands, homes, cars, bank accounts, stock certificates, food consumed, expenditure on entertainment, plus the tithes and offerings you have given—you can say, “There am I. That is the record of my life.” Then ask yourself the question “Have I neglected the more important matters—justice, mercy, and faithfulness?”

SEARCH AND LEARN: Study the two contrasting stories that follow. In the space provided, indicate how they demonstrate the difference between total commitment and halfhearted service:

- Acts 4:32—5:11—Ananias and Sapphira _____

- Mark 12:41-44 —The widow's mite _____

THINK IT THROUGH: When Jesus said “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21), did He mean that our hearts follow where we put our treasure or that our treasure follows where we put our hearts?

One specific purpose for God’s plan of stewardship is to develop greater faith and stronger Christian characters on our part. But we must not overlook the other side of the treasure/heart equation. Where our hearts are, there our treasures naturally will follow. Ananias and Sapphira held back part of their pledge because their hearts were not committed completely to Christ and they did not appreciate the tremendous privilege that was theirs in giving to Him and His cause. “It is only when Christian motives are fully acknowledged, and the conscience is awake to duty, when divine light makes impressions upon the heart and character, that selfishness is overcome, and the mind of Christ is exemplified. The Holy Spirit, working upon human hearts and characters, will expel all tendency to covetousness, to deceptive dealing.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 313.



IV. STEWARDHIP BLESSES THE FAITHFUL STEWARD.

What blessing does God pronounce upon the faithful steward? Matt. 25:21.

Not only do those who are faithful stewards reap what they have sown, they actually receive from the Master’s hands much more than they deserve. (See John 10:10.)

How abundant will be God’s blessing as we return to Him tithes and offerings? Mal. 3:10-12.

What use is to be made of the tithe? Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21; Deut. 12:5, 6; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14.

See also *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 247-250.

What is the result of commitment to God's will and way? 2 Cor. 9: 6-8.

Our giving demonstrates the extent and completeness of our commitment. It embraces all areas of our lives. The result of such giving is that grace abounds in and toward the giver. We reap what we sow.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, the Greek word for "cheerful" is *hilaros* from which is derived our English word "hilarious." It is interesting to note how solemn people's faces are when the offering plate passes by. There should be an enthusiastic, contagious, joyfulness as we give to God not only our funds but also our entire beings.

How much of our means and of ourselves does God expect us to give? Deut. 16:17.

Individuals can only give as God enables them to give, whether it be time, talents, money, or knowledge. Sharing the gospel is sharing what we are able to share. Our spiritual experience and our relationship with God is what we actually have to share. We use the "gifts" of life in the process of sharing. Doing so not only blesses the recipients but benefits those who give. As we learn to love by sharing, our characters are being molded in the image of the great Giver.

Financial gifts are needed urgently in the cause of God. However, a living experience and a personal relationship with God are our most urgent needs. Adequate funding is not and never has been the basic problem that has hindered in the development of God's work through the centuries. The great need has been the development of a truly spiritual experience in the recipients of God's gift of life.

True stewards of life understand by experience the joy of Jesus that is expressed in Hebrews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Giving brings joy as we enter into full, complete, and happy partnership with Jesus.



V. STEWARDSHIP BLESSES OTHERS.

What is the significance of Christ's fifth beatitude in Matthew 5:7?

More than the spirit of mercy or forgiveness is intended here. When Christ dwells in our hearts fully, they overflow with His benevolence.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What can we learn from the examples of giving in the early church that are recorded in the passages that follow?

- Rom. 15:26, 27 _____
- 1 Cor. 9:9-14 _____

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Counsels on Stewardship*, chapters 1-6, pp. 13-28, and chapters 65-68, pages 339-350.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Few other denominations have a stewardship program that approximates that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Adventist plan for returning tithes and offerings follows the principles outlined in Scripture. Some churches prefer modern money-raising techniques to collect the means they need. To persuade the people to give, they use television and pulpit appeals, blanket mailings, offering of prizes, bingo gambling, lotteries, begging, cajoling, and even threatening. Thank God for His spiritual plan of motivating the giver on the basis of love for the Lord, who sacrificed all for us.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: Your personal testimony of how God has blessed you mentally, physically, financially, and spiritually through a total life commitment stewardship program is the best way to help others understand this beautiful truth. Always present this subject from the angle of blessings received because of joyful obedience. For instance, on the question of tithing, show how nine tenths of a person's income goes much farther with God's blessing than ten tenths without it. Show the truth of this fact by using Haggai 1:5-11. Always remember to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to guide in what you say as you share your faith.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists understand stewardship as our response to receiving all that we have from God. Only God is self-existent. The fact that He created us means that we owe life itself to Him. He gave it and He maintains it. God has given us time in which to work for Him and others. He has given us bodies to care for so that we might be the greatest possible blessing to the world. He has given us money and material blessings for use in His service. As we consider God as the real owner of all these gifts and ourselves as His managers, we are moved to commit ourselves totally to Him. Stewardship then becomes a great blessing.

APPLICATION

- Have I experienced the peace that results from acknowledging God's ownership of all I possess?
- Do I see myself as the manager of God's gifts?
- Do I trust God enough to surrender my time, talents, treasure, and body temple for His service and the blessing of my fellow human beings?

God Tells Us About Christian Behavior



MEMORY TEXT: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "Christian Behavior. We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholeness, joy, and goodness."—Fundamental Belief No. 21.

OUTLINE:

- I. The More Abundant Life.
- II. The Christian's Health.
- III. Dress and Adornment.
- IV. Entertainment That Christ Approves.
- V. The Life of Jesus Is Our Example.

INTRODUCTION: Several years ago an article appeared in a popular evangelical magazine enumerating practices that seemed to erect a wall of separation between Adventists and other Christians. Why does our church advocate a life-style that includes healthful practices? Why do we advocate a modest dress code and beneficial types of amusement and recreation? Are we attempting to earn our way to heaven? Are we trying to be different for the sake of difference? Or is Christian behavior related to the gospel?

First, we must understand that the cross reveals the utter uselessness of trying to earn merit through a particular life-style. The practice of high standards related to Christian behavior cannot earn credit toward salvation. Standards do not save; they demonstrate the saving presence of Christ in the heart.

Second, trying to be different in the way we look, act, and think just for the sake of being different from the world is irrational. There are reasons for every standard that the church upholds. These reasons focus on Jesus, who was different, not in order to be different—but to make a difference in the lives of His followers. That difference is spelled out in John 10:10, our memory text. Above everything else, Jesus desires for His followers the more abundant life experience.

A key point in the gospel is restoration. Gospel restoration effects us mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. The committed Christian does not ask, “Why is this or that wrong?” He asks, “What would my Lord have me to do and why?” If this attitude means forsaking a cherished practice or habit, the Christian knows it is for his or her best good. A person’s relationship with Christ is more important than anything in life.

The Adventist Church does not provide detailed rules regarding conduct. The church presents the basic principles of the Bible and asks church members to live by them for their own good and for the honor and integrity of the church—the body of Christ. The details are left to individual conscience guided by the Holy Spirit.

I. THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE.

How did Moses set before Israel the more abundant life concept? Deut. 30:11-16; 28:1, 2.

Whose ownership are we urged to acknowledge? What is the basis of this ownership? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 3:16, 17.

We all know by experience that rules listed in an operation manual for various types of equipment—automobiles, furnaces, microwaves, et cetera—are designed to give the owner the best possible service. So with life. God, the Owner and Proprietor, desires our best good. He alone knows what will provide us the maximum amount of happiness. Why do some people rebel against standards of dress, diet, and recreation? (See Rom. 8:6-8.)

ILLUMINATION: “To set the mind on the things of the Spirit, and to have the thoughts and desires governed solely by the Spirit of God, result in that healthful, life-giving harmony of all the functions of the soul that is a sure pledge and foretaste of the life to come.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 563. (See also Eph. 1:13, 14.) The presence of the Holy Spirit brings love, joy, and peace into the life. (See Gal. 5:22.) The Spirit within is the kingdom of God within. The trusting Christian enjoys “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17).

What has Christ done for us that gives Him the right to direct our way of life? Col. 1:14, 16, 17; 1 Peter 1:15-19; Titus 2:14.

ILLUMINATION: "My heart aches as I am shown how many there are who make self their idol. Christ has paid the redemption price for them. To Him belongs the service of all their powers. But their hearts are filled with self-love, and the desire for self-adorning. They give no thought to the words, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Mark 8:34). Self-gratification is hiding Christ from their view. They have no desire to walk before God in meekness and lowliness. They are not looking to Jesus. They are not praying that they may be changed into His likeness."—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 80.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following passages indicate regarding the level of consecration that the Lord seeks of us?

- Rom. 12:1 _____
- 1 Thess. 5:23 _____
- 1 Cor. 10:31 _____



II. THE CHRISTIAN'S HEALTH.

Because God cares for us, he has given us information for the maintenance of our bodies. In Scripture there are more than one thousand texts that deal with a person's physical health. In addition, God has graciously given us specific details as to the best way to care for our bodies. Books such as *The Ministry of Healing*, *Counsels on Health*, and *Counsels on Diets and Foods* are indispensable to those who really seek to know God's will in these matters.

SEARCH AND LEARN: God has not left us in doubt about how He wants us to treat our bodies. What specific instruction do you find in the following passages?

- Gen. 1:29, 30; 3:18 _____
- Isa. 65:3, 4; 66:15-17 _____
- Prov. 20:1; 23:29-32 _____
- Lev. 11:1-20 _____

Health is not merely the absence of a disease. Health is not a product, but a process. A seemingly healthy person who is violating one of nature's laws is not really healthy. Sooner or later disease will develop. A truly healthy condition is found only in those who, by the grace of God, faithfully, cheerfully, and consistently practice *all* the laws of health.

ILLUMINATION: "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles in

volved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127.

There are many nonsmokers who do not get proper exercise. God wants us to be balanced. Many who would never think of smoking or drinking alcohol are grossly overweight because they eat enormous quantities of food. They are violating the laws of health, driving away the Holy Spirit, and sowing seeds of future illness. The original diet given man by God consisted of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and grains. (See Gen. 1:29.) Our first parents were vegetarians. Such a diet contains all the nutrients necessary for health.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why does the Seventh-day Adventist Church recommend a vegetarian diet to its members? What are the disadvantages of a flesh food diet?

ILLUMINATION: “There needs to be presented to all students and physicians, and by them to others, that the whole animal creation is more or less diseased. Diseased meat is not rare, but common. Every phase of disease is brought into the human system through subsisting upon the flesh of dead animals. The feebleness and weakness in consequence of a change from a meat diet will soon be overcome, and physicians ought to understand that they should not make the stimulus of meat eating essential for health and strength. All who leave it alone intelligently, after becoming accustomed to the change, will have health of sinews and muscles.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 292.

The cholesterol content of flesh foods is very high. Cholesterol is one of the main causes of arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) that produces heart disease.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why is the use of alcohol, tobacco, and the misuse of other drugs ruled out for the Christian?

1. Alcohol causes loss of mental and physical control. It is one of the main causes of tragedy on the highways in most countries on earth today. It is estimated that more than 10 percent of all admissions to public mental institutions are the result of chronic alcoholism. Alcohol damages the highest centers of the brain; those concerned with behavior, speech, and memory. Concentrated doses damage the nervous system.

2. The dangers of smoking to health have been heavily documented in recent years. Lung cancer, pulmonary emphysema, and heart disease are very common among smokers. As early as 1875 Ellen G. White wrote: “Tobacco is a slow, insidious poison, and its effects are more difficult to cleanse from the system than those of liquor.”—*Temperance*, p. 55.

3. Misuse of drugs is condemned in the Bible. The “sorcerers” (Rev. 21:8; 22:15; Greek *pharmakoi*) are “mixers of poisons,” or “poisoners.” Such people in ancient times were often involved in occult practices. At the coming of Jesus people who misuse drugs will be classed among murderers, adulterers, and idolaters. Not only the more potent drugs but also those contained in tea and coffee are harmful to health.

What does trust in God do for our health? Psalm 42:11.

ILLUMINATION: “When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place you last saw the light. Rest in Christ’s love and under His protecting care. When sin struggles for mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ’s grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. . . . Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does the spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 250, 251.



III. DRESS AND ADORNMENT.

SEEK AND FIND: What principles designed to direct the way we dress are spelled out in the Bible?

- 2 Cor. 3:18 _____
- 1 Tim. 2:9, 10 _____
- 1 Peter 3:3-5 _____

God wants the character of each believer “to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). The Holy Spirit brings the Christian progressively nearer to the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). If Christ is living out His life through the individual (Gal. 2:20), then the pattern of dress and conduct that Christ respects will be followed.

What is that pattern? Although women are mentioned in Scripture when dress is being discussed, the counsel is equally applicable to men. The modes of dress that the Bible condemns are: (1) braided hair; (2) wearing of gold; (3) wearing of pearls; (4) costly attire. (See 1 Tim. 2:9, 10.) In context, it is obvious that Paul is referring to extravagant hairdos and clothes. Obviously having hair disorderly and unkempt is just as likely to attract attention to oneself and so to break the Bible principle.

The mode of dress that the inspired the apostle Paul approves will be: (1) respectable; (2) modest; (3) moderate, showing good judgment and self-control; (4) such as reveals reverence for God; (5) such as demonstrates a pure, humble heart.

The secret of dressing properly is found in Philippians 2:5 and Hebrews 12:2. If we have the mind of Christ, focusing our eyes on Him rather than on self, then the dress, makeup, jewelry problem will certainly disappear. The Scriptures distinguish clearly between the fashions of the world and those that honor God. (See Rev. 12:1; 17:4, 5.) The description of the woman who represents the true church includes modesty, purity, and beauty. By contrast, the woman representing Babylon is extravagantly adorned. Those who have a relationship with Christ can easily detect the difference.

WED

IV. ENTERTAINMENT THAT CHRIST APPROVES.

How important are our thoughts in God's sight? 2 Cor. 10:4, 5; Phil. 4:8.

What effect do our thoughts have on our words and actions? Prov. 23:7; 15:26; 24:8, 9.

What will the believer do when he sees evil? What promise is given to such a person? Isa. 33:15-17.

THINK IT THROUGH: How would you apply the above principles to such forms of enjoyment as television watching, movie and theater going, dancing, and gambling? (See also 1 Tim. 6:6-11; Prov. 28:20; Jer. 17:10, 11; Matt. 6:19-24; 1 John 2:15-17; Col. 3:1-3.)

A person's control center is his mind. Our mind receptors must be kept keen and clean. The major purpose for the Christian health program is to keep the mind alert to the wiles of Satan and strong to resist him. The mind is to be the dwelling place of the Spirit of Christ.

The nondrug-taking, nonalcohol-drinking, nonsmoking vegetarian who exercises and rests well is just as vulnerable as those who do not follow his life-style if his television viewing is out of control. Television is one of Satan's most deadly weapons against Christians today. Moral and ethical values are progressively broken down by indiscriminate watching of programs filled with violence, immorality, and dishonesty.

THU

V. THE LIFE OF JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE.

What kind of person was Jesus? To what extent did personal pride and covetousness motivate His behavior? Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5-8.

How can we be like Jesus? 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 16:25; 1 Peter 2:21.

There was no pride, impurity, or covetousness in Jesus. Riches meant nothing to Him. Personal adornment, dancing, unholy entertainment, gambling, and unhealthful practices were totally excluded from His life. The devil could not overcome Him with these or any other temptations. Christ was possessed by one all-consuming purpose, the salvation of lost humanity. And He invites us to join Him in this great task.

ILLUMINATION: “Christians must be like Christ. They should have the same spirit, exert the same influence, and have the same moral excellence that He possessed. The idolatrous and corrupt in heart must repent and turn to God. Those who are proud and self-righteous must abase self and become penitent and meek and lowly in heart. The worldly-minded must have the tendrils of the heart removed from the rubbish of the world, around which they are clinging, and entwined about God; they must become spiritually minded.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 249, 250.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Counsels on Health*, pages 19-25; *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pages 628-648, 652, 653.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: A few score years ago many Protestant churches had standards regarding diet and drink similar to those of Seventh-day Adventists today. Gradually their standards have slipped. Some denominations have a partial message of health reform. God has greatly blessed Adventists in giving them a total life concept. Because others are now moving toward this view of life, we have an excellent opportunity for witnessing.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: Healthful living is easier to share than almost any other doctrine. Health is one of the most popular topics of conversation, especially among adults. Giving to our neighbors our health journal *Vibrant Life* is a fine way to strike up a friendship. Sharing a loaf of fresh-baked bread or inviting friends to eat in your home gives opportunity to share health concepts. After friendships are formed, other doctrines can gradually be introduced. Your new friends can then be invited to attend a worship service. When people see the validity of our health principles our other doctrines have greater credence.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists are convinced that the power of the indwelling Christ enables the believer to live in harmony with Bible principles in regard to health, dress, and entertainment. Correct behavior does not earn our salvation; it is the result of the saving power of Jesus in the heart of every committed Christian. While evil practices are excluded from the life, the habits and practices that our Lord respects are fostered and cherished.

APPLICATION

- Do I believe that, by Jesus' grace, it is possible for me to be a reflector of His character?
- Am I willing to turn away from everything that Christ rejects, and accept the manner of life that His Word teaches to be right?
- Am I committed to tactfully helping others draw nearer to Jesus in their manner of life?

God Tells Us About Happy Homes



MEMORY TEXT: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message."—Fundamental Belief, No. 22.

OUTLINE:

- I. How to Have a Happy Family.
- II. Marriage Established by God.
- III. A Lifelong Union.
- IV. Parents and Children.
- V. Increasing Family Closeness.

INTRODUCTION: Aspirin does not cure headaches. It merely treats the symptoms. The person who is sick may no longer feel the headache, but the cause still is there. A tragically large number of homes and families are unhappy ones. For that reason, much literature has been produced that is intended to help improve family relationships. But most of this literature treats the symptoms rather than the disease. We will not find long-lasting cures for home problems until we get down to the basic cause of all such problems—selfishness and sin. Only the Great Physician has the miracle cure for human unhappiness. Happy homes depend on Christ dwelling in our hearts and homes.

We begin this lesson with the happy family rather than the institution of marriage, because the principles shared in this lesson have a broad applica-

tion. All of us, whether married or single, are members of a family of one kind or another. All of us need Christ's help in order to improve our relationships. Unhappy homes, marital difficulties, the so-called generation gap, rebellious children, child abuse, family violence, bigotry, and hate are universal problems that are rooted in our sinful, human nature. They have only one cure—the power of Christ to overcome evil in us and to help mend fragmented relationships. In Christ also we can find relief from such related problems as loneliness, stress, anger, and insensitivity.

A happy, healthy, well-functioning family provides in turn a climate that fosters a better relationship with our Lord and a stronger witness to the community around us. Failure in family living and the inability to live up to our expectations is the source of much guilt. In this lesson, let us focus upon ways to bring the good news of the gospel to bear on the many facets of life in our homes.



I. HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY FAMILY.

As the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), Jesus brings peace to all who commit themselves to Him. Jesus never needlessly wounded anyone. The Lord looked upon His disciples and followers as His family. (See Matt. 12:50; John 15:15.) Notice how carefully He treated Judas and tried to win His affection. Yet in John 13:1 we read that Jesus, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

When we follow His example the peace He promised His disciples in John 14:27 will characterize our relationships and make them happy ones.

Notice specifically the counsel the apostle gives husbands and wives in 1 Peter 3:7. What does Peter set forth as the ideal in Christian relationships? Verses 8-11.

ILLUMINATION: "Too many cares and burdens are brought into our families, and too little of natural simplicity and peace and happiness is cherished. There should be less care for what the outside world will say and more thoughtful attention to members of the family circle. There should be less display and affectation of worldly politeness, and much more tenderness and love, cheerfulness and Christian courtesy, among the members of the household. Many need to learn how to make home attractive, a place of enjoyment. Thankful hearts and kind looks are more valuable than wealth or luxury, and contentment with simple things will make home happy if love be there."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 108.

How broadly can the fifth commandment be applied to family and home life? What does the word *honor* mean? Ex. 20:12.

In what way are we responsible for the happiness and well-being of other members of our church family? James 1:27.

In the same way that the spokes of the wheel come closer to one another as they approach the hub, our church and family relationships will come closer together as we come closer to Christ as the center of our lives.

MON

II. MARRIAGE ESTABLISHED BY GOD.

When God brought the animals to Adam for naming, Adam soon discovered that they came in pairs, yet he was alone. Because of Adam's need for companionship, God created Eve. (See Gen. 2:18.) When Adam saw her, he recognized that she would meet his needs and he felt a deep responsibility to meet hers. The first marriage, celebrated by God in Eden, was to be a model for marriages in succeeding generations.

How did Christ honor the institution of marriage when He lived on earth? John 2:1-11.

Jesus "gave no license to dissipation, and no shadow of worldly levity marred His conduct; yet He found pleasure in scenes of innocent happiness, and by His presence sanctioned the social gathering. A Jewish marriage was an impressive occasion, and its joy was not displeasing to the Son of man. By attending this feast, Jesus honored marriage as a divine institution."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 151.

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of the significance of the new wine as the presentation of the gospel in Mark 2:22, how does this new wine symbol relate to the place of the gospel in the marriage relationship?

ILLUMINATION: "Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 64.

What restriction did God place on marriage in order to preserve the sanctity of the home? 2 Cor. 6:14.

How did God's plan provide for equality in husband-wife relationship while maintaining leadership and responsibility? Eph. 5:21-33.

In Ephesians 5 we find the husband-wife relationship being compared to that of Christ to His church, which places marriage on a solid, Christ-centered foundation. When we understand fully what this chapter is saying we discover a concept of marriage that seems to be largely lost in our time. If Paul's counsel were heeded divorce virtually would be eliminated. Even young Christian couples who have the best intentions in the world often view marriage as a private transaction between themselves. Their center of focus is on the great love they have for each other.

However, if marriage is to be successful it must focus on another—Jesus. This most intimate of personal relationships proclaims to its participants the mystery of the gospel. It involves a love that is greater than all human love—a love that could not be understood until the Son of God gave His life for us on the cross.



III. A LIFELONG UNION.

When Paul compares the husband-wife relationship to that of Christ and the church, he establishes a model that indicates that the relationship is to last for the rest of the partners' lives. The peace and joy of heaven enables those united in Christ to weather the storms and trials of life. They develop a love that is evident to all. It does not need to be advertised. God's covenant love knits together what sin separates. (See Col. 2:2.) The everlasting covenant, with the cross of Christ at its center, helps bind men and women closer to each other in the marriage union. Even when spouses become alienated the cross of Christ can break down the hostility that the enemy has built up. (See Eph. 2:13, 14.)

ILLUSTRATION: Children can sense whether mother and father love each other. While one father was on a temporary assignment in an area far from home, he and his family lived in a small hotel room. Owing to lack of play space in the room, his little girl was playing "house" in the hotel lobby. One of the other guests in the hotel said to the little girl, "It's a shame that you don't have a home of your own to play in." Quick as a wink the girl responded, "Oh, we *do* have a home. We just don't have a house to put it in here." She recognized the love that made a home out of a small hotel room.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Carefully study the passages that follow, then write a statement that summarizes Christ's position on divorce:

- Matt. 5:31, 32.
- Matt. 19:3-9.
- Luke 16:18.

What are people to do who do not have Bible grounds for divorce, yet do divorce? 1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

Granted there are home and family situations that are far from the ideal that make this question one for which there are no simple answers. Yet consider the spiritual implications of divorce. It is the severing of relationships between persons whom God has joined together. It involves breaking not only vows made to another person but vows made to God. It undoes what He has done. Paul's burden seems to be that everything should be done that can be done to hold a marriage together.

THINK IT THROUGH: How can the forgiveness of God become a motivating factor in my life and family relationships? How can it help me forgive myself as well as others? What can we do as church members to help others deal with the guilt, anger, fear, and grief that arises from difficult marriage relationships?



IV. PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

Parents assume a solemn responsibility when they have children. Children do not ask to be born, nor do they deserve the disruption that divorce forces on them. The parents' first responsibility to the children is to live consecrated Christian lives before them. Children often are confused by parents who do not live the principles that they teach.

What specific role is delegated to fathers in Ephesians 6:4?

The Bible places the duty of teaching and disciplining on fathers. Deuteronomy 6:1-9 pictures the father training the children to know and understand the commandments of God. The father is to serve as the priest of the home. In the absence of a Christian father this responsibility falls upon the mother.

ILLUMINATION: "All members of the family center in the father. He is the lawmaker, illustrating in his own manly bearing the sterner virtues: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice. . . . Morning and evening the father, as priest of the household, should confess to God the sins committed by himself and his children through the day."— *The Adventist Home*, p. 212.

What qualities characterize a mother whose husband and children call her "blessed?" Prov. 31:10-28.

"The tenderest earthly tie is that between the mother and her child. The child is more readily impressed by the life and example of the mother than by that of the father, for a stronger and more tender bond of union unites them.

"The thoughts and feelings of the mother will have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. . . .

"A Christian mother will ever be wide awake to discern the dangers that surround her children. She will keep her own soul in a pure, holy atmosphere; she will regulate her temper and principles by the word of God and will faithfully do her duty, living above the petty temptations which will always assail her."— *The Adventist Home*, pp. 240, 241.

As difficult as child rearing can be at times, children have a charm that is all their own. They possess a capacity to initiate and reciprocate love and trust. We must appreciate the preciousness of this gift with which the Lord blesses parents.

What is the responsibility of children toward their parents? Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3.

As parents and children open their hearts to the influences of the Holy Spirit, harmony and love will prevail in the home. This increasing closeness to one another and to God will testify to the power of the final gospel message to create the kind of unity for which Christ prayed (Mal. 4:5, 6; John 17:23).

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of James 1:27, in what practical ways should church members respond to the needs of single parents and their children?



V. INCREASING FAMILY CLOSENESS.

Happiness is not an end in itself. It is the product of Christlike, other-centered living. The family that prays and plays together stays together. "Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never get very far apart."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 335. Families that attend church together and work together for others find joy and happiness in such association.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What keys to successful family relationships are found in the passages that follow?

- Matt. 5:44 _____
- Matt. 7:1-5 _____
- Rom. 12:10 _____
- Eph. 4:32 _____

ILLUMINATION: "As life with its burden of perplexity and care meets the newly wedded pair, the romance with which imagination so often invests marriage disappears. Husband and wife learn each other's character as it was impossible to learn it in their previous association. This is a most critical period in their experience. The happiness and usefulness of their whole future life depend upon their taking a right course now. Often they discern in each other unsuspected weaknesses and defects; but the hearts that love has united will discern excellencies also heretofore unknown. Let all seek to discover the excellencies rather than the defects. Often it is our own attitude, the atmosphere that surrounds ourselves, which determines what will be revealed to us in another."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 360.

If you strike a single key on the piano the sound you get is not harmony. In order to get harmony you must have at least one other note. It may be one close by or one at some distance, but if it is a harmonious note it will blend until the two sound like one but produce a more beautiful tone than either would if struck separately or if one were played twice as loud.

THINK IT THROUGH: What benefits come to the family through the practice of regular family worship? What can I do to help family worship deepen the individual spiritual experience of my family?



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Study as much as you can of the section on the home found in *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 349-395.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: The Roman Catholic Church constitutes the world's largest Christian organization. It takes a strong stand against divorce for any reason. The Catholic Church does not recognize the one exception that Jesus made, adultery, as grounds for a divorce. On the other extreme, divorce for any and all reasons is allowed by many Protestant churches.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: The first requirement in sharing our understanding of truth with others is daily to ask the Lord for a fitness to meet people in a redemptive way. One of the finest ways to share this doctrine is to invite a neighboring family to enjoy an evening worship with your family. If possible sing several hymns, ask the children to participate in reading passages of Scripture, share a Bible story or two, then have prayer together. Make your guests feel welcome and comfortable. Be sensitive as to whether they are willing to participate in the worship or not. As you get to know people through this method, invite them to church and watch for opportunities to have Bible studies together. The same principle can apply to those who are single or who live alone. One person can invite a family over to enjoy a worship experience of this kind.

SUMMARY: Malachi 4:6 has special application to God's remnant people in the end time. A Christian home, where the love of Christ reigns supreme, is a powerful witness to the effectiveness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Consecrated families form the backbone of the church. Satan's special object of attack is to destroy the marriage relationship and to alienate love and respect on the part of husbands and wives, children and parents. We live in fearful times, but we have the sacred opportunity of taking the time and effort to make our marriages work and to have a model home. Both the seventh-day Sabbath and marriage were established by God in Eden and were designed to be a permanent fixture. Christ did not divorce His unfaithful bride, the church, but died for it. In the same way husbands and wives should demonstrate tender love and faithfulness for one another.

APPLICATION

- Do I realize that a happy marriage relationship and home do not come by accident, but are a result of specific planning and working the plan?
- If I am single and have plans for marriage or am thinking of marriage, am I making a deliberate effort to assure that my plans are approved by God?
- If there is a problem in my marriage relationship, am I doing everything possible through my own commitment to Christ to bring about healing?
- In what way has Christ's presence brought happiness and joy to my family?

God Tells Us About Christ's Heavenly Ministry



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

CENTRAL TEACHING: “Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.”—Fundamental Belief No. 23.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Ancient Israelite Sanctuary.**
- II. Christ the Deity, the Sacrifice, and the High Priest.**
- III. The Pre-Advent, Investigative Judgment.**
- IV. The Time of the Judgment.**

INTRODUCTION: The ancient Israelite sanctuary was designed by God to explain the sacrifice, heavenly mediation, and judgment ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sacrifices offered in the sanctuary court pointed for-

ward to the cross. The priestly work in the Holy Place represented Christ's intercessory ministry after His resurrection. The High Priest's work in the Most Holy Place symbolized Christ's final ministry of vindication in the pre-advent, investigative judgment.

Why is there need for an end-time, pre-advent judgment? God sees the end from the beginning. Why should He convene a court session in heaven to decide who should be saved and who lost?

God is not concerned only with His own attitudes and reactions. He is concerned that all the inhabitants of the unfallen universe should be thoroughly convinced that the people He takes to heaven at the second coming of Jesus have a right to be there. And God wants the unfallen angels to understand without any doubt at all that every person whom He judges to be unworthy of heaven is justly condemned to eternal death.

The only way to confirm the belief of the unfallen universe in His complete justice is to allow them to look into the records of people's lives, so that they can know for themselves who have genuinely believed in Jesus and who have not.

There is another equally important point. God wants His people to have victory over sin. He cannot take to heaven people who refuse to receive the Holy Spirit as the power to overcome sin. There is a special sealing work to be done before our Lord returns. Associated with that work there will be a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit (the "latter rain") as the end draws near. The heavenly judgment now in session is an on-going scrutiny of people's lives, so that the universe can know who is growing in Christ and who is refusing to grow. Our Lord promises to give us unlimited power to serve Him and overcome all evil. The pre-advent judgment decides who is availing himself of that power, and who is not.

The pre-advent judgment is intended by God to be a great incentive for last-day people to turn to Christ and receive His Spirit into their hearts. Their innocence in Christ will make it possible for the heavenly court to decide that their names should be kept in the book of life for eternity.

SUN

I. THE ANCIENT ISRAELITE SANCTUARY.

When the children of Israel were traveling from Egypt to the promised land, Moses was commanded by the Lord to build a sanctuary that would be His dwelling place, as well as a place of worship for the people. (See Ex. 25:8.) This sanctuary was not the same as a modern church. It consisted of a courtyard in which was a tent or tabernacle. The tent contained two rooms, one twice the size of the other.

Describe the two items of furniture in the court of the sanctuary. Ex. 27:1-8; 30:17-21.

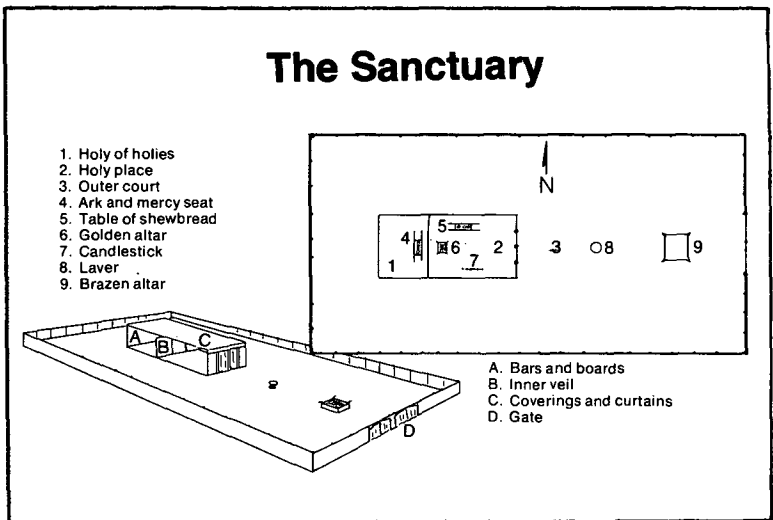
Briefly describe the contents of the holy place. Ex. 25:23-32; 30:1-8.

Describe the contents of the most holy place. Ex. 25:10-21.

The two items of furniture in the court were the altar of burnt offering and the laver.

The Holy Place contained a candlestick with seven branches (menorah), the table of shewbread, and the altar of incense.

In the Most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant, a relatively small box containing the tables of stone, on which were written the Ten Commandments. The ark was a symbol of the throne of God. The presence of the Lord was manifested above the mercy seat. (See Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kings 19:15.)



The court was the place for animal sacrifices; the Holy Place represented priestly intercession or mediation; the Most Holy Place was the dwelling place of God where each Day of Atonement (tenth day of the seventh month) the judgment took place. Sacrifice, mediation, and judgment are the three great ministries provided by Jesus Christ to save the believing worshiper.



II. CHRIST THE DEITY, THE SACRIFICE, AND THE HIGH PRIEST.

Who accompanied Israel in their travels, dwelling upon the throne in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary? 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Ex. 40:33-38.

The Greek word translated "followed" in 1 Cor. 10:4 may also mean "accompanied." Christ accompanied Israel in their wilderness travels.

ILLUMINATION: "Christ was their instructor. As He had been with them in the wilderness, so He was still to be their teacher and guide. In the tabernacle and the temple His glory dwelt in the holy Shekinah above the mercy seat. In their behalf He constantly manifested the riches of His love and patience."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 288. (See also *Prophets and Kings*, p. 18 and *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 221.)

Whose sacrifice was represented by every animal sacrifice offered in the court of the sanctuary? John 1:29; Heb. 10:1-12.

What was symbolized by the daily ministry of the priests in the court and the Holy Place? Heb. 4:14-16; 7:23-28; 8:1, 2; 9:11-14.

Atonement for sin was provided the repenting Israelite when: (1) he confessed his sin over the head of a sacrifice (Lev. 4:29 first part); (2) he took the life of the animal (Lev. 4:29 last part); (3) the priest sprinkled the blood either on the horns of the altar of burnt offering (for the ruler or common person) or before the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place (for the entire congregation or a priest). (See Lev. 4:25, 30; compare verses 6, 17.) Thus "atonement" included priestly ministry (sprinkling of blood) after the sacrifice had been made.

Leviticus chapter four explains that in the case of the sin-offering for the average person and the ruler, blood was sprinkled by the priest on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the court (Lev. 4:25, 30). Then part of the flesh of the animal was cooked and eaten by the priests (Lev. 6:26, 29, 30). The eating of the flesh represented the priest taking upon himself the sin of the penitent sinner. (See Lev. 10:16-18.) Because he later ministered in the holy place, the sin was taken into the presence of God and symbolically transferred to the sanctuary. In the case of the sin-offering for the priest and the entire congregation, the officiating priest sprinkled the blood seven times before the veil in the holy place, and upon the horns of the altar of incense. (See Lev. 4:6, 7.) None of the sin-offering for the priest was eaten by the priests.

The sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the flesh by the priests symbolized the recording of pardon in the sanctuary. Christ bore "our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Now in the heavenly sanctuary He applies the merits of His shed blood. (See Heb. 9:12-14.) His sacrifice was a full and complete offering for sin. But His heavenly priestly mediation is essential so that the merits of His sacrifice can be applied for every repentant sinner.

ILLUMINATION: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, 'whither the forerunner is for us entered.' Hebrews 6:20."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.



III. THE PRE-ADVENT INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT.

In the earthly sanctuary, what were the most important events of the Day of Atonement? Lev. 16:6-10, 15-22.

What was the purpose of the High Priest's ministry in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement? Lev. 16:29, 30, 33.

Of the two goats taken by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, one represented Christ and the other represented Satan. The animal representing Christ was slain, symbolizing Christ's death upon the cross. The High Priest sprinkled some of its blood on the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place, on the altar of incense in the Holy Place, and on the altar of burnt offering in the court. Thus every part of the sanctuary was symbolically cleansed of the record of pardoned sin. The sins of the people, who had brought their sin offerings during the year, had been forgiven already. (See Lev. 4:26, 31, 35). By the sprinkling of blood in the daily service the pardoned record had been symbolically retained in the sanctuary. Because this record of pardoned sin defiled the sanctuary, it was necessary to cleanse it on the Day of Atonement.

While the High Priest was sprinkling the blood in the Most Holy Place, the people were out in the court examining their hearts to be sure that all their sins had been confessed and put away. The Day of Atonement was an annual judgment day, on which the sanctuary, priests, and people were cleansed.

After the vision of the "little horn" power persecuting God's people for centuries, what scene was Daniel shown? Dan. 7:8-10, 13, 14, 21, 22, 25, 26.

After the Papacy had functioned as ecclesiastically supreme for centuries, the heavenly judgment began. This pre-advent judgment is the antitype of the Israelite Day of Atonement. The period of Papal supremacy ended in 1798 when the Pope was taken prisoner by Napoleon's general. This act simply marked the end of a process during which the Papacy lost its iron grip on the governments of western Europe. The heavenly judgment began shortly after this. In Daniel chapter 8 we are actually given a prophecy which, when interpreted correctly, reveals the year when this judgment commenced.



What is the nature of the pre-advent judgment? What kinds of decisions does it make?

1. It takes place in heaven (Dan. 7:9).
2. It involves a court session in which books of record are examined

(Dan. 7:9, 10). This is why we call it an “investigative judgment.” (On the heavenly books of record, see the book of life [Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 20:12], the record of sins [Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36, 37; Jer. 2:22; Rev. 20:12; 22:12], the book remembrance [Mal. 3:16, 17].)

3. The “Son of man” is the defense attorney in this judgment (Dan. 7:13). The title “Son of man” was Jesus’ favorite name for Himself. (See Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19, et cetera.) Daniel 7:13 is not describing the second coming of Christ. The Son of man comes to the Ancient of Days (the Father) who is seated upon His throne before the heavenly court (vs. 9). (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 424.)

4. Christ receives His kingdom in this judgment (Dan. 7:14). At the conclusion of the pre-advent judgment, all those whose names have been retained in the book of life are delivered and saved eternally (Dan. 12:1). Those who once had their names in the book of life, but who did not retain their victorious born-again experience, have had their names taken out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5). Salvation depends on maintaining our relationship with Jesus. “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13).

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following passages teach regarding the nature of the pre-advent judgment? Mal. 3:1-4 (compare Isa. 4:3, 4); Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:1-3; 8:2-5; 11:1 (compare chapter 10); 14:1-5; 19:2, 7, 8; 22:11, 12.

Two prominent messages emerge from a study of the above passages: (1) In the heavenly temple before His second advent, the Lord conducts an investigation of His professed people. (2) In that investigation the righteous dead are vindicated, and the living believers are filled with the Spirit of Christ and righteousness as the means of victory over sin.

ILLUMINATION: “Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”— *The Great Controversy*, p. 623. (See also pp. 484-491; *Early Writings*, pp. 48, 71, 269-271; *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 355, 430; vol. 4, p. 429; *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 531; *Our High Calling*, p. 278.)



IV. THE TIME OF THE JUDGMENT.

The prophecy of Daniel 8 provides a foreview of history from ancient times to the second coming of Jesus. It covers substantially the same extensive period of history outlined in Daniel 7. The symbolism is different, but the two prophecies are, for the most part, parallel.

What event mentioned in Daniel 8 is parallel to the pre-advent judgment of Daniel 7:9-14? Dan. 8:14.

When did both the 70 weeks and the 2300 days begin? Dan. 9:24, 25.

The cleansing of the sanctuary was to begin after 2300 days (Dan. 8:14). There are some vital facts about this period of time that we must notice:

1. The phrase translated "days" means a 24-hour period. The Hebrew phrase is *'ereb boqer*. It means literally "evening-morning." A form of this phrase is used some 22 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. When a 24-hour period is intended the phrase is always "evening-morning." (See Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Ex. 27:20, 21.) When the offering of the morning and evening sacrifice or the offering of incense is referred to, the phrase is always "morning-evening." (See 1 Chron. 16:40; 2 Chron. 2:4.) In Daniel 8:14, 26 the phrase is "evening-morning," a 24-hour period. Dan. 8:14 is not speaking of 2300 morning and evening sacrifices of the sanctuary; or 1,150 days. The reference is to 2300 24-hour days.

2. The 2300 days of Dan. 8:14 are symbolic of 2300 years. The prophet was told that the work of the little horn power would continue till the end of time. (See Dan. 8:17, 19, 25, 26.) The 2300 literal days would not reach to the end of time. They must refer to a period of centuries, not just a period of 6 years 4 months.

3. Gabriel told Daniel that "seventy weeks" (Hebrew: "seventy sevens") were to be "cut off" (Hebrew: *chatak*) from the 2300 days. These "seventy sevens" must refer to 490 years, because they were to reach down to the time of the Messiah. The 490 years were to be cut off from the beginning of the 2300 days. You cannot have 490 years cut off from 2300 literal days. Therefore, the 2300 days are a prophetic symbol of 2300 years.

4. Both the 70 weeks and the 2300 days began with "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Dan. 9:25). Ezra 6:14 indicates that God's commandment for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the restoration of the temple and its services, and the re-establishment of the Jewish state was put into effect by the decrees of three Persian monarchs: Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. The decree of Artaxerxes I Longimanus was put into operation in the autumn of 457 B.C. (See S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1953, 1970). And 2300 years after the autumn of 457 B.C. brings us to the autumn of 1844 when the pre-advent judgment began.

How are we prepared for examination of our cases in the pre-advent judgment? 1 John 4:13-17.

None need fear the investigative judgment. Relationship with Christ is the key to security. There is to be an unbroken union between our Lord and ourselves. As we look to Christ and His sacrifice, we will have victory over Satan's power.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read as much as you can from *The Great Controversy*, chapters 23, 24, and 28.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: The sanctuary doctrine is virtually unknown and untouched by other churches. No group seriously studies and preaches this doctrine as do Seventh-day Adventists. Yet it is given more attention in Scripture than any other single topic. The Scriptures are literally saturated with sanctuary language and illustrations.

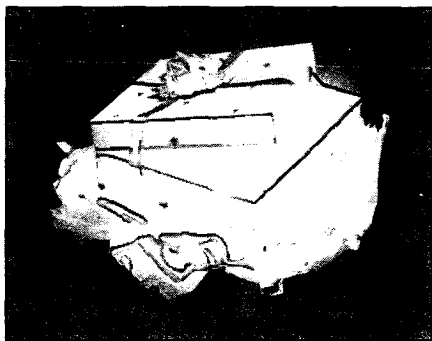
HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: This is one of the most beautiful subjects to help others see the grand sweep of the great controversy between Christ and Satan followed by the final victory of our Lord. It is a most Christ-centered topic. Successful presentation of the subject requires mastery of its various elements. It would be well to share pictures in a book or slides in order to make the subject vibrant and understandable. You should share literature on the subject with those with whom you study.

SUMMARY: Christ's sacrifice on the cross was followed by centuries of mediatorial ministry. Although the ministry of forgiveness has continued since 1844, in that year the pre-advent, investigative judgment began. In this judgment the heavenly sanctuary is cleansed of the record of pardoned sin, and God's living people are spiritually purified as a preparation to meet their returning Lord.

APPLICATION

- Do I believe that God is able to give His living believers total victory over sin?
- Am I willing to seek the Lord daily for the grace to be an overcomer?

This Christmas Give a School



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 19, you're giving desks, chalkboards and the chance for a brighter future to children in Curitiba, Brazil.

**Help Build a School in
Curitiba, Brazil.**

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

God Tells Us About the Second Coming



MEMORY TEXT: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "The second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times."—Fundamental Belief No. 24.

OUTLINE:

- I. Who Will Come?
- II. Why Will He Come?
- III. When Will He Come?
- IV. How Will He Come?
- V. How Can We Be Ready?

INTRODUCTION: From the earliest days of our existence as a people, Seventh-day Adventists have sung songs about the "blessed hope" in the second coming of Christ (Titus 2:13). As half of our denominational name indicates, we expect a literal second coming. Not only will Christ return but He will return soon, although He has not revealed the specific time for this event. Because we believe that one day we will see Jesus coming in triumph, surrounded by His holy angels, we are happy people, and our songs reflect this joy.

Although no one but God knows the exact time of the second coming, it is possible to know by studying the prophecies and signs that it is near, "even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). The Second Coming will bring the earthly kingdoms of the present age to an end. It will establish God's kingdom, the last of the kingdoms predicted in Daniel 2. Because history records

that the other portions of the Daniel 2 prophecy have been fulfilled, there is no doubt that God's kingdom will be established as predicted.



I. WHO WILL COME?

In recent years bumper stickers on some cars in the United States have raised the question "Guess Who's Coming Again?" People in this country are talking about the end of the world and the second coming of Jesus to a degree not seen since the great advent movement of the eighteen-forties.

What is there about the promise that Jesus made in John 14:1-3 that has inspired His followers through the ages to look forward so enthusiastically to His return?

Facing the final crisis of His life on earth and ultimate separation from His disciples, Christ gave this glorious promise for the encouragement of His followers throughout the ages. It is one of the 318 times that His second coming is mentioned in the New Testament. One of the greatest assurances that we have that Christ will come the second time comes from the way He fulfilled the prophecies of His first coming.

How did heavenly beings attest to the fact that Christ will return? Acts 1:9-11.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Indicate below how the Old Testament contributes to our understanding of the second coming of Christ:

- Psalm 50:3-5 _____
- Isa. 66:15, 16 _____
- Dan. 2:44, 45 _____

True Christians live for the fulfillment of these prophecies. If they die before Jesus comes, they do so with this hope in their hearts. Why? Because true Christians love Jesus more than anyone else and long to be with Him.

THINK IT THROUGH: If you hear that a loved one that you have not seen for some time is coming soon to see you, how do you feel?

If you knew that a person dear to you was coming to see you soon, what kind of information would you want? Most likely you would want to know why, where, when, and how the person was coming. You would also want to know what you could do to make preparations for your beloved visitor and how best to prepare for his or her arrival. This lesson seeks to answer these kinds of questions about Jesus' return.



II. WHY WILL HE COME?

The reason for Jesus' second coming is that He loves His human brothers and sisters and wants them to be with Him. "I go to prepare a place for you," He told the first disciples. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Jesus will take His beloved—including those who have died and are resurrected when He comes—to heaven with Him. (See 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.)

What all-inclusive reason for Christ's second coming is mentioned in Hebrews 9:28?

Here is the one text in the Bible that links the term *second* with Christ's return. History moves relentlessly toward this glorious event. It is God who controls the future of our earth because of the victory over sin and the world, which Jesus won at the cross. Although many today are pessimistic about the future, Christ will come soon to make everything that is wrong right again.

How does Paul show that victory over the grave depends on the return of Jesus? 1 Cor. 15:19-23.

Three important concepts can be found in this passage that discusses the resurrection. First, Paul holds out hope for all who accept Christ. The "blessed hope" that Christ gives the believer is not only for this life but includes the life that the righteous receive on the resurrection day. Second, Paul holds out hope for those who die in Christ. He argues that if there is no second coming of Christ, then there can be no resurrection of the dead. In that case our belief, hope, and trust in Christ would be quite transitory and futile. Third, Paul emphasizes the fact that the resurrection definitely takes place at Christ's coming: "As in Adam all men die, so in Christ all will be brought to life; but each in his own proper place: Christ the firstfruits, and afterwards, *at his coming*, those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:22, 23, NEB, italics supplied).

What distinction is made in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 between what happens to the righteous dead and the righteous living at Christ's return?

Notice that, whether a righteous person is dead or living when Christ returns, the glorious gift of immortality is bestowed upon both at that time, never again to be haunted by the fear of death. Death will have lost its sting. The grave will have been robbed of the victory it has claimed.

What additional reason does John give for the second coming of Christ? Rev. 22:12.

Christians whose lives are hid in Christ look upon the judgment as bringing a happy reward. They will spend eternity with Jesus.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What are some of the other happy consequences of the judgment and Christ's return?

- Isa. 35:10 _____
- Dan. 7:22 _____
- 2 Tim. 4:8 _____
- Rev. 2:7 _____
- Rev. 3:21 _____
- Rev. 21:4 _____



III. WHEN WILL HE COME?

There are many lines of prophecy in the Scriptures, particularly the books of Daniel and Revelation, that indicate Jesus will return soon. But here we will concentrate on Christ's own predictions about His second coming, predictions made during His ministry on earth.

What did Jesus say to the disciples as they left the Temple that triggered their interest in the question of when these things would take place? Matt. 24:1-3.

Apparently the disciples thought of the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming as taking place in one great climactic event. In the prophecy that follows, Jesus answers both phases of the disciples' question. Thus the prophecy has a double application—first to the events that surrounded the destruction of A.D. 70, and next to the time of His second coming. In verses 4-14 we find predictions that apply to both events. Verses 15-20 seem to find their primary fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem, although there is a parallel to our day.

What description did Jesus give of the period that was to follow the destruction of Jerusalem? Verses 21, 22.

This was fulfilled during the period known as the Dark Ages and continued through the middle of the eighteenth century.

What spectacular signs were to follow immediately after the period of great tribulation? Verse 29.

God Tells Us About the Second Coming December 10

Adventists are aware of the fulfillment of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars in 1780 and 1833. But what does Jesus' prophecy mean when it states that the "powers of the heavens shall be shaken"? See *Early Writings*, p. 41.

What does Luke add to the prophetic outline found in Matthew 24 that takes place after the signs in the sun, moon, and stars? Luke 21:25, 26.

The distress of nations mentioned in verse 25 is accompanied with perplexity—the sea and the waves roaring. In Bible prophetic symbolism the sea represents peoples. This phase of prophecy most likely was fulfilled in the middle of the nineteenth century in the great revolutionary movements among the peoples of Europe. The condition of worldwide fear described in verse 26 certainly describes what has happened during the last half of the twentieth century. Christ's prophetic outline reaches down to the very time in which we are living.

What will happen next? Luke 21:27, 28.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why does God not want us to know the exact day and hour of Christ's return? (See Matt. 24:36.)

Even though we may not know the exact day and hour, what can we know in regard to the time when Christ will return? Matt. 24:32, 33.



IV. HOW WILL HE COME?

Besides watching carefully the signs of Jesus' coming, we are to learn all that we can about the manner of His coming. The reason for this is that counterfeit "christs" will appear in the last days who will "deceive many" (Matt. 24:5).

What assurance do we have that Christ's coming will be literal, personal, and visible? Acts 1:11.

His second coming is not to be confused with the spiritual presence of Christ with believers since His ascension, with the descent of the Holy Spirit as Christ's representative, or with death.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How do we know that Christ will not come in the kind of "secret rapture" so many expect today?

- Matt. 24:26, 27, 30

- 1 Thess. 4:16 _____
- Rev. 1:7 _____



V. HOW CAN WE BE READY?

What two essential steps are we to take in order to make sure that we are ready for Jesus to come? Luke 21:36.

1. _____
2. _____

What did Jesus mean when He challenged those who want to be ready for His return to “watch”? He spells His meaning out in very detailed fashion in seven parables of preparedness found in Matthew 24:32—25:46.

STUDY carefully the chart that follows in order better to understand what it means to “watch” and to become aware of those attitudes that should characterize those longing for Christ’s return:

Parables of Preparedness	Meaning of “Watch”	Attitude
24:32-35—Fig tree	Nearness	Awareness
24:36-42—As in the days of Noah	Unexpectedness	Watchfulness, concern
24:43, 44—Thief in the night	Readiness	Being on guard
24:45, 51—Two types of servants	Responsibility	Faithfulness
25:1-13—Ten virgins	Spiritual responsibility	Consecration dedication
25:14-30—Talents	Diligence, accountability	Loving anxiety to share
25:31-46—Sheep and goats	Love	As Christ loved

What will those who have the blessed hope in Christ’s soon return do to demonstrate that they belong to Him and wish to be with Him? 1 John 3:2, 3.

God Tells Us About the Second Coming December 10

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read as much as you can of chapter 40 in *The Great Controversy*, "God's People Delivered," pages 635-652.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Many Christians believe Christ's coming is likened to a thief in the night because it will be a secret rapture. Hal Lindsey, author of the best seller *The Late Great Planet Earth*, calls it "Project Disappearance." These teach that Christians will be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" suddenly—from whatever they are doing—driving, piloting, teaching, performing surgery, et cetera. Imagine the colossal confusion that would be the result of this type of activity!

The teaching of dispensationalism is a prominent one. Those who believe it hold that the references to the second coming in Scripture are primarily concerned with the fate of restored Israel in the last days and not with the church. Dispensationalists believe that the secret rapture will begin a seven-year period in which the Temple will be rebuilt, sacrifices commence, Israel will be invaded three-and-a-half years into the tribulation period, but God will miraculously intervene. Out of gratitude all Jews will become Christians and evangelize the world to prepare for the second coming of Christ at the end of the seven-year period. Naturally this interpretation does violence to the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9 by pulling this one week period out of context and placing it in the future.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: If you are conversing with Christians, a good way to introduce this subject is to ask what they personally believe about the second coming. If they belong to a church ask what their church teaches. Pray that their questions will open the door for you to explain your position based on the Sabbath School lesson just studied. If the person to whom you are talking is a dispensationalist or believes in the secret rapture, then carefully study this lesson and be prepared to ask other questions as to the meaning of certain texts that cannot be harmonized with these false doctrines. Above all present the second coming of Christ in an eager, exciting way. Let others see that you are looking forward to this great day, and realize how much you long to see Jesus face to face.

SUMMARY: Summarize this fundamental belief in your own words:

APPLICATION

- Do I eagerly await the coming of Christ by daily growing in grace through study, prayer, and witnessing?
- Am I able to look back on each day's activities and know that this day has been a steppingstone toward Christ's return?
- Do the things I do, eat, wear, and the places I go fit in with my belief in the soon return of Jesus Christ?

God Tells Us About Death and Resurrection



MEMORY TEXT: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "Death and Resurrection. The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later."—Fundamental Belief No. 25.

OUTLINE:

- I. What Did Jesus and Bible Prophets Teach About Death?
- II. Where Are the Dead?
- III. What Is a Human "Spirit"?
- IV. What Is a "Soul"? Is It Immortal?
- V. Will the Dead Live Again?

INTRODUCTION: There is great interest today in the subject of life after death. The weekly national newspapers at supermarket checkout stands often have stories and pictures of people who allegedly experienced life after being pronounced clinically dead. When they were revived they told their stories. The concept of life after death is also very vividly portrayed in some television programs.

At various times and places during the past century, studies have been conducted suggesting that there is life immediately after death. The idea of the immortality of the soul has pervaded the religions and philosophies of mankind for many centuries. The Chinese built mansions, veritable ghost towns, to house the spirits of their ancestors. Buddhists believe in transmigration of the soul to other bodies. Hindus also believe in spirit migration, a reincarnation through other births.

These Eastern philosophies are becoming very influential in the West. Certain organizations and movements, some Christian and some non-Christian, are giving credence to the immortal-soul concept.

It is vitally important to know the truth of this subject as a safeguard against the onslaught of spiritistic philosophies and religions that are gripping masses of Christians and non-Christians. What happens when a person

dies? Does his soul go to heaven or hell? Does it stay in the grave? Does the dead person know what is happening on earth? Can he, as many people believe, communicate with his living loved ones? Where are the dead? Will the circumstances of the dead ever change, or is death the end of it all? Is there life immediately after death, or later, or never?

Philosophers have come up with all kinds of theories on this subject. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul taught by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (about 427-347 B.C.) very much influenced Jewish thought in the Hellenistic period. As a result, the Jewish Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul. The Alexandrian Jew Philo, who wrote in the first century A.D., had a considerable influence on early Christian theologians, such as Origen (about A.D. 185-254). Hence, the Greek philosophical teaching of the immortality of the soul became largely accepted by Christians.

We are interested in what the Bible teaches. Only God knows the true condition of those who have died. We turn to God for the answer.



I. WHAT DID JESUS AND BIBLE PROPHETS TEACH ABOUT DEATH?

How did Christ's greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus, reveal the state of man in death? What did Jesus call death? John 11:6, 7, 11-14.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Compare the following Bible passages with Jesus' teaching on the state of man in death:

- Deut. 31:16 _____
- Job 7:21; 14:10-12 _____
- Dan. 12:2 _____
- Matt. 27:52 _____
- Mark 5:39 _____
- Acts 7:60 _____

Never did Jesus or any of the Bible writers suggest that part of man sleeps at death while another part goes on living in a conscious state. Never do they even imply that death is not, like sleep, a state of unconsciousness. When the Bible writers faced death they did not expect to be conscious living beings again until, by a divine miracle, their existence was restored.

According to the inspired wise man, how much knowledge do the dead have? Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10.

What did Job teach about the knowledge dead people have of their living loved ones? Job 14:21.

What knowledge of God do the dead have? Do they praise God? Psalms 6:5; 115:17.

The Bible teaches that the dead are sleeping, without any awareness of what is happening on earth or in heaven. They do not praise God because they cannot. If the good were in heaven immediately after death, wouldn't they praise the Lord?

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is often used as evidence of life in either heaven or hell immediately after death. The parable is simply designed to teach the danger of covetousness. It offers no support for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. If the parable is interpreted literally it becomes an absurdity.

For example, the beggar went to "Abraham's bosom." Obviously that is a symbol. Abraham would have needed a very large chest to literally accommodate all the righteous dead. The rich man in hell spoke of Lazarus' finger, and his own tongue. In this parable the dead have bodies. But immortal soul advocates believe that the souls of the dead are disembodied. Who imagines that it is possible for the good in heaven to converse with the wicked in hell, as they do in this parable? The rich man wanted Lazarus to go to his living brothers and warn them. The only way that could happen, according to this story, would be if "one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). That is quite different from the popular idea that dead souls can communicate with the living without a resurrection being necessary.

Jesus was using a popular fable as a sermon illustration. He was not teaching life immediately after death, or the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus tells much the same fable in other words. (See "An Extract out of Josephus's Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades" in *Josephus—Complete Works*, translated by William Whiston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1960), pp. 637, 638).



II. WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Bible explains where the dead are not, as well as where they are.

Where did David not go when he died, despite the fact that he was a righteous man whose sins had been forgiven? Acts 2:29, 34.

In his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter explained that David's statement in Psalm 16 was a reference to the Messiah, not to David himself (Acts 2:24-33). Peter pointed out that David was dead and buried, and his grave was there for everyone to see. Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, but David remained in the grave, where he saw corruption. David was a righteous man, but he did not go to heaven when he died.

The Bible nowhere teaches that believers in Christ go to heaven when they die.

According to Isaiah, where are the dead? Isa. 26:19.

Where would be Job's place of waiting for the change that only God can bring to the dead? Job 14:14; 17:13-16.

Where are the dead? Job and Isaiah answer very positively. The dead are in the dust of the earth, resting in their graves, waiting for the great change that Jesus promised would come at the end of time.

Death need have no fears for the believer in Christ. Because it is a state of unconsciousness, he or she will rest sweetly until the call of the Lifegiver. If the dead were in heaven seeing the struggles of their loved ones on earth, how could they ever be happy? If they were in hell, suffering for long periods of time until the second coming of the Lord, it would be difficult to understand how a God of love could bring such protracted suffering. It would seem that the punishment would be very much in excess of the crime; even though some people have been very wicked.



III. WHAT IS A HUMAN "SPIRIT"?

It is believed by many Christians that there is in each person an immortal, immaterial part that does not sleep when the body dies. The "spirit" of an individual is thought to go on living either in heaven or hell. Does the Bible teach this view?

What were the component parts of man given by God at creation? Gen. 2:7.

What happens to these components when a person dies? Psalm 146:3, 4; Eccl. 12:7.

What gift from God do animals share with man? Gen. 7:15, 21, 22; Eccl. 3:19-21.

The breath of life given to man at creation was the life principle, or life force that gave life to the body and existence to the individual. When a person dies the opposite process takes place. The breath of life (spirit) goes back to God, and the body goes back to the dust of the earth. The words "breath" (Psalm 146:4) and "spirit" (Eccl. 12:7) are a translation of the Hebrew word *ruach*. The Greek equivalent used in the New Testament is *pneuma*. These words have a number of meanings:

- (i) Breath of the mouth (Psalm 33:6; Dan. 10:17; 2 Thess. 2:8).

- (ii) Breath of air, wind, soft breeze (Ex. 14:21; John 3:8).
- (iii) The Spirit of God (Gen. 1:2; John 14:17).
- (iv) An evil spirit (1 Sam. 16:23; Luke 11:24).
- (v) The principle that gives life to the body (Gen. 6:17; 7:15; Luke 8:55).
- (vi) The emotions, intellectual functions, and attitudes of the will (Gen. 41:8; Deut. 34:9; 1 Cor. 2:11; 2 Cor. 2:13).

Never in Scripture is the "spirit" of man said to survive the death of the body as an immortal, conscious entity. In Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 the "spirit" is the life force implanted by God at Creation and shared by every living thing, whether man or animal.

Some interpreters of the Bible try to use Ecclesiastes 12:7 to prove that the immortal spirits of good people go to heaven when they die. If the *spirit* in this verse is man's immortal soul, then the souls of *all* people, good and bad, must go to heaven when they die. No one believes that the spirits of evil men ascend to heaven at death.

The text simply teaches that the life principle given by God to a person is taken back by God when the individual dies. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not even implied.

Both Old and New Testaments sometimes use the word "spirit" to refer to the mind of man, his capacity to reason, as well as his ability to feel and choose. (See Dan. 2:1; 5:12; Matt. 26:41; Rom. 1:9.) Such intellectual and emotional faculties never survive the death of the body. In this sense, the spirit is the inner life that is totally dependent upon the existence of the body. As we have seen, the dead person has no further reasoning powers, emotions, or powers of the will. Because the life force has been taken away from him, he has ceased to be a living person.



IV. WHAT IS A "SOUL"? IS IT IMMORTAL?

Did God create an immortal soul for man? Genesis 2:7 says that the body + the breath of life = "a living soul."

That implies that if the breath of life were withdrawn man would be a dead soul. If souls can die, they are not immortal. Immortality is the capacity never to die.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following passages teach regarding the soul?

- Ezek. 18:4 _____
- Rev. 16:3 _____
- Num. 6:6 _____
- Matt. 10:28 _____
- Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 30; 2:19 _____

The Hebrew word for soul used in the Old Testament is *nephesh*. The Greek equivalent used in the New Testament is *psuche*. The word *body* in

the King James Version of Numbers 6:6 translates the Hebrew word for "soul." The word "creature" is used to translate the Hebrew word for "soul" in the King James Version of Gen. 1:20, 21, 30; 2:19; 9:10, 12, 15, 16. In all of those passages animals are spoken of as souls. God made animals living souls just as He made man a living soul. He formed animals from the dust and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life. Like man, when the animals die, they are dead souls.

Comparing man with God, who only has immortality? 1 Tim. 6:15, 16.

Because God "only hath immortality," human souls are not immortal. As we have seen, the human soul is composed of two parts: the body and the breath. Without the one the other cannot exist. The death of the body is the death of the soul.

Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* comments on the Hebrew word for "soul" (*nephesh*): The soul "has no existence apart from the body. Hence the best translation in many instances is 'person' comprised in corporeal reality. The person can be marked off and counted, Gen. 12:5; 46:18; Jos. 10:28; 11:11. Each individual is a *nephesh* [soul] and when the texts speak of a single *nephesh* [soul] for a totality, the totality is viewed as a single person, a 'corporate personality.' Hence *nephesh* [soul] can denote what is most individual in human nature, namely the ego, and it can become a synonym for the personal pronoun, Gn. 27:25." Volume IX, p. 620.

The New Testament Greek word for soul (*psuche*) has meanings similar to those of the Old Testament word. It is often best translated by "life." A human life is a "soul." (See Mark 3:4; 8:35 where the King James Version translates the Greek word for "soul" by "life.")

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the soul spoken of as a disembodied immortal entity in heaven or hell. The soul is the total personality or part of it. Sometimes when the word *soul* is used it refers to the spiritual self, or the intellectual or emotional self. But these aspects of soul are not conceived as ever separate from the physical self. When the body dies so do the other faculties of the soul. What is preserved for the believer is God's knowledge of his faithfulness, and God's promise that he will have eternal life at the second coming of Jesus.



V. WILL THE DEAD LIVE AGAIN?

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following passages teach regarding the resurrection of the dead:

- John 5:28, 29 _____
- Acts 24:15 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:16-22, 51-54 _____
- 2 Cor. 4:14 _____
- 1 Thess. 4:13-18 _____

There are two resurrections: (1) "the resurrection of life," which is the resurrection of the "just," (2) "the resurrection of damnation," which is the resurrection of the "unjust." The first resurrection takes place at the second coming of Jesus. This is when all of Christ's faithful people, those who are raised from the dead and those who are translated without seeing death, are given immortality. All of these faithful ones are taken to heaven with perfect bodies and minds. (See John 14:1-3; Rev. 7:13-17; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.) The second resurrection, in which those are raised who died unbelieving, takes place 1,000 years later. (See Rev. 20:5, first part, 7-9.) The lost are never given immortality. They are consumed in the fires of the last great day. They do not live on to suffer for eternity. (See Mal. 4:1, 3; Psalms 37:10, 20; 68:1, 2; Jude 13; 2 Peter 2:17.)



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: On the meaning of "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9) compare: Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6; Jer. 17:27; 2 Chron. 36:19, 21. On the meaning of "forever" (Rev. 14:11; 20:10) compare: Jonah 2:6; 1:17; Matt. 12:40; 2 Kings 5:27; Ex. 12:24. On the danger of the immortal soul doctrine read *The Great Controversy*, pages 531-562.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: For centuries most of the Christian world has espoused the immortal soul doctrine. Today the vast majority of Christian churches teach that the soul is immortal and that the reward in heaven or hell is received at death. Belief in limbo and purgatory is founded on this false doctrine.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: Most Christians to whom you witness believe in the immortality of the soul. Unless dealt with very sensitively, presentation of the Bible teaching on this subject can cause considerable conflict. Attempt to discover what the individual believes about death before sharing your belief. Place the emphasis on life in Christ Jesus and the hope of the resurrection. Never use crude illustrations. Do not immediately contradict a person's belief that he or she has communicated with the dead. First present the resurrection. Then gradually and tactfully open up the truths found in this lesson. If you sense that an individual is upset, immediately bring your study to a close and talk about hope in Christ and the resurrection. Do not attempt to give the whole doctrine at one time to people who firmly believe in the immortality of the soul.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists believe that, because of Calvary, death is a temporary sleep for all human beings. There is no immortal part of man that lives on after the death of the body. At the second coming of Jesus, the righteous dead are raised and, along with their living brethren, given immortality. At the end of the 1,000 years, the wicked are raised, punished according to their works, and put to sleep for eternity.

APPLICATION

- Have I put away my fear of death because of Jesus' promise to raise me from the dead?
- Am I committed to warning others of the deceptions involved in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?

God Tells Us About the Millennium



MEMORY TEXT: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

CENTRAL TEACHING: The Millennium and the End of Sin. The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever.”—Fundamental Belief No. 26.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Millennium—the Period Between Two Resurrections.
- II. Events at the Beginning of the Millennium.
- III. Events During the Millennium:
 1. What Takes Place in Heaven?
 2. What Takes Place on Earth?
- IV. Events at the Close of the Millennium.

INTRODUCTION: There are three millennial views, amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. Amillennialism takes the position that the thousand years of Revelation 20 is a figurative expression. Postmillennialism turns from the figurative to a spiritualized interpretation of the thousand years. It believes that history is moving toward the millennium when the reign of Christ will bring the triumph of the church in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. The third view, premillennialism, was accepted by the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They believed and taught this under ridicule at a time when postmillennialism held sway. The religious world in general predicted a thousand years of peace and prosperity prior to Christ’s second coming, while Adventists preached on the authority of the Word that the world would progressively grow more wicked. Adventists taught that the coming of Christ would take place before the millennial reign of peace. This is called premillennialism. Adventists believe that the millennium will be in heaven, while the other two interpretations hold that it will take place on earth.

God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the special purpose of proclaiming the everlasting gospel to the world in the setting of the three

angels' messages. At the heart of these messages, designed to prepare people everywhere for the second coming of Christ, is the announcement that the "hour of his judgment is come."

The judgment began in 1844 as Christ began His Most Holy apartment ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. As mentioned in the lesson that dealt with the Bible teaching on the judgment, there are four phases.

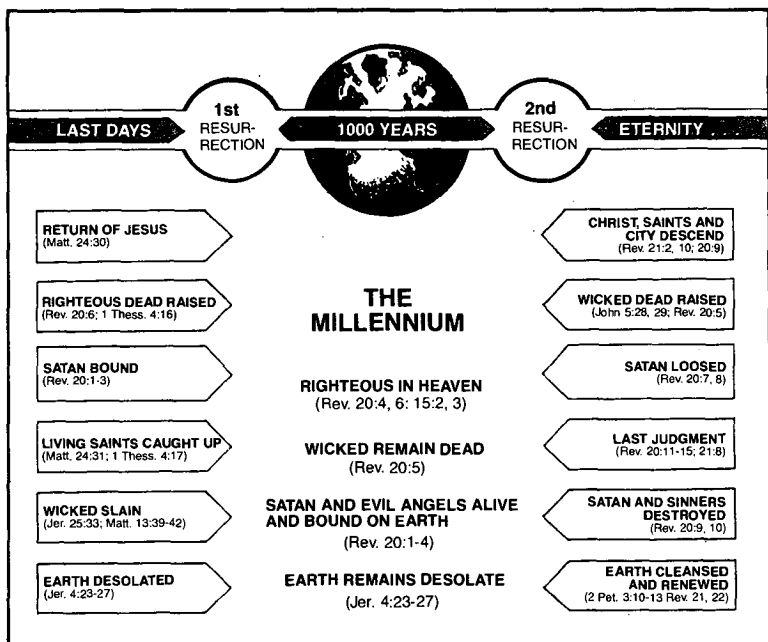
Phase 1—The Investigative Judgment of the Righteous. "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). In 1844 "the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:10; see also Dan. 8:14). The records of those whose names are recorded in the book of life are opened to the universe in order to show who on earth is fit for eternal companionship with sinless heavenly beings.

Phase 2—The Executive Judgment of the Righteous. Jesus tells us that this will take place at His second coming. (See Rev. 22:12.)

Phase 3—The Investigative Judgment of the Unrighteous. In order to satisfy any questions that may arise concerning the justness of His judgments, God allows the records of those from earth who were not taken to heaven to be investigated during the millennium. (See Rev. 20:4.)

Phase 4—The Executive Judgment of the Unrighteous. When all are satisfied that God has been fair in determining the fate of the unrighteous, final judgment is pronounced and executed. Sin and sinners will be no more.

This lesson is designed to show how these four phases of the judgment fit into the framework of the millennium set forth in Revelation 20.



SUN

I. THE MILLENNIUM—THE PERIOD BETWEEN TWO RESURRECTIONS.

The book of Revelation describes a period of 1,000 years known to Bible students as “the millennium.” The term *millennium* is not in the Bible, but is derived from two Latin words—*mille*, meaning “1,000,” and *annum*, meaning “year.” In discussions of the prophecies, Bible students use the term to refer exclusively to the 1,000-year period set forth in Revelation 20. Of the time prophecies in the Bible, the starting and ending points of the millennium are among the easiest to establish. The millennium begins with a resurrection and ends with a resurrection.

What does the Bible call the resurrection that begins the 1,000-year period? Rev. 20:6.

This resurrection affects only the righteous dead, those who are “blessed and holy.”

When are the rest of the dead resurrected? Rev. 20:5.

How did Jesus distinguish between these two resurrections in John 5:28, 29?

He called the first resurrection the _____

He called the second resurrection the _____

STUDY the chart on page 96. Notice in the bar at the top how the events that take place at the time of the first resurrection *precede* the 1,000 years and those that take place at the time of the second resurrection *follow* the 1,000 years.

MON

II. EVENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM.

NOTICE the events listed in the left hand column of the chart. These six precede the millennium.

1. The Return of Jesus. This is the climax of what are known as the “last days.” (See description in Rev. 19:11-16.)

How did Jesus describe His second coming? Matt. 24:30.

2. The Righteous Dead Raised. Revelation 20:4 describes the righteous in heaven. How did they get there? Revelation 20:6 explains.

How does the Bible connect the resurrection of the righteous with the second coming of Christ? 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

3. Satan Bound. Revelation 20:1-3 describes Satan being bound at the beginning of the 1,000 years. What does it mean for Satan to be bound?

Ever since he first tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan has occupied himself with trying to deceive people and lead them into sin. But with the righteous in heaven and the wicked in their graves, he will have nothing to do. The Bible pictures him as being bound with a chain (Rev. 20:1, 2). The chain is symbolic, not literal, just as we sometimes say that we would like to go somewhere or do something but we can't because "our hands are tied." The translation of the righteous and the death of the wicked are links in the chain that will bind Satan. He will be isolated on this desolated earth.

4. Living Saints Caught Up.

What task does Jesus assign to the angels who accompany Him on His return to earth? Matt. 24:31.

First Thessalonians 4:16, 17 indicates that those gathered will include both the righteous who are living when Jesus comes and the righteous who are resurrected at His coming.

The righteous do not remain on the earth. Before Jesus went away He gave the wonderful promise: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). That place is in heaven. According to Revelation 20:4-6, the saints will live and reign there with Christ during the thousand years.

5. The Wicked Slain.

Where will the wicked be during the millennium? Jer. 25:33; 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

6. The Earth Desolated.

How does Jeremiah 4:23-27 describe the condition of this earth after Jesus has come and taken the saints to heaven?



III. EVENTS DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

1. What Takes Place in Heaven?

What is the significance of where Revelation 15:2-4 pictures those

standing who have gained the victory over the beast and its image and have been taken to heaven at the Second Coming? What are they doing?

See *The Great Controversy*, p. 650

SEARCH AND LEARN: Analyze the texts that follow in order to gain a clear understanding of what they have to say about the investigative judgment of the wicked that takes place in heaven during the millennium: Dan. 7:22; 1 Cor. 4:5; 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:4, 6.

ILLUMINATION: "In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 661.

This phase of judgment is part of the divine plan for demonstrating to the entire universe that God is both just and merciful.

2. What Takes Place on Earth?



How does the Bible show that the wicked remain dead during the 1,000 years? Rev. 20:5.

The saints will be caught up and taken to heaven to reign with Christ during the thousand years while the wicked will be destroyed in the brightness of His coming. This leaves the earth in a depopulated condition. Thus we see how Satan is bound. He is bound by circumstances; for he now has no one to tempt.

What is intended by the use of the symbol of the "bottomless pit" in Revelation 20:1, 3?

This "bottomless pit" is our earth. At Christ's coming, through earthquakes, storms, and human violence, this earth will be reduced to chaos. (See Rev. 16:18-20; Isa. 6:11; 24:1; Jer. 4:23-27.)

How does Isaiah portray the conditions that will prevail on earth during the millennium? Isa. 24:1, 3, 5, 6.

See *The Great Controversy*, p. 660.



IV. EVENTS AT THE CLOSE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

Review the six events listed in the right hand column of the chart on p. 96 the events that mark the close of the millennium.

1. Christ, the Saints, and the City Descend.

Revelation 20:9 speaks of the "camp of the saints," or the beloved

city, being on earth at the end of the millennium. From where did it come? Rev. 21:2.

Not only the New Jerusalem but its inhabitants come to earth to dwell, including God Himself (see Rev. 21:3). "The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in . . . [God's] glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here . . . the tabernacle of God shall be with men."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 26.

2. The Wicked Dead Raised. We previously studied John 5:28, 29. There Jesus refers to the two resurrections—the resurrection to life and the resurrection to damnation, or judgment. Of the wicked, Revelation 20:5 declares: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." It is clear that they come to life at the end of this period.

3. Satan Loosed.

How does Revelation 20:7, 8 help us understand what is meant by Satan being loosed?

Events reverse themselves at the end of the millennium. God and the saints return to earth, and the wicked dead are raised. Once again Satan has someone to deceive. Thus he is "loosed" for a little season.

4. The Last Judgment. The last phase of the judgment is the executive judgment of the wicked, when God will be able (because of the three phases now completed) to do away with sin and its effect forever.

How is this awesome judgment described? Rev. 20:9-15.

5. Satan and Sinners Destroyed. The fire God uses to destroy sin and sinners does not burn eternally—its *consequences* are eternal.

What three phrases in Malachi 4:1 demonstrate that the final judgment fire does not burn eternally?

6. The Earth Cleansed and Renewed.

What does Peter say will happen to this earth after it has been purged by the fires kept in store for the judgment of the wicked? 2 Peter 3:13.

At the end of the millennium, Satan and those who have followed him in rebellion will be destroyed. The universe will be free from sin. And then God will re-create this earth as the eternal home of the saved.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read as much as you can of chapter 41, "Desolation of the Earth," and chapter 42, "The Controversy Ended," in *The Great Controversy*, pages 653-678.

On the meaning of "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:9) compare: Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6; Jer. 17:27; 2 Chron 36:19, 21. On the meaning of "forever" (Rev. 14:11; 20:10) compare: Jonah 2:6; 1:17; Matt. 12:40; 2 Kings 5:27; Ex. 12:24; 1 Cor. 5:7.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: As mentioned in the introduction, there are three major views of the millennium. Review these. Very few hold a specific definite doctrine of the millennium as Adventists do. We are the major premillennialist group, making the various details of the millennium that follows Christ's return quite vivid and literal.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: One way to help others understand this truth is to present all of the details of the millennium dealing with the second coming and the judgment, but save the teaching about the destruction of the wicked until the last. There is a natural, logical progression in this type of presentation that can capture the hearts of those who are committed to an eternally burning hell fire. Emphasize the glories of the redeemed, the new earth, and the throb of unity and peace that will be felt throughout the universe when sin and its effects will be eradicated forever.

SUMMARY: Just as there is a time between a person's death and resurrection to new life, so there is time between the world's end and its re-creation as the new earth. This time is called the millennium, the thousand years during which the wicked dead know not anything, the righteous living are in heaven, and Satan and his angels are confined to this desolate planet. For the saved the millennium will be a time of reflection, judgment, and investigation as to why the wicked were lost.

APPLICATION

- Does the millennium doctrine give me a sense of security in knowing the future and final climax of sin and the restoration of our world to its Edenic beauty?
- How often does it cross my mind as to where I will be during the thousand years?
- Am I determined that by God's grace I will be inside the New Jerusalem at the end of the thousand years?

God Tells Us About the New Earth



MEMORY TEXT: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:1, 2).

CENTRAL TEACHING: "The New Earth. On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen."—Fundamental Belief No. 27.

OUTLINE:

- I. When Will the Earth Be Made New?
- II. What Is the New Jerusalem Like?
- III. What Is the Spiritual Condition of the Saved?
- IV. What Physical and Material Blessings Are Enjoyed by the Saved?
- V. Are You Ready for the New Earth?

INTRODUCTION: The poems and hymns of Fanny Crosby have had a profound influence on the spiritual lives of millions of people in many lands. The phenomenon of a blind woman being able to express in verse the deepest sentiments of the believer's heart captured the imagination of nineteenth century Christians. Her hymns are sung with genuine appreciation by modern churchgoers.

Fanny's cousin Dr. Howard Crosby, a Presbyterian minister, died of pneumonia at age 65. His last message stirred Fanny to the depths of her soul. He had written that no one need fear death, and added: "If each of us is faithful to the grace which is given us by Christ, that same grace which teaches us how to live will also teach us how to die."

Taking up her pen, in just a few minutes Fanny wrote the famous poem that soon after became the well-known hymn "Saved by Grace."

Someday the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, O, the joy when I awake
Within the Palace of the King!

Someday, when fades the golden sun
Beneath the rosy-tinted west,
My blessed Lord will say, 'Well done!'
And I shall enter into rest.

Many questions come to mind when we consider the condition of the saved in the earth made new. First is the question When is the earth made new? Last week's lesson emphasized that during the 1,000 years after Jesus' second coming the saved will be in heaven, while this earth will be in a state of desolation inhabited only by Satan and his evil demons. How does God change that situation?

What will the capital of the new earth be like? In their present state human beings are not able to understand the magnificence of their eternal inheritance. Even so, the Scriptures provide a faint glimpse of the unsurpassed loveliness of the home that Jesus is preparing for His people.

What will the saved be like spiritually and physically? It is difficult to imagine a world free from temptation to sin, free from hatred, discrimination, and war, and free from sickness, disease, and death. Is there any possibility that evil will reappear after the earth has been recreated by God? Will the saved have complete security without any fear that their world of glory and peace will be shattered by some new threat?

How can we be sure that Fanny Crosby's dream will be realized? For whom will this dream come true? How do we prepare to inhabit the earth made new?



I. WHEN WILL THE EARTH BE MADE NEW?

When do Christ and the saved descend to this earth? Rev. 21:2; 20:7-9.

What does God do immediately after the destruction of the lost? Rev. 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13, 14.

At the end of the millennium Satan will be released from his prison by the raising of the lost from the dead. Then he and his demons once again will have people to tempt. Christ and the saved will descend from heaven in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, and the city will come to rest on this earth. Satan will lead his hosts of lost to besiege the city with the plan of making an assault upon it. At that point their plan will be interrupted by Christ's appearing on the "great white throne" above the city. (See Rev. 20:11.) The final judgment will take place, and fire will come down from heaven, destroying the wicked and purifying the earth. (See *The Great Controversy*, pp. 664-673.)

Before the wondering gaze of the redeemed within the holy city, the deformed old world is converted into a paradise of unexcelled loveliness.

What did Isaiah write regarding God's intention to renew the earth? Isa. 65:17, 18, 21, 22; 66:22.

What a picture of permanence and security! No more building and someone else inhabiting, no more planting and someone else reaping, no more end of life. There will be no painful reminders of our former misery. The Lord's assurances and promises are certain to be fulfilled.

Present disappointment and suffering are so much less difficult to bear when we consider the joys and fulfillments that are in store for us. Isaiah's words provide wonderful reassurance: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. 64:4).



II. WHAT IS THE NEW JERUSALEM LIKE?

No human pen can adequately describe the magnificence of the New Jerusalem. We can only read the Bible description and try to imagine what it will be like.

What is the New Jerusalem called? How does John describe it? Rev. 21:9-26; compare 19:7, 8.

The New Jerusalem is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). It is the home of Christ's faithful people who were married to Christ during their earthly sojourn. Both the people and the city are called the bride because the city is the eternal home of the real bride—those who before the Advent were judged worthy of eternal life.

The frequency of the number 12 in the description of the city indicates its perfect symmetry. It is a perfect home for a spiritually perfected people. The wall of jasper, the city itself of translucent gold, the foundations of precious stones, the gates of pearl, the massive size—all suggest to the mind the most beautiful architectural wonder the human mind could possibly conceive. But it is impossible to depict accurately the dimensions and glory of the city.

ILLUMINATION: "I know something of the glory of the future life. Once a sister wrote to me and asked if I would not tell her something about the city of our God, further than we have in the Word. She asked me if I could not draw something of its plans. I wrote her that I would have to say to her, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' 'No,' said I, 'you cannot paint, you cannot picture, and the martyr tongue cannot begin to give any description of the glory of the future life; but I will tell you what you can do: you can "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." You can die to self; you can seek to grow up to the perfection of Christian character in Christ Jesus.' That is our work; but when men begin to meddle with God's Word, I want to tell them to take their hands off, for they do not know what they are

doing”—Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 920.

Why is there no temple in the New Jerusalem? Rev. 21:22.

When the saved are translated to heaven at the second coming of Jesus, they are taken to God's temple. (See Rev. 7:15; compare 20:4.) This is the heavenly sanctuary spoken of in Hebrews 8:1, 2, in which the sin problem is finally disposed of during the millennium. After that there is no need of a temple. Sin has at last been excluded from the universe.



III. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THE SAVED?

When Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), He meant that His kingdom is spiritual, not temporal; not characterized by worldly power or human pride. His eternal kingdom on the earth made new will be primarily a spiritual realm in which holiness is perfectly and perpetually manifested.

Who will dwell with the saved for eternity on the earth made new? Rev. 21:3.

Paul wrote of Christian experience on this earth as freedom in Christ. “Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:11). On the earth made new the redeemed will look up to Jesus as the only One who bridged the terrible gap created by sin. He will be their eternal fulfillment. They will understand that apart from Him there would be no meaningful everlasting life. Throughout eternity, Christians will ever hunger and thirst for more of Jesus—more understanding of His human life and works, more communion with Him, more time witnessing with Him to unfallen worlds. They will ever seek to become more like Him. They will live with and for Christ. To them, He will be everything forever.

ILLUMINATION: “The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly.’ 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 676, 677.

Of what will the saved partake throughout eternity? Rev. 22:2; 7:17; 21:6; 22:17; compare John 4:14.

In the new earth, the river of life flows “out of the throne of God and of

the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1), and runs parallel with the city's street. The tree of life forms an arch over the river, with roots on both sides (Rev. 22:2). Every month it will bear new fruit. Throughout eternity the saved will partake of the tree of life and the water of life. This symbolizes that their perpetual existence, both spiritually and physically, will be maintained by their constant union with Christ. Thus the promise of Christ to the woman of Samaria will be completely fulfilled to her and to the redeemed of all ages. (See John 4:14.)

What special day of worship will be observed on the new earth? Isa. 66:23.

ILLUMINATION: "So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

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



IV. WHAT PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL BLESSINGS ARE ENJOYED BY THE SAVED?

One of the most exciting features of the new earth is that we will be real people in a real world. We will not be ethereal spirits divorced from work and social activities that are meaningful to humans.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Summarize what the following passages teach regarding the physical and material condition of the saved:

- Phil. 3:20, 21 _____
- 1 Cor. 13:12 _____
- Isa. 65:17-25 _____
- Isa. 11:6-9 _____
- Isa. 33:17, 20-22, 24 _____

The new earth is a real place inhabited by real people with real emotions and feelings, who will experience the real life that God intended for our parents in Eden. The new earth is a place where we will know our friends and loved ones, and be known by them. We will perform real work with real hands and enjoy the results of our labor. It will not be the arduous labor of

this fallen world, but the most satisfying and fulfilling work. There will be scope for every noble ambition. Isaiah 65:20 does not mean that sin and death will exist on the new earth. Isaiah's message had a dual application; to Israel as a nation, and to the end-time situation when earthly kingdoms have been swept away and God's kingdom established. Israel could have enjoyed great spiritual, physical, and material blessings, if the people had followed the will of God. There would have been little infant mortality, little physical sickness. Because of Israel's failure, the promises to her have been inherited by the Christian church. (See Gal. 3:28, 29.) Now the secondary application of Isaiah's prophecy applies. Those features involving sin and death no longer have relevance. But the predictions concerning the "new heavens" and the "new earth" run parallel with those of John in the book of Revelation.

"The former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4), and "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). The Lord will not allow the memories of earth's struggles, disappointments, and heartaches to destroy the peace and contentment of His people.

ILLUMINATION: The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.



V. ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEW EARTH?

What is Jesus' earnest desire for each of us? John 17:24.

What is the spiritual qualification for inhabiting the new earth? Rev. 14:3-5; 21:7, 8, 27.

Christ will accept as a subject for His kingdom the person who, by His grace, overcomes sin. Throughout the book of Revelation, emphasis is given to the blessings for the overcomer. (See Rev. 2 and 3.) Christ craves to give us the victory that He experienced. (See Rev. 3:21.) He offers all the necessary power to make us conquerors. (See Jude 24; 1 John 5:2-4.)

You can be an overcomer because of your spiritual union with Christ. He wants to dwell within you by His Holy Spirit and live out His life through you. (See John 14:23; 17:23; Gal. 2:20.) There are enormous material and physical blessings for the saved in the new earth. But the real issue confronting us today is spiritual. Christ is offering spiritual advantages: victory over all sin, and purity of heart and mind. (See 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Peter 1:15, 16.) These blessings can be yours now and forever. The spiritual qualities that will characterize the saved are to be yours now; because Jesus offers Himself to you now. His righteousness is yours now (Rom. 8:9, 10). His presence in your heart is yours now (John 14:18).

Christ assures us that what we give up for Him is not for our best good anyway. What a thrill we will have in the new earth of being totally free from the demands of fallen natures and the attacks of the evil one. Ultimate spiritual liberty will be the experience of God's redeemed people. In the truest sense, they will be free at last!

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *The Great Controversy*, pp. 674-678; *Education*, pp. 301-309; *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 67-70.

WHAT OTHERS TEACH: Seventh-day Adventists endeavor to make heaven and the new earth more literal and inviting than do most denominations. Other churches make general references to the subject, but nothing is concrete. We owe much to Ellen White's visions and descriptions of the new earth. She has painted a tangible picture that is thoroughly relevant to most people. On the subject of the after life, most people express themselves in the negative. Often you hear the remark that heaven is not a place where people sit on a cloud strumming a harp. That usually ends the discussion, and nothing positive or real is offered the hearers.

HOW TO SHARE THIS TRUTH WITH OTHERS: This is one of the most exciting subjects to share with others. The only controversial aspect is the question of where heaven is. Some denominations are trying to make a heaven now on earth. Some speak as if the present life will be our only heaven. As you study this subject with others it will be fresh and new to most of them. Make sure that your own heart is overflowing with eager anticipation of living with Christ and the redeemed for eternity.

The following principle is important to remember: "We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow man should be our motive."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 398, 399. The great motivation that should be emphasized in sharing this truth is not the mansions in which we will live, the gardens we will plant, and the fun we will have free from pain, sickness, and death. Even though that is all good, the most powerful motivation is the eternal fellowship we will have with the One who, for the sake of our redemption, left the fellowship of heaven and risked failure and eternal loss.

SUMMARY: Seventh-day Adventists believe that God will restore our world to its original state of perfection at the end of the millennium when the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven. After the earth has been purged of sin and its results, God's people will be spiritually, intellectually, and physically perfect in a paradise of Edenic loveliness.

APPLICATION

- After studying this lesson, do I better understand why Jesus said that there will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth on the part of those who will be lost?
- How much time do I spend thinking about things above as compared to things on the earth?
- Are you willing to receive Christ as your present Saviour from sin?
- Will you resolve to seek Him daily so that when He comes there will be no doubt at all about your eternal destiny?

Lessons for First Quarter, 1989

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1989 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is "Leviticus and Life."

First Lesson:

"SANCTUARIES OF SALVATION"

MEMORY TEXT: Hebrews 10:1.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Insights on Leviticus from the New Testament. Hebrews 11:4, 7; 10:1-4; Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's method of saving sinners is the same in all ages. Salvation comes through faith in the Saviour whom God provided to pay the penalty for our sins.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Faith of the Patriarchs (Heb. 11:4, 7; Gal. 3:8; John 8:56).
- II. The Faith of Israel (Heb. 10:1-4).
- III. The Faith of Christians (Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39).

Second Lesson:

"CLEANSING FROM THE LEPROSY OF SIN"

MEMORY TEXT: 1 John 1:7.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Leviticus 12-15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In Scripture leprosy is used as a symbol of sin. The cleansing ceremony focused on Christ's ministry of healing and resulted in the restoration of lepers to full fellowship with God and man. Only the grace of Christ can cleanse us from the inner contamination of sin.

OUTLINE:

- I. Defiled By Sin (Lev. 13:6, 23, 28, 34; 15:31-33; Matt. 8:4).
- II. The Defilement Cleansed (Isa. 6:1-7; Matt. 12:34; John 5:22; 1 Peter 4:5).

Lessons in Braille:

The regular Adult Sabbath School Lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16 ⅓ rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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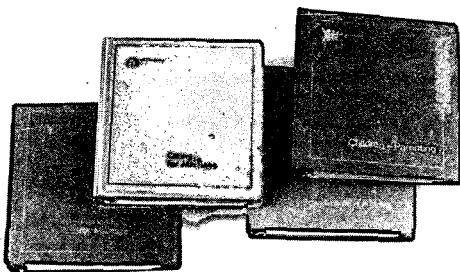


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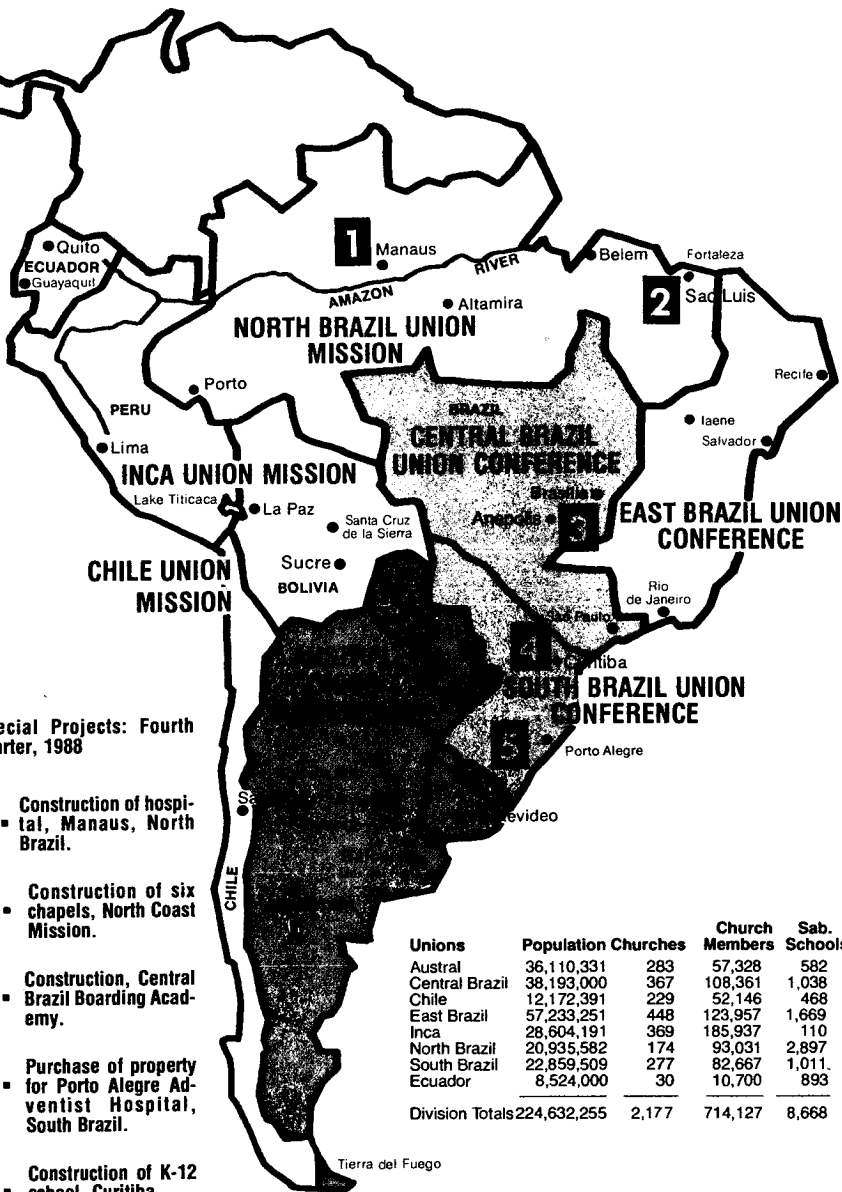
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South American Division



Special Projects: Fourth quarter, 1988

1. Construction of hospital, Manaus, North Brazil.
2. Construction of six chapels, North Coast Mission.
3. Construction, Central Brazil Boarding Academy.
4. Purchase of property for Porto Alegre Adventist Hospital, South Brazil.
5. Construction of K-12 school, Curitiba.

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sab. Schools
Austral	36,110,331	283	57,328	582
Central Brazil	38,193,000	367	108,361	1,038
Chile	12,172,391	229	52,146	468
East Brazil	57,233,251	448	123,957	1,669
Inca	28,604,191	369	185,937	110
North Brazil	20,935,582	174	93,031	2,897
South Brazil	22,859,509	277	82,667	1,011
Ecuador	8,524,000	30	10,700	893
Division Totals	224,632,255	2,177	714,127	8,668