

South American DIVISION

ADULT
SABBATH SCHOOL
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

April • May • June 2006

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- 2 Rebuild boys' dormitory at Espirito Santo Academy (EDESSA).
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ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

April • May • June 2006

The Holy Spirit



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

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THE *Holy*

*The Spirit alone
can breathe
upon us the life-
changing breath
of our Savior.*

“God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ,

and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth.”
—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988), p. 58.

Even the quickest reading of Fundamental Beliefs, number 5, should awaken us to the importance of the Holy Spirit to our faith. Indeed, we couldn’t be Christians without Him and His work in our lives. Christ’s accomplishments for us become efficacious only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and claim His righteousness instead of our own filthy rags or when we determine through the grace of God to put away sin and live in obedience to God’s law—we are responding to the Holy Spirit and nothing else.

The Bible mentions the Holy Spirit more than three hundred times: more than one hundred times in the Old Testament and more than two hundred in the New Testament. Thus, how worthy of study the Holy Spirit is, especially now when every wind of doctrine is blowing, even in regard to the Holy Spirit Himself. Some question His personhood and/or His divinity. Others emphasize the work of the Spirit and His gifts (or what they claim are His gifts), while they pay scant attention to the obedience and sanctifi-

Spirit

cation that are the undeniable fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives. All this needs to be looked at in light of the Word of God.

Seventh-day Adventists should be most interested in becoming personally acquainted with the Spirit. We believe not only in Christ's death for our sins but also in His intercession for us in the heavenly sanctuary. Only the Spirit can apply the results of that intercession to our lives in anticipation of Christ's return.

Because it was the Spirit who inspired the writers of the Scriptures (*2 Pet. 1:21*), when the Spirit speaks today, He will speak in accordance with His own inspired messages. Anything not in conformity with the Bible, must therefore emanate from some source other than the Holy Spirit. We are told to "test the spirits" (*1 John 4:1, NIV*), and in the end the only sure standard for that test is the Bible itself.

Though these lessons will present a doctrinal picture of the Spirit, they also will emphasize the daily and practical aspect of His work in our lives, for the Spirit is the Divine Agent for reaching sinful humanity. His workings are as unchartable as mountain breezes; yet, the powerful reality of His work is manifested not only in our personal experiences but in the life and power of the church. Thus, we deal extensively with the vivifying power of the Spirit as we seek to present the Spirit as God's regenerating Agent. He alone can breathe upon us the life-changing breath of our Lord—a truth so fundamental to being a Christian.

May the Lord bless us as we seek not only to understand the work of the Holy Spirit but to know more about how to receive His promises in order that, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, we "might be filled with all the fulness of God" (*Eph. 3:19*).

The late Arnold V. Wallenkampf, Ph.D., a Swede, worked in the church for decades as a pastor and a professor, and before retirement was an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Got Questions?

Sabbath School University *has answers!*

Sabbath School University is a 28-minute discussion of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. SSU discusses the content and strategies to enrich your Sabbath School with fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and missions. Sabbath School leaders, don't miss this weekly broadcast on Hope Channel.



www.hopetv.org



One Brick at a Time

Mission brings believers together to share God's love. Sometimes members contribute money to build churches in a specific area; other times believers form a prayer partnership that joins hearts with God and with fellow members far away. And sometimes mission takes on a unique challenge, such as that which faced Segunda Galvan (above) when a little group of believers in Argentina needed a church. Her family made the bricks by hand, hauled the water by burro, and built their church, which has become a community of praise.

In these ways and more, we come together to introduce others to Jesus and His love.

Many believers in northwestern Argentina and eastern Brazil have no place in which to worship. Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help build chapels for them. That's mission at work.

MISSION

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The Personality *and* Divinity *of the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Gen. 1:26; 3:22; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; 2 Cor. 13:14.*

Memory Text: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (*Matthew 28:19*).

One doesn't have to read far in the Bible before one is confronted with the Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:2 reads, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” (*NASB*); meanwhile, at the other end of the Bible, Revelation 22:17 reads, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Of course, between these two texts, throughout the pages of Scripture, the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit are revealed to us. This especially is true in the New Testament, where we are given many insights into the reality, purpose, and function of the Holy Spirit, particularly in regard to the plan of salvation.

This week we'll concentrate on one often misunderstood aspect of the Holy Spirit: His divinity. In other words, the Holy Spirit isn't just some impersonal force that emanates from God. Instead, He is God, one of the three Persons who make up the Godhead of the Christian faith. Let's take a look at this fundamental teaching of the Bible.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 1.*

The Triune God

The second of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reads, in part: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, p. 16. In other words, Adventists—along with millions of other Christians—believe in the triune nature of God; that is, there is one God (*Deut. 6:4*) who exists as three Persons. While that concept itself might not be simple, the biblical evidence for this truth is powerful and compelling. That we can’t fully understand something, particularly something about the very nature of God Himself, is hardly reason to reject it (*Job 11:7, 1 Cor. 13:12*).

How do each of the following texts point to the plurality of the Godhead?

Gen. 1:26

Gen. 3:22

Gen. 11:7

Isa. 6:8

John 1:1-3

John 8:58

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be ‘the express image of His person.’ . . . The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 614, 615.

What analogies—such as a triangle or a three-pronged fork—can help someone understand the idea of how one God can be composed of three equal Persons? What other examples might help us better understand this deep truth?

God the Holy Spirit: Part 1

Most people don't have a problem with the idea of the Father as God. After all, God is who the Father is. Even the idea of Jesus as God, as a fully Divine Being manifest in human form, though somewhat difficult to grasp, is, nevertheless, comprehensible. After all, an all-powerful God should be able to manifest Himself in human flesh if He so chooses to, right?

For many people, however, the concept of the Holy Spirit Himself as God is a much more difficult concept. It's much easier to think of the Holy Spirit not as God Himself but as some sort of impersonal force, some divine energy and power, such as gravity, that comes from God and pervades the world.

Yet, the Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit is Divine; that is, the Holy Spirit, just as the Father and as the Son, is one of the divine Personages of the Godhead.

How do the following texts help us understand the divine nature of the Holy Spirit?

Gen. 1:2

Matt. 1:20

Matt. 28:19

John 14:16

Acts 5:3, 4

Rom. 8:11

1 Cor. 2:10, 11

2 Cor. 3:17

Attributes of the Holy Spirit include truth (*John 16:13*), life (*Rom. 8:2*), and omnipotence (*1 Cor. 2:10, 11*)—attributes associated with divinity. Jesus, in Matthew 12:31, 32, says blasphemy spoken against Him can be forgiven but not blasphemy spoken against the Holy Spirit, a concept that doesn't make much sense if the Holy Spirit is anything less than God. Matthew 1:20, where Jesus is conceived in the womb of Mary through the Holy Spirit, is also a difficult text to understand if the Holy Spirit were not truly God. (*See also Gen. 1:2.*)

God the Holy Spirit: Part 2

“Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (*Acts 5:3, 4*).

In these two verses the Holy Ghost and God are used interchangeably. Thus, Peter here is equating the Holy Spirit and God, a powerful text that points to the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

How does 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28 help us understand the divinity of the Holy Spirit?

First Corinthians 12, as well as chapters 13 and 14, speaks of divine gifts or heavenly endowments made to members of the church. Interestingly enough, this discussion by the apostle Paul uses the same interchange that Peter made in speaking to Ananias and Sapphira. The Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, and Lord and God, in verses 5, 6, and 28, are used interchangeably.

What did Jesus call the Representative He was going to send to His followers after His ascension? *John 14:16*.

Here Jesus addresses His Father as an equal and petitions a gift for His followers. For the word translated “another” here, the Greek is *allos*. It means “another of the same kind,” in contradistinction to *heteros*, which means “another of another kind.” Jesus intended to send Someone who is like Himself, and that is—Divine—to the disciples and succeeding generations of His followers. Previously, Jesus had related Himself to His Father. Now He relates Himself to the Spirit. Consequently, they are all alike, the Divine Persons of the Godhead.

Have you ever, as did Ananias and Sapphira, lied to the Holy Spirit? If so, what should you do now?

The Unity of God

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:14).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).

How do these two verses help us see the divine nature of the Holy Spirit?

Christians have often been, and sometimes still are, accused of being polytheists—worshippers of more than one God. This is an understandable, but false, accusation. As Christians we admit there are three Persons in the Godhead, but “they are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 422. The Christian religion is not a belief in three separate gods; rather, it is a belief in one God who is manifested in three Persons working in perfect harmony with one another.

How is God presented by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4?

“Our God” in the text could justly be translated “our Gods.” Even with their intense monotheism, the Jews still used a plural name for God. In other words, this “one” God is depicted with a plural noun.

There has been a great deal of scholarly debate over the centuries regarding the meaning and significance of the plural for *God* here and in other places in Scripture. Explanations among both Jewish and Christian scholars, besides the plurality of the Godhead itself, have been given. As believers in the triune nature of God, we could see this use as *evidence* of our position but certainly not as proof. There is other scriptural evidence, more concrete, that affirms our understanding of the nature of God.

What hope can you find in the idea that all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in the plan of salvation?

Evidences of the Spirit's Personality

Because Jesus had come to earth as a human being, in human form, it's not hard to think of Him as a person with distinct character traits. In contrast, we oftentimes think of the Holy Spirit as an "it," an impersonal entity or power. Yet, the Bible presents the Holy Spirit as a distinct personality, one that has intelligence (*John 14:26, 15:26, Rom. 8:16*), a will (*Acts 16:7, 1 Cor. 12:11*), and affections (*Eph. 4:30*).

The Bible also attributes to the Holy Spirit actions that reveal personality. He is said to speak expressly (*1 Tim. 4:1*), to send people on missions (*Acts 10:19, 20*), to prevent people from going places (*Acts 16:7*), to command people (*Acts 11:12*), to forbid actions (*Acts 16:6*), to call ministers of the gospel (*Acts 13:2*), to appoint them their spheres of duty (*Acts 20:28*), and to make intercession (*Rom. 8:26, 27*). These qualities and actions are more commonly identified with human personality as opposed to some mere power or influence.

How did Jesus refer to the Spirit? *John 15:26; 16:13, 14*. What do these texts tell us about the work of the Holy Spirit?

Although the word *Spirit* is a neuter noun in Greek, the Gospel writers refer to Him by using the masculine *he*. The Spirit refers to Himself by using the pronoun for the first person in *Acts 13:2—me*. Thus, it is appropriate to use *he* when speaking of the Spirit. The neuter gender for the Spirit, both in the original Greek and in English, has undoubtedly contributed to the popular use of *it* as have the symbols or emblems used in the Bible to present His nature and operations—fire, wind, oil, seal, and others.

What should it mean to you that the Holy Spirit isn't just some divine force but God Himself? How is it more comforting to know that God the Holy Spirit, as opposed to an impersonal force, is intimately and closely working in our lives?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 615–617; Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 209; vol. 6, pp. 1052, 1053; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 530; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 585, 586.

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 616.

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 617.

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.”
—Page 617.

“We are to co-operate with the three highest powers in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.”—Page 617.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ Have those in the class who are willing talk about their own personal experiences with the Holy Spirit and how He has changed their lives.
- ❷ Trying to understand the idea of the plural nature of one God isn’t always easy. There are limits to how much we can understand. Why, though, should these limits not be a barrier to our believing the Bible teaching on the triune nature of God? In other words, do we have to fully understand something in order to believe it? Defend your answer.

The Sabbath Suit

Charlotte Ishkanian

Manuel Mombassa was asked to be Sabbath School superintendent in his church in Mozambique. He was glad to serve, but he had a problem: In Mozambique, as in much of Africa, a man who stands before the church must wear a suit coat and tie. Mombassa had neither, and the recent civil war made it difficult to find a coat at any price. So Mombassa borrowed his uncle's suit and tie each Sabbath.

One week the mission president was coming, and Mombassa spent extra time on his Sabbath School presentation. But on Wednesday his uncle told him that he was leaving town, taking his suit with him. "Tell your God to send you a coat and tie," his uncle chuckled.

Mombassa had no idea where to find a coat and tie, but he *had* to be on the platform that Sabbath. He put his problem at the feet of Jesus. But by Friday afternoon he still had no coat or tie. Then late Friday afternoon as he was praying, someone knocked at the door. His aunt opened the door and shouted, "Mombassa, come! Your God has sent a suit."

Mombassa hurried to the door and found a man selling a suit, complete with shirt and tie. It looked new. "How much?" Mombassa asked, trembling, for he had almost no money.

"Just 20,000 meticaïs (about US 50 cents at that time)," the man said. Mombassa could hardly believe what he heard.

He slipped the coat on; it fit perfectly. He held up the pants; they did not even need ironing! Quickly he paid the man and took the suit to his room. There he knelt to thank God for the blessing.

During the mission report time that Sabbath Mombassa told how God had provided his Sabbath suit. "When I could not help myself," he said, "God sent a stranger with exactly what I needed and just in time."

Mombassa returned home from church and found his uncle had arrived. "Uncle, look at the suit that my God has sent!" he said.

When Mombassa meets someone who doubts God's care, he tells them about the Sabbath suit God sent.

Manuel Mombassa (left) lives in Chimoio, Mozambique. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Matt. 3:11; 10:16; John 1:9, 32; 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 1 Pet. 1:22.*

Memory Text: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (*John 3:8*).

In addition to numerous references to the Spirit by name, both in the Old and in the New Testament, the Spirit is frequently alluded to through the use of a variety of symbols. It only is through an acquaintance with the symbols, emblems, or illustrations used for the Spirit that His work and ministry in the believer's life can be adequately understood.

“In us as a Light to illuminate; in us as a Friend to counsel; in us as Water to refresh; in us as a Comforter to cheer; in us as a Teacher to teach; in us as a Guide to direct; in us as Oil to make us shine; in us as a Fire to purge; in us as a Dove to sympathize; in us as the Seal to secure; in us as the Witness to confirm; in us as the Strength to keep; in us as the Power to pray; in us as the Source of fruitbearing; in us as Sap to make us grow; in us as the Remembrancer to remind us that all the precious promises of God are yea and amen in Christ; and in us as the Earnest of the coming glory.”—F. E. Marsh, *Emblems of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1957, 1971), p. 246. This week we'll take a look at what some of these symbols mean.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 8.*

Dove

“John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (*John 1:32*).

“The Lord had promised to give John a sign whereby he might know who was the Messiah, and now as Jesus went up out of the water, the promised sign was given; for he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, hovered over the head of Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1078.

When you think of a dove, what qualities do you think of? Why would this type of bird—as opposed to a crow, a vulture, or a hawk—be used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit? *See Matt. 10:16.*

The word in Matthew 10:16 often translated as “harmless” can more accurately be translated as “unmixed,” “pure,” “without a mixture of evil.” This is certainly an apt description of Jesus, but it is also an indication of what the Spirit can do in the lives of believers.

Read Ephesians 5:9, 10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:22. What is the Lord telling us with these texts?

The Bible is abundantly clear about the kind of lives those who follow the Lord should live. Yet, it’s also clear, too, that we can be what God wants us to be only through a power from above working in our hearts. In and of ourselves, we are simply too far gone to reform ourselves in the sight of God. Only the purifying, regenerating, and sanctifying power of the Spirit can enable us to reflect the purity and character of Jesus. This is the goal of all who profess to follow Christ.

What areas in your own life need the greatest reformation? What are practical ways in which you can cooperate with the Holy Spirit so He can work the changes in you that are needed?

Water

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, ‘If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, “Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” ’ Now this he said about the Spirit” (*John 7:37-39, RSV*).

Jesus here likens the Spirit to water. Water is essential to life. There can be no life without water. So, there can be no spiritual life without the presence of the Spirit. Also, water is not something we can make ourselves. We are totally dependent upon God for it. It’s the same with the Spirit.

Notice, too, the idea of water flowing out of the hearts of those who believe in Jesus. Here the Lord reveals a crucial truth about those who believe in Him: That which they received through the Spirit will in turn flow out from them to others.

Read Isaiah 44:3, 4. How does this text reflect the same idea Jesus expressed above?

The second part of verse 3 explains what the first part actually means. Verse 4 indicates that as there will be growth as a result of pouring out water upon parched land, so there will be spiritual growth as a result of the outpouring of God’s Spirit. And growth alone is positive evidence of life. As parched land is clothed with verdant growth because of water, so the Spirit can transform a barren soul into a person of Christian beauty. “The Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 176.

Read Matthew 18:21-35. What principle is seen here that powerfully expresses the idea of today’s lesson?

What are some things the Holy Spirit has done for you that you also should be doing for others?

Oil

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (*Matt. 25:1-4*).

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As lamps in the time of Christ did not give light without oil, so a Christian cannot bring light to the world, as he is commissioned to do (*Matt. 5:14-16*), without the Spirit in his or her life. The wise virgins in the parable “had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 394.

In what terms is the light-giving power of the Holy Spirit described in Zechariah? *Zech. 4:1-6*. In particular, what do you think the angel meant by his words in verse 6?

The lamps or the lampstands (the candlesticks) represent the church, or Christ’s followers. (*See Rev. 1:20*.) From the holy ones that stand in God’s presence, His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. It is only through the anointing and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit upon the heart that we may develop the right attitude toward divine light and truth. It is only through the Spirit, as opposed to human power and might, that we can be channels of mercy and grace toward a sinful, dying world.

In Zechariah’s vision the two olive trees that stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the sanctuary. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a continuous bright and shining light. So, from the anointed ones that stand in God’s presence, the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. They are to become channels through which divine instrumentalities communicate to the world the tide of God’s love.

In the past 24 hours, were you a dim bulb, a fickle lantern, or a bright beacon of hope and grace?

Seal and Guarantee

“He has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor. 1:22, RSV).

Read a few verses (starting at verse 20) that precede 2 Corinthians 1:22. What is Paul basically saying to us?

Paul here uses the figure, or symbol, of money, kind of like a down payment, to illustrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers. This is a first installment, an assurance of their full inheritance when Christ returns.

Where do you see the work of the triune God in the preceding texts? Why should that also give us assurance regarding salvation?

Notice too, in the above texts, in whom we have all these promises. Of course, it's in Jesus, for “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (*vs. 20, RSV*). The assurance Paul talks about here, which is sealed with the Holy Spirit, comes because of what Jesus has done for us at the Cross. It's only because of the Cross that we have been given the Holy Spirit, the seal of our redemption.

The gift of the Spirit to the believer is the pledged guarantee to the believer on the part of God that He will ultimately bring him the full gift of salvation by taking him out of this world of sin and give him an inheritance in His eternal kingdom. Even in human affairs the earnest money, or down payment, is the purchaser's pledge that he will go through with a particular transaction. The Spirit is God's down payment on His promised salvation, which was paid in full at the Cross.

The texts, though, do not teach “once saved always saved.” We can resist the Spirit (*Acts 7:51*); we can fall away. God's sovereignty does not infringe upon human free will. As long as we choose to follow Him, living by faith—claiming His power to overcome when tempted, claiming His forgiveness when we fall—we can be sure He will do all He has promised for us. What more assurance do we need?

Paul wrote that “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Cor. 1:20). What promises that we have in Jesus mean the most to you and give you the most comfort and assurance? Share them with the class on Sabbath.

Light and Fire

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (*John 1:9*).

“Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God’s Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The ‘Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (*John 1:9*), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 385.

Dwell on Ellen White’s understanding of *John 1:9*. What important issues does it answer? What questions does it leave unanswered?

With what did John the Baptist say Jesus would baptize His followers? What do you think he meant by what he said? *Matt. 3:11*.

Fire had a significant meaning to people familiar with Old Testament traditions, for it denoted the presence of God (*Exod. 3:2*). It also represented the protection and leading providence of God (*Exod. 13:21*), the approval of God (*Lev. 9:24*), and the cleansing and sanctifying power of God (*Isa. 6:6, 7*).

In what ways have you experienced a baptism of fire? What happened? What lessons did you learn?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, “Two Worshipers,” pp. 158, 159 and “To Meet the Bridegroom,” pp. 405–408; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 190, 453, 454; *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 36, 37; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 425, 426; *Steps to Christ*, “The Test of Discipleship,” pp. 57, 58.

Another example used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit was presented by Jesus Himself, when He compared the work of the Spirit to the wind (*John 3:8*). The wind is not visible; we do not know from where it comes or where it goes. But although invisible, its effects are plainly seen. Jesus likened the Spirit to the wind. He cannot be seen, yet, the effects He brings about in changed human lives are plainly evident. But the Spirit Himself is a mystery. Of the three Persons in the Godhead, He is the most unfamiliar to humanity. Jesus came to reveal, or make known, the Father (*see John 1:18*), and humanity saw Jesus in human form. But no one has ever seen the Spirit, nor has anyone revealed Him to us.

“Christ uses the wind as a symbol of the Spirit of God. As the wind bloweth whither it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so it is with the Spirit of God. We do not know through whom it will be manifested.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 15.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, compare your answers to the final question in Wednesday’s study. What promises, if any, came up again and again?
- ❷ The week’s study emphasized the changes the Holy Spirit brings about in our individual lives and how these changes should be manifested. How, though, should the church, as a whole, be impacted by the Holy Spirit? What changes could He bring to the whole church? How would these changes be made manifest in, for example, how the church related to the local community?
- ❸ What things could you do as a class to help your whole church be more receptive to the workings and power of the Holy Spirit?

A New Hope

Anastasia Kmetova

I am an artist living in Bulgaria. My entire life had been filled with art, but as I approached retirement, I knew that I would no longer be able to enjoy the ceramics that had given me so much joy. I found my hope for the future fading before me.

Then I found the true path to God, and my heart again was filled with hope and love. But how, I wondered, could I share my faith with colleagues—artists, actors, writers, intellectuals. They were so much smarter than I was. If I tried to preach to them, I knew they would not listen. I prayed that God would give me a way to share my faith with these influential people.

And God gave me poetry.

Since my childhood I have written poems, but never a religious poem. After I prayed for a way to share my faith, the words of religious poems began to pour out onto paper. I had a small book of poems published. Then when my friends asked me about God, I gave them a copy of the poems. I've written poems about Christ's first advent, His second coming, the Flood—almost any religious topic.

People were curious why I was suddenly writing religious poems. I told them I was excited over finding the true path to God, and I wanted to share my joy with others.

Then I became ill and was hospitalized for 20 days. While there I shared my faith with those who came to my room. Hospitals in Bulgaria are gloomy and sad, but I dressed up my room a little and put my Bible on the table and a nice blanket and pillowcase on the bed. The doctors and nurses noticed and commented on the bright room. I told them that God created a beautiful world, and we owe it to Him to recreate some beauty even in the hospital.



I shared my faith with my roommates and with the doctors and nurses. I gave each of them a copy of my poems, and several asked to learn more about my religion. I plan to contact these women again soon and follow up on our conversations in the hospital.

When I asked God for a way to share, He gave me just what I needed.

Anastasia Kmetova (left) is a retired artist who shares her faith in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Jesus *and the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Matt. 1:18-20; 3:16, 17; Luke 1:35; John 3:3-8, 34; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14.*

Memory Text: “The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (*Luke 1:35*).

The Holy Spirit was involved in the incarnation of Jesus and His coming to this earth. Jesus was conceived by Mary through the overshadowing of the Spirit. Before He entered upon His public ministry, Jesus was endowed with the Spirit as He descended on Him in the form of a dove at His baptism. Immediately after the baptism, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

Throughout His entire ministry Jesus was led by the Spirit. He unreservedly committed Himself to the accomplishment of His Father's will, as unveiled to Him in the Sacred Writings and the promptings of the Spirit. He surrendered His own inclinations. He had no more desire to die at the age of 33 than you and I would. In fact, He pleaded with His Father to take that cup away, if possible. But He would rather die at 33 than go contrary to His Father's will. He did not insist on having His own way, although He could easily have escaped death.

His work, His ministry, and His miracles were accomplished, just as ours must be, through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 15.*

Miracle Birth

Read Matthew 1:18-20 and Luke 1:35. What role do these texts give to the Holy Spirit regarding the birth of Jesus into humanity?

If there are any texts in Scripture that show the limits of science and human logic and experience to explain the great truths of God, these two must be among the top. It's amazing enough, a woman being impregnated by the Holy Spirit; that she was a virgin (*Matt. 1:23*) makes the miracle even more amazing. People all through the history of the church have come up with all sorts of explanations for the birth of Jesus other than what the texts say. Those who limit what they believe only to what their senses can tell them or what past experience has shown them or what modern science can explain to them will have a very hard time with these texts and the great truths they contain. Those, however, who trust in the power of God (*Luke 1:37, Heb. 11:6*) and the truth of God's Word (*2 Tim. 3:16*) can accept the texts for what they say, regardless of how little we can understand the processes behind the truth revealed in them. The just, after all, shall live by faith (*Heb. 10:38*), and what is faith other than belief in what we can't fully understand, and who can fully understand a sinful human woman bearing in her womb the Son of God?

How do these few texts (*Gen. 1:2, Job 33:4, John 3:3-8, Rom. 8:11*) help us better understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the pregnancy of Mary and in the birth of Jesus?

However unfathomable the incarnation of Jesus, it's not hard to understand why the Holy Spirit Himself, One of the Godhead, would be the acting Agent. Who else other than God could perform such a miracle? It's hard to imagine an angel, or any inferior or created being, as the causative agent in this incredible act.

What are some things in the natural world that you believe are true but don't fully understand? How do these examples help you realize there are things about your faith you can believe in but not understand either?

Anointed by the Spirit

What do Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21, 22; and John 1:32-34 tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's ministry?

Though He was the spotless Son of God, the One who was with God from the days of eternity (*John 1:1-3*), Jesus, in His human manifestation, was totally dependent upon the work of the Spirit in His life. That is, in His humanity, He allowed Himself to be guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Notice, too, at this scene that all three Persons of the Trinity were manifested in a special way not always revealed in Scripture: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were all there. This fact alone should tell us how significant the anointing and baptism of Jesus were. Indeed, here, in a special way, began His work, not only for the redemption of humanity but for ending the great controversy with Satan.

What do Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12, and Luke 4:1 tell us about the continued work and role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ?

Here, too, we are shown the influence of the Holy Spirit on the life and mission of Christ. It was here, in the wilderness temptation, that Christ went over the same ground that Adam did, only in a situation much worse than Adam (after all, Adam had a full belly in paradise while Jesus, with a growling empty stomach, was in a barren wilderness). The three writers who wrote about the temptation all emphasized it was the Spirit, which had just fallen on Christ in a marked way at His baptism, that had led Him into the wilderness. They also expressly state, too, that it was Satan who had tempted Him.

In what ways have you faced your own “wilderness temptation”? How did you fare? What can you learn from Christ’s experience that can help you with future temptations?

Guided by the Spirit

“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (*John 3:34*).

Today’s English Version lucidly renders this verse as follows: “The one whom God has sent speaks God’s words, because God gives him the fullness of his Spirit.”

What is Jesus saying with those words? What do they tell us about the influence of the Holy Spirit in His life? What should they tell us about what the Holy Spirit should be doing in our lives?

Acts 1:1, 2 makes it plain that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus “had given commandments unto the apostles.” Here, too, we have another clear reference to the dependence of Jesus upon the power of the Holy Spirit in His life.

What was Jesus’ main objective during His life on earth? *John 4:34, 6:38, 8:29*. How does this objective fit in with the work of the Holy Spirit in His life?

“Jesus stood, with reference to His human nature, during all the days of His humiliation, under the constant and penetrating operation of the Holy Spirit. The Son, who lacked nothing, but as God in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit possessed all things, compassionately adopted our human nature. . . . Although He was the Son, He did not take its preparation, enriching, and operation into His own hand, but was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit.” —Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 96.

What changes do you need to make in your life so every word you speak could be done through the influence of the Holy Spirit? How different would your words be than they are now?

Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 1

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (*Luke 4:18, 19*).

As you read the above text, focus on where Christ’s emphasis is. In other words, though He’s talking about the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him, how was that reality manifested in His life?

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor demoniacs (*Mark 5:1-16*); He forgave fallen Mary Magdalene (*see Luke 7:36-48, John 8:1-11*) and delivered her from captivity in sin; He restored sight to the physically blind (*see Mark 10:46-52*), as well as to the spiritually blind; He set at liberty those who were bruised and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Pharisees asserted that Jesus cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub. But He made it clear that He performed His miracles through the power of the Spirit (*see Matt. 12:28*). Jesus was dependent on the power of the Spirit to perform His miracles during His earthly ministry.

What part did the Spirit play in Christ’s offering Himself as a ransom for our sins? *Heb. 9:14*.

How did Peter sum up the Spirit-inspired ministry of Jesus? *Acts 10:38*.

None of us, of course, is Jesus. But in what ways can we, if filled with the Spirit, do some of the same things Jesus did (*John 14:12*) for the benefit of others? How have you been able to, under the power of the Spirit, do some of these same things?

Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 2

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (*1 Pet. 3:18; see also Rom. 1:4, 8:11*).

God is one, but triune. The three Persons of the Trinity work together. They are intimately united in Their work. Thus, although this text says Jesus was raised from the dead by that Spirit, the other two Persons of the Deity united in resurrecting Jesus.

Who does the apostle Paul say raised Jesus from the dead? *Gal. 1:1, Eph. 1:17-20*.

What did Jesus Himself say about His resurrection? How does this text help us understand all that was involved in His resurrection? *John 10:17, 18*.

“Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

Although Paul spends little time on the events of Christ’s life, His death and resurrection are constant themes in Paul’s letters. When Paul speaks about what is of “first importance” (*1 Cor. 15:3, NIV*) for believers, it is that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared” (*vss. 3-5, NIV*). No wonder, then, the Bible links all three Persons of the Godhead with the resurrection of Christ as it did with His baptism. It’s of crucial importance to all that we believe as Christians. Without that belief, as Paul says, we have no hope (*vs. 17, NIV*).

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important to us as Seventh-day Adventists, especially with our understanding of the state of the dead?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 72–74, 111–113, 122, 123; *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 479; Isaiah 58.

“Jesus is our example. . . . He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God’s service just as much when laboring at the carpenter’s bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ’s example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, ‘Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.’ Isa. 42:1.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 74.

Everything pertaining to Christ’s life on earth was accomplished by the power of the Spirit: (1) His conception (*Luke 1:35*); (2) His baptism (*Luke 3:21, 22*); (3) His justification; that is, the manifestation of His righteous life (*1 Tim. 3:16*); (4) His guidance in His life of service (*Luke 4:1*; see also *Luke 2:49*); (5) His miracles (*Matt. 12:28*); (6) His resurrection (*1 Pet. 3:18*). This reality powerfully points out the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation and our lives.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, talk about the incarnation of Jesus, about what it means that God Himself would “come down” into our world and then die for our sins. What hope does this great truth give us?
- ❷ According to Ellen White, stories were circulating about the “illegitimate” birth of Jesus. What lessons are there for us today? Do you know someone who is pregnant out of wedlock or has made some similar mistakes? As a class, what can you do to help that person, in contrast to just gossiping about the situation?
- ❸ In what practical ways can you, as a class, do for others the kind of things Jesus did, such as visiting the sick or inviting people to a meal? How are these types of acts visible expressions of the Holy Spirit working in our lives?

Darkness Meets Light

Anwhus Anwa

Ama was married to a dedicated Adventist man in central Ghana. But a spirit of darkness entered Ama's life and made life difficult for the couple. From that day her husband never knew peace at home. Ama fought with him and created much heartache. Because darkness and light cannot live together, Ama did not want to see her husband anymore. Her husband was convinced that Ama had a spiritual problem, and he could do nothing but pray for her and endure her behavior. Divorce was not a solution for him.

Ama decided to visit one of her daughters in the capital city of Accra. Ama's daughter encouraged her mother to go with her to a meeting at church, and Ama went. Ama continued attending church services and started studying the Bible. The church members fasted and prayed for Ama, and she gave her life to Christ. She confessed how demons had used her to bring her family pain and to disgrace God's church.

On the day of her baptism, the pastor entered the river and motioned for Ama to enter. He could see her struggling on the riverbank and realized that the demons were forbidding her to enter the water. The deacons tried to help her into the water, but she clung to them, as if fearful of even touching the water. The pastor waded toward Ama and began praying aloud to Jesus. At the name of Jesus, the demons left Ama. She let go of the deacons and waded into the water to be baptized. As others witnessed the power of God in her life they, too, decided to follow Jesus.

Ama was eager to return to her husband as a born-again Seventh-day Adventist Christian. She reconciled with her husband and testified of the power of God to save her and deliver her from the demons that had tormented her for so many years.

Ama's home is peaceful now, filled with the songs of grace and truth instead of harsh words of censure and angry shouts of accusation. And her patient husband rejoices that his years of prayer and fasting, and his faithfulness to his marriage vows has been rewarded.

Your mission offerings support the work in Ghana and throughout the world, providing materials and literature to bring the light of God's love to searching men and women.

Anwhus Anwa is a pastor in Accra, Ghana, who baptized Ama.

The Promise *of the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 31:3; Num. 11:25; Isa. 6:1-7; 48:10; Ezek. 36:25-27; Mal. 3:2, 3; Matt. 3:11; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:3; 5:17; 7:1.*

Memory Text: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (*John 14:16*).

Many Old Testament writers promised an outpouring of the Spirit (*Joel 2:28, 29*). John the Baptist—the forerunner of Jesus—informed the crowds that the One who would come after him, the Messiah, would baptize the repentant with the Holy Spirit and fire. However, the disciples of Jesus did not see the need of the Spirit during Jesus’ ministry. Jesus was close to them. Why should they need another?

Of course, Jesus wasn’t going to be around forever, at least in the flesh. The plan of salvation called for Him to leave, to minister the merits of His atonement in the sanctuary above before coming back and claiming those bought with His blood.

Thus, He promised to send them His Spirit. The Spirit would be their Guide and Comforter as they would not be able to follow their beloved Master where He was soon to go.

The coming Comforter was to be the disciples’ constant Companion. He would sustain and comfort them in their loss and more than compensate for their Friend’s departure. Yet, as we will see this week, the promise of the Spirit was not only for them but for us, as well.

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 22.*

The Promise of Water

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (*Ezek. 36:25-27*).

Look at the promises in the above text. What is God saying He will do for His people? Though these were written to those in another time, why are the principles behind these promises applicable for us today, as well? *See also Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:3; 5:17; 7:1; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 4:3.*

Ezekiel speaks of the Spirit under the symbol of water. By using the emblem of water, the prophet presents the Spirit both as a cleansing and life-giving Agent. Followers of Christ will have new lives, one in which through the power of the Holy Spirit they are cleansed of filthiness of the flesh and live a life of faith and obedience.

Thus, it's clear from these texts that whatever the work of the Spirit, it includes the process of sanctification. It includes a change of habits, of actions, of words. Most important, it also includes a change of heart.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:3. How does this text help explain what the Holy Spirit will do in our lives?

Focusing on the above text, ask yourself this question: As an “epistle of Christ,” what’s my message to all who read me?

John the Baptist's Promise

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (*Matt. 3:11*).

“John proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptized them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah’s kingdom.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

But John was keenly aware that his baptism would not suffice to fit men and women to stand in the presence of God. More was needed than a baptism with water. There was also the baptism of fire.

It’s very interesting how both water and fire are used as symbols of the work of the Holy Spirit. It’s hard to think of two things that, in one sense, are more opposite from each other than fire and water. And yet, both are used to describe the actions of the Holy Spirit.

How do these texts help us understand the fire image in regard to the Holy Spirit? *Isa. 6:1-7; 48:10; Mal. 3:2, 3; Luke 12:49; Heb. 12:29.*

Fire and water are two great natural purifying agencies, and it is appropriate that both should be used to represent the regeneration of the heart, the work of the Holy Spirit. And yet, fire acts very differently upon us than does water. They both might, in a spiritual sense, accomplish the same thing, but the processes by which they work are different. When we think of water, we often think of something soothing, refreshing, delightful; in contrast, though fire brings with it warmth, it also implies trial (*1 Pet. 4:12*), as well as pain and suffering. The image of a refiner’s fire is one that doesn’t express a process that would be comfortable or pleasant. And that’s, no doubt, because sometimes the work that needs to be done in us is like a refiner’s fire: We have to be purged of sin; the dross has to be burned away.

What have been some trials “by fire” that brought about important changes in your life? What did you learn from these experiences that could be of benefit to others?

The Spirit Not Yet Given

“On the last and most important day of the festival Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, ‘Whoever is thirsty should come to me and drink. As the scripture says, “Whoever believes in me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart.” ’” Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were going to receive. At that time the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not been raised to glory” (John 7:37-39, TEV).

When Jesus spoke these words, the Spirit as a dove had already descended upon Him. An abundance of Old Testament references indicate that the Holy Spirit had long been at work in behalf of humanity. What then does John mean when he says “The Spirit had not yet been given”?

Even though the Spirit had worked with men and women from the entrance of sin, He had not come to earth in His fullness. That was not to take place until Jesus had been glorified (see next week’s study).

As Jesus was about to leave them, what promise did He give His disciples with reference to His presence? *Matt. 28:20; Acts 1:4, 5.*

How does John 16:7 help us understand Christ’s promises to remain with us even unto the end of the world?

Christ’s departure would enrich the disciples and all believers rather than impoverish them. While on earth, Jesus was geographically limited to one particular place at a time. While He was with the three disciples on the mountain, He could not be with the others at the foot of the mountain. He was limited in space, as we are. But the Holy Spirit was not to be cumbered with humanity or limited in space. Being omnipresent, the Spirit is not confined by the limitation of a human body. He is equally accessible to all everywhere. And it’s through the presence of the Holy Spirit that Jesus remains with us, even to the end of the world.

Go back and read the text written out at the top of today’s lesson. Is there anyone you know from whom “streams of life-giving water” have poured out upon you? What was the person like? How could you be more like him or her in those positive areas?

Jesus' Promise

Shortly before His crucifixion, what did Jesus again promise His disciples? What hope exists for us today in that promise (*John 14:16*)?

The word Jesus uses for “pray” in this verse has the basic meaning of “to ask” or “to enquire.” In John’s writings it usually connotes a person asking something from an equal.

This is the first direct promise made by Jesus to His disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Evidently, He is referring to the Day of Pentecost. Yet, this was not the Spirit’s first appearance on the earth.

“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

What do these texts tell us about the influence of the Holy Spirit on human beings prior to the coming of Christ? *Exod. 31:3; Num. 11:25; 1 Sam. 10:6; Ps. 51:10, 11; Ezek. 36:25-27.*

John 20:22 shows that before He left His disciples, Christ “breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Again He said “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you” (*Luke 24:49*). But not until after the Ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then, in a special sense, the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. In other words, though Christ gave them this wonderful promise, they had to be prepared to receive it. Is it any different today for us?

We’re often told to pray for the Holy Spirit, but what must you do in order to be prepared to receive it?

Another Comforter

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (*John 14:18*).

“Another Comforter” (*John 14:16*) was coming to take the place of Jesus. Up to this time Jesus had been with the disciples and had been their Helper in every emergency. But now another Person was coming to take His place.

The Greek word translated “Comforter” is a compound word made up of *para*, which means “alongside,” and *kletos*, which means “one called.” Thus *parakletos* means “one called to stand alongside another,” or one called to take his or her part to help another in any emergency that arises. It has the meaning of “advocate” or “counselor.”

Further, the same verb form is translated “exhort.” Thus, He is also an “Exhorter.” In fact, this latter meaning is the prominent feature of the work of the Spirit as outlined by John. He will “teach” and “bring all things to your . . . remembrance” (*John 14:26*). He will testify of Christ (*John 15:26*). He will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (*John 16:8*). He will guide into all truth and show things to come (*vs. 13*). He will glorify Christ and receive from Him and impart to the disciples (*vs. 14*).

Yet, the Word also conveys the thought of a helper always at hand with counsel, strength, exhortation, or whatever help is needed. Though Jesus all but equates Himself with the presence of the Spirit, it’s clear the Holy Spirit will do for them what Christ Himself would do.

How do these texts (*1 John 3:24, 4:13*) help us understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?

The apostles and their fellow believers were not to be left alone or without help after Jesus ascended to heaven. An all-adequate Helper was to be with them. “By the Spirit, He said, He would manifest Himself to them.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

In what ways have you experienced the reality of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 40, 41, 52–54; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 100–103, 668–672; *Gospel Workers*, pp. 284–289.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

“If we look to Jesus and trust in Him we call to our aid a power that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 426.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, discuss your answers to Thursday’s final question.
- ❷ Do you know anyone going through a fiery trial right now? Why not, as a class, get in touch with that person and let him or her know your concern and ask whether there is anything the class, as a group, could do to help?
- ❸ In what ways can we do some of the same work as the Holy Spirit? That is, how can we comfort, exhort, or teach others? Are we not, by doing these things, showing the reality of the Spirit in our lives? What other ways can we manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit? How does the work of the Holy Spirit in us harmonize with all the Bible commands for loving others and ministering to their needs?

Sacrifice of Love

Ramesh Rathod

Mukam and his wife, Gimil, are rice farmers in India. They faithfully attended their village church until religious trouble broke out in 1995 and several churches were destroyed. Fearing more violence, the people closed the church.

In 2000 Mukam and Gimil learned that a group of Adventists planned to hold evangelistic and health meetings in their village. The villagers provided housing for the team members. Mukam and Gimil hosted several team members in their small home.

Excited to hear gospel preaching again, Mukam and Gimil invited everyone to attend the meetings. Between 300 and 400 people gathered to hear the health lectures and spiritual messages. Mukam and Gimil were impressed that these Christians had brought them a new understanding of God's Word. When leaders of other churches tried to convince Mukam to reject the "heretic" Adventists, Mukam refused. "What have they taught that is against the Bible?" he asked. The accusers could not answer, but they warned the couple that they might lose their salvation if they listened to such "heresy."

But Mukam and Gimil stood firm and were among the first 17 people who prepared for baptism. Another 50 were baptized several months later, and the group of believers has continued to grow.

The group needed a church, and Mukam offered part of his two-acre rice paddy. Their home stood on the highest land, which sloped down to a creek that sometimes flooded during heavy rains. When the pastor suggested that the lowland was not suitable for a church, the couple asked for time to think about what to do.

The next day the pastor returned to find Mukam and Gimil's house gone. "What happened?" he asked, shocked. Gimil explained that her relatives helped her tear down their house to make room for the new church. With the materials they had saved from their home, they built a lean-to on the side of their son's house nearby.

"It is our sacrifice of love to our God," Mukam said. With help from the conference, the members built a church that seats 200 people.

Adventist work is spreading quickly in this region of India. Mukam and Gimil's church has spawned three other churches in nearby villages. Several new congregations have formed, and more villages have asked Adventists to come and teach them God's Word. Today 2,000 Adventists worship in four churches and 20 companies in the area.

Our mission offerings help advance the work of Christ in India and around the world.

Ramesh Rathod is a district pastor in the Surat region of western India.

The Promise Fulfilled



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 23:16; Mark 16:17; John 4:35; 14:16-26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:4, 5, 14; 2:1, 2, 5-7, 22-35.*

Memory Text: “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (*Acts 2:2-4*).

This week we read about one of the greatest and most important events in salvation's history: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This remarkable and phenomenal event came in fulfillment of what the Lord had promised before He returned to heaven: that these apostles and disciples would be “baptized with the Holy Ghost” (*Acts 1:5*) and would be given “power from on high” (*Luke 24:49*). The Holy Ghost came upon them as He had promised, and they began speaking in other languages “the wonderful works of God” (*Acts 2:11*). How interesting and insightful that the first thing they did with this gift was witness for their Lord. Of course, this was only the beginning of what the Holy Spirit would do, and is still doing, for the Lord's church.

As we will soon see, this great event didn't happen in a vacuum. It was the culmination of many other events, all centering around the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Among those events, too, was the Lord's preparation of His people in order that they be ready to receive this wonderful outpouring from heaven.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 29.*

Faith and the Promise

“Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (*Acts 1:4, 5*).

In the above verses, Jesus talked about the promise that you “have heard of me.” What promise is He talking about? See *John 14:16-26, 16:7-13*.

According to Acts 1:4, the disciples were to remain or stay or even sit in Jerusalem until the promise was fulfilled. The emphasis in the command to “wait” or “sit” is upon the fulfillment of God’s promise in due time. The waiting itself would not bring the Spirit. The word translated “promise”—*epaggelia*—as it is used in other parts of the New Testament, stresses God’s grace rather than human effort. It is God’s gift, received by faith.

Faith, of course, is a gift from God, as well (*Eph. 2:8*), but there are things believers can do in order to strengthen faith. It’s very foolish and presumptuous to assume that just because we have been promised faith that we will be given all we need, with no effort or cooperation on our part. Great things are promised to those who have faith (*Rom. 5:1, Heb. 11:6*), but faith is something believers must cherish, cultivate, and protect.

What are some practical ways in which we, even with a modicum of faith, can cultivate that faith and create a personal environment in which it can grow stronger? The following texts will help provide answers (*Deut. 4:9; Ps. 119:1, 2; Col. 3:1, 2*). What other things can you think of that protect and even strengthen faith? What works especially well for you personally?

Waiting as Preparation

Yesterday, we looked at the texts where Jesus told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem, which is exactly what they did (*Acts 1:12*). Here we see immediately one of the great principles of faith: obedience. One can hardly expect the promises to be fulfilled in those who disobey the Lord.

Read Acts 1:14. What key element is found in this text that helps us understand the attitude among the disciples that enabled them to be ready to receive, as a group, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? See also *Acts 2:1, 46*.

There's a story told about the great English Admiral Lord Nelson, who, right before a major naval battle, took two feuding officers to a place where they could see all the enemy ships amassed to make war against them. "Yonder," said the admiral, "are your enemies. Shake hands and be friends like good Englishmen." In other words, the issues at stake were too great to let personal differences stand in the way of victory.

In the same way, we can see here how important unity was among these disciples, who, in the past, weren't always united.

Read Mark 9:33, 34 and Luke 22:24. What caused dissension between the disciples in the past?

What the above texts from Acts show is that after the disciples had come into unity and were no longer striving for the highest place, the Spirit was poured out. They were of one accord. Differences had been put away. They had a common goal, a common purpose much more important than any and all personal quibbles. They had to work through these things before they would be ready to work together toward their common mission. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (*Acts 4:32*).

What are some of the things that work against unity in your own local church? What can you do to be a unifying force in your church?

The Pentecostal Fulfillment

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1, 2).

Pentecost is derived from a word that means “fiftieth,” a reference to the 50 days between the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and Pentecost—which is the Feast of the First Fruits. In this feast, the children of Israel would present a wave offering of the wheat harvest to the Lord, expressing their thankfulness for His material benefits to them (*Lev. 23:15-21*).

Also, because the rabbis had concluded that 50 days after the Exodus the Lord had given Israel the law at Sinai, the festival came to be understood among the Jews as a memorial of Sinai, as well. In that sense, it commemorated the founding of the 12 tribes of Israel as the nation that had entered into a covenant relationship with the Lord, a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (*Exod. 19:6*) that would preach the truth about God to a world steeped in sin and idolatry. How fitting that this feast day would represent a crucial phase in the founding of the early Christian church, which also was called to preach the truth about God to a world steeped in idolatry and sin.

Look up Exodus 23:16 and John 4:35. How do these texts help us understand the spiritual context of what was happening in Acts 2?

What’s fascinating, too, about this time is that of all the festivals, Pentecost attracted the largest number of Jews from different lands. Acts 2:5 talks about the devout Jews from “every nation under heaven” who were there. What a perfect opportunity for the incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early church in order that it be ready to fulfill its mission to the world.

How do you understand your own role in the mission of the church to preach the gospel to the world? What role are you playing? What more could you do?

Heaven and the Outpouring

Read Acts 2:22-35 and then answer the following questions:

1. What contrast is Peter making there between David and Jesus? What was his crucial point?

2. How central is Christ's death and resurrection to Peter's whole speech?

3. What was the promise of the Father? (vs. 33).

4. What incredible event in heaven prompted this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

“Christ's ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

What does today's study reveal to us about the close harmony between heaven and earth? In what ways can you be more sensitive to the reality of this close tie between heaven and earth? What things might you have done in the past 24 hours that showed a callousness toward the reality of this close link?

The Gift of Language

Read Acts 2:5-15. In what clear way does the Bible here explain the meaning of the gift of tongues that accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? What kind of languages were being spoken here, and why is this answer important for us today?

Try to imagine the scene. Devout Jews from all over the then-known world were assembled (as they did every year) for the great festival, when suddenly—what happens? A bunch of Galileans, known as rather rough rural types (not exactly the sophisticated elite of Israel) suddenly start speaking in all these different languages! What’s going on here?

One could imagine the consternation of those who suddenly heard them speak in their own language. They were so baffled that at one point (*Acts 2:13*) someone accused them of being “full of new wine,” a rather silly reply if you think about it. (After all, how many people under the influence of alcohol suddenly start speaking in foreign languages that they never knew before?)

Along with what’s here in Acts 2, read Mark 16:17. How does that verse help us understand what the gift of tongues meant?

It’s very clear from Acts 2, where the gift of tongues is first mentioned, that “tongues” is the Spirit-endowed ability to speak in foreign languages. In fact, the word translated “tongue” (such as in 1 Corinthians 14) is *glossa*, which means “language.” If we use the principle of interpretation, in which difficult passages are interpreted on the basis of simpler ones, then some of the more difficult texts that deal with tongues (*1 Corinthians 14*) need to be examined in light of what’s clear—and it’s clear that in Acts 2 the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in foreign languages. This point is important, especially in light of the phenomenon now called “speaking in tongues,” in which people believe their repetition of unintelligible utterances are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This is certainly not what happened when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 30–37; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 19–21; *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 242–247.

“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.

“Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 412.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, read aloud Acts 1:14. What important elements help bring about such unity among those who, in the past, had been at variance with one another? What can you do, as a class, to help your whole local church find the same kind of unity so apparent in the early church?
- ❷ We saw how the disciples had to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Is there anyone in your class or church who is waiting for a promise from God—of any kind? If so, what can you do, as a class, to help keep this person or persons from being discouraged as they wait? What can you do, in a practical way, to help them not give up?
- ❸ The “tongues” phenomenon has been growing. Why not, as a class, work together to create a good Bible study on this topic that you could give to help anyone with questions about “tongues”?

The Little Warrior

Charlotte Ishkanian

Noelyne Mantari is a tiny woman, but she's a mighty warrior for Jesus in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Noelyne works as a volunteer missionary, a lay woman who takes the gospel commission seriously. She visits people in their homes, sometimes even staying overnight to help a family through difficult times. Once the crisis has passed, she teaches them a better way to live. Her work includes marital counseling and instruction on preparation of nutritious food. And, of course, she prays for them and shares her love for God with them.

Noelyne's husband, a member of another denomination, supports her in her work. He often helps her carry out her ministries, prays with her, and gives her funds to carry on her work as she needs them. Sometimes he attends church with her.

Through her husband's work as a high school teacher, Noelyne has met the wives of many of the teachers at the school. She makes it a point to stay in touch with these women and greets them at every opportunity. Before long the wives comment on the peace and joy that radiates from Noelyne's countenance, and they ask her what makes the difference in her life. She loves to tell them simply, "It's Jesus."

Many of the families she works with are Christian, though they sometimes do not attend church. Noelyne began organizing prayer bands among the wives to pray for their husbands and the other teachers at the schools. The women pray for their children as well. These prayer bands forge bonds with the women, who then are open to learning more about healthful living and how to prepare clean, nutritious food for their families. And from there,



it is an easy step to sharing her faith principles. She has seen that the wives pass on what they have learned to their husbands.

In her simple way, Noelyne creates a contagious atmosphere for Christian living in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Our mission offerings help spread God's love around the world and provide literature and services that help the church family grow in strength and faith.

Noelyne Mantari (left) shares her faith in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The Baptism *of the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Acts 2:37, 38; 9:5, 6; 1 Cor. 12:1-13; 2 Cor. 7:9-11; Gal. 3:1-11; 5:5, 6.*

Memory Text: “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (*Ephesians 5:18*).

There's been a great deal of speculation and argument in the Christian church over the centuries about what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. It is clear from the few references in Scripture that it deals with the Holy Spirit in the life of a person who has been born again. Without the prompting of the Spirit, no one can experience the new birth; those who have had that experience have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:5, Jesus told His followers they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit; the spectacular events of Pentecost ten days later seem the obvious fulfillment of His words (*see Acts 2*), when many people accepted Christ and became born-again followers of the Messiah.

One thing is sure: Anyone who has surrendered in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. A loving and lovable Christian, giving of himself or herself for others, is the greatest manifestation of that baptism.

This week we'll look at this promise for all who give of themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 6.*

One Spirit, One Body

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-13. What point is Paul making here, especially in verse 13?

Paul is dealing with a church that was fighting over spiritual gifts. In response, Paul exclaims, “Don’t get divided over this issue.” Or, as he specifically expressed it: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13, NASB).

The word translated “by” in the above verse (NASB) may also be translated “in” (as in NEB, etc.). Thus, genuine believers are baptized in one Spirit into the body of Christ (vs. 13), which is the church. Whatever other points Paul wanted to make, one point is clear: All believers share the reality of being baptized by the Spirit, and this makes us part of the body of Christ, the church.

Baptism in the Spirit, or conversion, ideally precedes water baptism. Baptism in water is an outward demonstration of the change that has already taken place in the heart. The true believer is born by the Spirit (John 3:5, 6); the Spirit is the sealing Agent (Eph. 1:13, 14); and the Spirit has been given as an earnest (guarantee) and reminder that one belongs to God (2 Cor. 5:5).

How important is it that the Holy Spirit dwells in us? Rom. 8:9.

In personally accepting Jesus as our Savior, we receive the Spirit as a heavenly endowment, or assurance, of ultimate and complete salvation. His indwelling becomes our guarantee and constant reminder that someday in the future Jesus will not merely dwell within us; we shall dwell with Him and the unfallen angels in a realm where temptation and sin will no longer touch us. In order to remind us constantly of this ultimate deliverance from the realm of sin, He constantly gives us His Spirit.

Every true believer since Pentecost has received the guarantee of the Spirit, which is the same experience as baptism in the Spirit. The important question for us is this: How willing are we to receive the Spirit?

What is your understanding of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? If someone were to ask, “Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?” how would you respond?

Guilt and the Spirit

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (*Acts 2:37*).

Look at the action depicted in the above text. If you read the verses preceding it in Acts 2 (*starting in verse 14*), you can see clearly what was going on here. Peter, quoting the Old Testament, preached to them about the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. He was giving them the plan of salvation.

Notice, too, their immediate response. Was it joy? Gladness? Happiness? On the contrary, they were “pricked in their heart.” The Greek verb means “to pierce,” and the idea given in the text is that they were pained, they suffered, their consciences were troubled. And no wonder, especially when you read verse 36. Of course, in one sense, we are all just as guilty as these men in that it was the sins of all of us that ultimately brought Jesus to the Cross.

Nevertheless, the idea here is clear: It was guilt, it was sorrow, it was pain that helped bring them to where they needed to be.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. In your own words write what Paul is saying here and how it relates to the experience of the Jews at Pentecost.

In this context, it’s easier to understand Christ’s words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (*Matt. 5:3*). However much the gospel is a message of joy, of peace, and of hope, the process of salvation, of repentance, and of sanctification does involve some suffering on our part (*Acts 14:22*). Indeed, one of the acts of the Holy Spirit is to bring to us conviction of sin (*John 16:8*), and this can happen only to the degree that our hearts can be “pierced” over the reality of just how sinful our lives have been.

How has the Holy Spirit brought conviction to your heart? What kind of feelings did you have? How has the Spirit been able to use this conviction toward your own spiritual growth?

Repentance and the Spirit

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Though Peter here promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who repent and are baptized, it's only through the working of the Holy Spirit that they could be brought to repentance. Thus, we can see here the reality of the Holy Spirit working in every stage of a person's relationship to his or her Creator. Theologians sometimes refer to this as “common grace.”

Repentance is a change of mind and life. The words for “repentance” in both Hebrew and Greek involve the idea of change, especially a change of mind and direction. It is acknowledgment that one has been wrong, an acknowledgment that leads not only to sorrow but to a change, a turn to the Source of life and moral understanding. Repentance, true repentance (*2 Cor. 7:10*), is powerful evidence that a person has been touched by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 2:4, along with John 15:26 and 16:13, 14. How do these texts help us understand the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing us repentance?

The Holy Spirit is Christ's Representative here on earth. Only through His work of revealing to us the truth about Christ can a person be brought to conviction and, hence, to true repentance. Only through the power of the Spirit can we be moved to make the conscious choice to surrender our sinful ways and live in submission to the Lord. By revealing to us the love of God, the Spirit touches us and gives us the only true motive for wanting to serve God: a grateful heart that loves a God who first loved us (*1 John 4:10*).

True love for God, however, cannot be forced. The Spirit comes and touches us; we have the freedom to surrender to His convictions or to push them away. In the end, the choice is ours, and ours alone.

Write out a paragraph explaining your own experience with repentance. Where were you when you first felt conviction? What was your immediate reaction? How did you finally respond? What changes took place? Be prepared to share your response with the class.

Obedience and the Spirit

Read again Acts 2:37, the reaction of these Jews to Peter's witness. What was their response? Compare this response with Saul's response (*Acts 9:5, 6*). In both cases, what immediate evidence shows that their conversion was genuine?

"We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (*Acts 5:32*). As this text suggests, obedience is one of the prerequisites for receiving the Holy Spirit. However much we are saved by faith, it's only Christ's righteousness credited to us that saves us from the final consequences of sin. We cannot live in disobedience to the Lord. The Spirit was given to bring conviction to us, a conviction that will lead us to obedience. Anything else is a counterfeit.

Look up the following texts. What do they tell us about the role of the Spirit and obedience?

Acts 16:7

Gal. 5:5, 6

Gal. 5:22-26

1 Pet. 1:2

When here, Jesus admonished His followers to obey God, to walk in the commandments, to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. How foolish to believe that the Holy Spirit, which is here in His place, would admonish us in any other way. Those who claim "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and use, for instance, "speaking in tongues" as proof of that baptism yet live in disobedience to God's commandments are fooling themselves. The greatest proof of living by the Spirit is a life lived in faith and obedience to God.

Faith and the Spirit

As we saw yesterday, those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit will be brought into what Paul calls “the obedience of faith” (*Rom. 16:26*). However, because those who are saved in Christ obey, and because salvation is inseparable from obedience, people can easily slip into the trap of confusing the results of salvation (obedience) with the means of salvation (faith in Christ). This was a problem with the Galatians.

Read Galatians 3:1-11. What issue is Paul addressing here? What concern does he express for the Galatians? Note particularly the role he gives to the Spirit in these texts.

The Holy Spirit was to lead people into “all truth” (*John 16:13*); the center of “all truth” is, of course, Christ and Him crucified (*1 Cor. 2:2*). The greatest and most important of all truths is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, that at Calvary He paid the penalty for all human sin, and that anyone can, by faith, be forgiven his or her sin and stand perfect before God. Central to this truth is that no works any human can do, even works of the law, can atone for his or her sins and bring forgiveness (*Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:16*). This forgiveness and atonement come only through the work of Jesus and become effective in the life of those who believe; that is, those who claim it for themselves by faith (*Gal. 3:5, 6*). Thus, the same Holy Spirit who guides us toward obedience is the same one that helps us understand the great truth of salvation by faith alone. It’s obvious the Galatians were somehow losing sight of this great truth.

Notice, too, the crucial role Paul attributes to the Holy Spirit here (*Gal. 3:2-5*) and how Paul so closely links the Holy Spirit coming to the people through their faith, as opposed to their works of the law.

What are some of the subtle traps of legalism we can easily fall into? How can we protect ourselves from these traps?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 41–46, 50; *Christian Service*, pp. 252–255; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 283–287, 290, 632–634; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 444; vol. 7, pp. 211, 212; Exodus 14.

“Let Christ work by His Holy Spirit, and awaken you as from the dead, and carry your minds along with His. Let Him employ your faculties. He has created your every capability that you may better honor and glorify His name. Consecrate yourself to Him, and all associated with you will see that your energies are inspired of God, that your noblest powers are called into exercise to do God’s service. The faculties once used to serve self and advance unworthy principles, once serving as members of unrighteous purposes, will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ and become one with the will of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 396.

“We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 66.

Discussion Questions:

- ① Share your answers to Tuesday’s final question with the class. What can you learn from one another’s responses?
- ② As a class, read together Luke 11:11-13. Then talk about what it was like when you gave someone you cared about a gift that you knew they would really like. How did it make you feel? Why were you so eager to give it? What good would it do for the person you gave it to? With those thoughts in mind, what can we learn about the promise of the Holy Spirit offered to us?
- ③ As a class, see whether you can get some time before the lesson study to prepare a small presentation for Sabbath School on what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. Anticipate as much as possible beforehand what questions people in the church might have regarding this topic and be prepared to answer them.

Long Road to Peace

Andrei Skvortsov

Andrei grew up in an atheist home in Russia. While in university he sensed an emptiness in his life and began reading philosophy and history. One book he read contained many quotations from the Bible. *Maybe Christianity holds the answers I am searching for*, he thought. He visited churches and monasteries, but the ceremonies did not lead him to God. He yearned to find someone to answer his questions.

He found a New Testament in a shop and bought it, though it cost him almost a week's wages. He started reading, but Matthew's "begats" puzzled him. If only he knew someone who could explain the Bible to him. But before he found anyone, he was drafted into the army.

He was sent to Siberia, 3,000 miles from home. He felt lonely and out of place. Then he met a Christian soldier who gave Andrei another New Testament. Andrei began reading again, but when he asked his friend questions, the soldier replied, "Just keep reading."

The military was a bitter experience after the fall of Communism. Soldiers were beaten for little or no reason, and many deserted their posts or tried to commit suicide. Andrei's commander learned of his interest in religion and made life as difficult as he could. Often Andrei was beaten for refusing to hurt a fellow soldier or for crimes he did not commit. But Andrei sensed God's presence guiding and saving him.

When his military duty ended, Andrei returned to Moscow. He bought a Bible and spent many nights reading it. His aunt learned of his spiritual interest and invited him to attend evangelistic meetings with her. There he found answers to his deepest questions.

Then he learned his mother had brain cancer, and he hurried to her hospital bed. His father, desperate for help, asked Andrei to find a psychic healer who would cure his mother. Andrei knew this was wrong, so he offered to ask a pastor to pray for her. He brought a pastor from the evangelistic meetings to pray for his mother. The pastor explained the importance of faith in God and God's power to heal. Then he prayed for her.

Andrei's mother underwent surgery and recovered with no permanent side effects. Andrei was convinced that the pastor's prayers of faith had brought about this miracle, and soon he was baptized. He hopes that his parents, who sometimes attend church with him, will surrender their hearts to the Great Physician.

Andrei Skvortsov is a computer technician and local elder in Moscow, Russia.

A CHOICE TO MAKE



Felipe de Sousa Pequeno had a choice to make. Participate with his mother in Candomblé, a traditional religion that involves Christianity and spiritism, or attend Petrópolis Adventist Academy. He chose Petrópolis and Jesus over spiritism. Now he is sharing his faith with his mother and grandmother. The school is growing and needs additional classroom and dormitory space.

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will go to Brazil to help expand Petrópolis and Espírito Santo Adventist Academies, so there is room for others who choose to come.



MISSION

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Gifts of the Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-25; Eph. 4:11.*

Memory Text: “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (*1 Corinthians 12:1, 4*).

The New Testament introduces spiritual gifts as an endowment from Christ and imparted by the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit is one, the gifts, or the manifestations of the Spirit, are many and diverse. These gifts of grace (*charismata*) are presented primarily in three different passages: Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12 through 14, and Ephesians 4:7-13. Probably even these examples, taken together, are not exhaustive but rather illustrative of spiritual endowments. These gifts were promised to the church when Jesus ascended to heaven (*Eph. 4:8, 11*).

No one individual in the church should expect to receive all the gifts of the Spirit. Neither should all the members expect to receive the same and identical gift or gifts. The New Testament likens the church, in which the manifestations of the Spirit appear, to the human body: different parts, doing different functions, yet all working together for a common goal.

This week we'll take a look at some of these gifts and how they are manifested in the church.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 13.*

The Church as the Body

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-25 and then answer the following questions:

1. For what reason is the Spirit given to the church?

2. What seems to be Paul's main concern here?

3. What is the role of the Spirit as depicted by Paul?

4. What point was Paul making through his use of the human body as an analogy for work of the Spirit in the church?

Through the Spirit we have been born again and become members of the body of Christ. Through the rite of baptism by immersion we then joined a local church. However, the members of the body of Christ, or of the church, are no more alike than are the different organs of the body. It's very important not to try to make each one a carbon copy of another. We should rejoice in our diversity of gifts.

Nevertheless, just as all the organs are part of the same body and serve a very definite purpose in it, the church we have joined will not be complete or constitute a body without all its different members. That's because, like a human body, we need these different parts; we need different people who can do different things.

At the same time, too, diversity is not the same as disunity. As Paul's analogy shows, though the parts of the body are different, look different, and work differently, they are all working in unity for a common purpose. All the work done for the Master by different people with different gifts is to be connected with the great whole.

In your own experience, what's the greatest cause of disunity among us? Is it because we are all different and have different gifts, or is it because of something else? If so, what?

Wisdom and Knowledge

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8, 9).

How interesting that in the above text, the “word of wisdom” and the “word of knowledge” are seen as gifts of the Spirit. We often tend to think of those as acquired, what we learn through study and/or through the toils and lessons of life. Yet, the two ideas are not in contradiction. Some people can read and study and go through life and come away with no real “knowledge” or “wisdom,” at least as the Bible defines those things (*Prov. 1:7, 9:10*). Thus, we need the Holy Spirit to give us knowledge and wisdom, as the Bible defines those words.

How does 2 Timothy 3:7 help us understand the need of the Spirit for biblical wisdom and knowledge?

It’s sad, but true, that through history some of the “greatest” Bible scholars didn’t believe the truths of the Bible. They might have been world-renowned experts in the original languages and maybe even have been unsurpassed in their knowledge of biblical history. But the spiritual wisdom and knowledge about God found in those texts was completely lost on them. What a waste!

Read 1 Corinthians 2:5-7. What is the wisdom referred to here? Why do we need the Spirit to know it?

Look at the contrast Paul puts between different kinds of knowledge and wisdom. Notice, too, how he contrasts the wisdom of the world with the “power” of God. That’s important, because the wisdom of God is life-changing. It brings power and change in our lives; it’s not just facts and propositions. It’s a life-changing power that comes only from the Holy Spirit working in us. This is something all worldly knowledge and wisdom can never perform.

What kind of knowledge has changed your life? What kind hasn’t? What can you learn from your answers?

Miracles and Healings

The gifts of the Spirit will remain in the church until Jesus returns. This includes the gift of healing, as well as the gift of working miracles (*1 Cor. 12:8-10*). Yet, we do not regard it appropriate for a Christian to refuse medical help, expecting God to heal a person's disease by a miracle without his or her having done anything to remedy the condition. God does not use miracles extravagantly or uselessly. "What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 535.

1 Corinthians 12:10 talks about "the working of miracles." How are we to understand what this means?

Miracles, someone once said, are deemed miracles only because of their infrequency. If, for instance, the sun rose only once every thousand years, those who saw it would believe they had witnessed a miracle. Because we see it rise all the time, we deem it just an ordinary occurrence—despite how "miraculous" it really is. Imagine someone who never before saw a cell phone in his or her life: How miraculous it would seem to that person to actually hear a voice come through this little box!

What are some other "common" things that, under other circumstances, might be deemed "miraculous"? What can we learn from these that can help us better understand the nature of miracles?

While "miracles," no doubt, can strengthen our faith, a faith that depends upon them is no real faith at all (*Luke 16:31*). Perhaps some of us have seen what could be deemed "miracles"; maybe for others, the greatest "miracle" is the change in their life brought about by the power of God working in them. Though the Holy Spirit can, in His divine wisdom, perform miracles (*see Matt. 12:28*) whenever He chooses, the manifestation of "miracles" is no proof God is working any more than the lack of "miracles" is proof God is not present with us.

What miracles has God wrought in your life? Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

Prophecy and Government

Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; and Ephesians 4:11. What one gift is mentioned in each of these sections?

A prophet is a spokesperson for God. Even after ancient Israel became a monarchy, it was the prophet who received messages and instruction from God. These he or she was to convey to the king. The prophet, consequently, is God's spokesperson to the people as the minister is humanity's spokesperson to God. The content of the message is not primarily predictive but may be any message that God desires to give His people at any particular time, whether it pertains to the past, the present, or the future. The church of God today, as in days of old, needs instruction from God. The principal agent by which this instruction is given is the prophet.

In addition to prophets who receive instruction from God, what is needed in the church to execute the relayed divine plans in efficient administration? *1 Cor. 12:28.*

The Revised Standard Version translates "administrators" instead of "governments." Although the gospel work is God's, some human agent must direct it under God's guidance.

What instances in the apostolic church indicate that God works through appointed agencies in His organized church? *Acts 9:10-17, 13:1-3.*

"The circumstances connected with the separation of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit to a definite line of service show clearly that the Lord works through appointed agencies in His organized church. Years before, when the divine purpose concerning Paul was first revealed to him by the Saviour Himself, Paul was immediately afterward brought into contact with members of the newly organized church at Damascus. . . . And now, when the divine commission given at that time was to be more fully carried out, the Holy Spirit, again bearing witness concerning Paul as a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, laid upon the church the work of ordaining him and his fellow laborer."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 162, 163.

Why has God committed the direction of His work on earth to His church rather than primarily laying the burden on solitary individuals?

Tongues (Revisited)

“The gift of tongues, as prophecy and miracles, has a counterfeit. The original gift on the day of Pentecost consisted of perfectly spoken human languages. Uttering sounds that cannot be identified with any human language is not a perversion of but a counterfeit of the genuine.”—*Handbook of SDA Theology*, vol. 12, p. 619.

As we saw in an earlier lesson, it seems clear that “tongues” mentioned here denotes foreign languages, because that was clearly the way the gift was manifested at Pentecost and on subsequent recorded occasions (see *Acts 2, 10:44-46, 11:15, 19:6*).

Why should the gift of tongues be so important to the early church?

Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:8.

In the early church there was a need for the gift of tongues, or a mastery of foreign languages. The gospel had to be communicated to the world, and most of the postascension Christians did not possess a command of foreign languages.

Who spoke more often in tongues than anyone else? *1 Cor. 14:18.*

What do you think he meant by this statement?

In his evangelization among the heathen, Paul constantly had to use a tongue other than his native Aramaic—the common language of the Jews in the day of Jesus and the apostles. Corinth was a large seaport and commercial city with people from many parts of the Roman Empire. It seems that some in the Corinthian church boastfully used languages that some other members could not readily understand. Paul admonished them not to do so, unless they had an interpreter, since no one in the congregation, other than the speaker, could be edified by it (see *1 Cor. 14:4*).

What are some types of counterfeits you have encountered or known about? What can you learn from them that can help protect you from other spiritual counterfeits you might face?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 33–35; vol. 5, pp. 236–238; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “Hidden Treasure,” pp. 112–114; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 624, 625; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 160–165; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 243–245.

“Paul taught that the gifts—including prophecy, teaching, apostleship, evangelism, speaking in tongues, and working of miracles—were to be exercised by Christians from all walks of life. From his letter to the Corinthians it is evident that some misused them, especially that of speaking in tongues.

“While in some quarters great significance is attached to speaking in tongues, the NT makes it clear that other gifts are more important to the well-being of the church. Paul recommends the gift of prophecy as the most desirable. Therefore, a major portion of this article is given to a discussion of this gift.”—*Handbook of SDA Theology*, vol. 12, p. 610.

“The Jews had been scattered to almost every nation, and spoke various languages. . . . This diversity of languages was a great obstacle to the labors of God’s servants in publishing the doctrine of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. That God should supply the deficiency of the apostles in a miraculous manner was to the people the most perfect confirmation of the testimony of these witnesses for Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 242, 243.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, talk about your answers to Tuesday’s final question. What is your understanding of just what a “miracle” is? What does the reality of miracles do for your faith? What danger is there in relying on miracles for faith?
- ❷ As a class, talk about the role and ministry of Ellen White and the gift of prophecy. How does the manifestation of this gift help us understand what the purpose of spiritual gifts in general should be for the church?
- ❸ Talk about the spiritual gifts of the members of the class. What can you do to help affirm one another in those gifts, as well as help one another put them to good use?

The Students Wouldn't Quit

Rosa Marten

The Adventist seminary in Cuba stands near a poor barrio (neighborhood) outside of Havana. A high crime rate in the area has left the people suspicious of strangers. So when some young people arrived in the barrio, people told them to get out and not come back.

The visitors were seminary students who had come to share God's love, and they were not willing to let the neighbors' comments discourage them. They prayed fervently for God's leading and tried again. They invited the children to sing songs and hear stories about Jesus. And the children came.

The parents were amazed at the changes they saw in their children, and they invited the seminary students to return.

The students met a woman named Anita, who was willing to study the Bible with them. A group of students began visiting her regularly. When her husband became sick, the students prayed with him.

Anita's relatives warned her that reading the Bible was bad luck, and when her husband became sick they said, "We told you so." But he accepted Jesus as his Savior and urged Anita to be faithful. When he died, the students comforted Anita with Bible promises and cried and prayed with her.

Anita wanted to keep the Sabbath, but she feared losing her job in a factory. Finally she decided to keep the Sabbath and be baptized. She says that the love of the seminary students had drawn her to Christ. Anita has filled her once-empty life with activities in the church, including helping with children's ministries and outreach to her neighbors. When she met a family who wanted to know more about Jesus, she introduced them to the seminary students and opened the way for the family to come to church.

Anita has opened her home as a *casa culto*, or house church, for neighborhood worships. Her friends say that Anita sought Christ in the darkest time of her life, and now she shines as a light to those around her.

Your generous mission offerings each week support a wide variety of outreach around the world.

Rosa Marten (not her real name) has completed her studies at the Adventist seminary and is working as a Bible worker in Cuba.

The Fruit *of the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Isa. 53:3, John 3:16, 15:13, Rom. 5:5, 1 Corinthians 13, Eph. 2:8, Phil. 4:11-13, 1 John 3:16, 4:8.*

Memory Text: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (*Galatians 5:22, 23*).

We are saved only through what Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the cross two thousand years ago. As Peter expressed it: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (*Acts 15:11*). Or Paul: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (*Eph. 2:8, 9*). Or Ellen White: “There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.”—Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, p. 19.

Yet, no Christian who enjoys the promise of salvation through Jesus can live without bearing the fruit of the Spirit (*Matt. 12:33*), the day-by-day manifestation in our lives of what Christ has done for us. We can profess all the sacred truths in heaven and earth, but the best evidence that we are in Christ is the fruit we bear.

This week we'll take a look at what this fruit is and what it should mean for our lives.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 20.*

Love

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (*Rom. 5:5*).

Why do you think Paul listed love as the first of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22? See 1 Corinthians 13.

A certain type of tree in the temperate zone inevitably and spontaneously produces leaves in the spring as the sap begins to rise in the trunk and reaches out into every branch and twig. In the same way, a Christian filled with the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit—love.

Jesus is God. As there is no life apart from God, so there is no love or virtue apart from God. If a human is going to possess and manifest divine love, he or she must receive it from God. There is no other source. Where else would it come from if not from above? Can beings—who are only protein, carbon, water, or even only atoms and molecules—express love? How can these elements, no matter how finely tuned, ever be able to love? No matter how good a painter is, no matter how perfect his or her paints and canvas, no flower that person paints will ever live or do photosynthesis or grow a seed. Carbon, water, and protein, in and of themselves, can’t even live, much less love. Love has to come from a source that in and of itself knows love and can impart it. And that source, of course, is God (*see 1 John 4:8*).

A crucial question, though, needs to be answered: What do we mean by “love”? The word itself has been so broadened and, hence, cheapened until it covers a multitude of acts and emotions that hardly do justice to the term. Scripture, however, gives verses that help us understand the biblical concept of love as a fruit of the Spirit.

Read John 3:16, 15:13, and 1 John 3:16. What’s the crucial factor here that helps us understand the nature of love, as depicted in the Scriptures? How, too, does this idea help us understand why “the love of God . . . shed abroad in our hearts” (*Rom. 5:5*) comes from the Holy Spirit?

Joy and Peace

The idea of joy and peace as fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22, 23*) is susceptible to misinterpretation. Our world is a sinful world; we are sinful beings, each one of us suffering the effects of sin: sickness, loss, separation, fear, worry, uncertainty . . . the list goes on. No one, even a Christian, is immune to the painful struggles that afflict us in a fallen world. Jesus suffered; we are going to, as well.

And yet, as Christians, there should be a difference. Unlike many people who attribute pain and suffering to the mindless and purposeless forces of nature or to pure chance or to anger of evil spirits, we should, day by day, live with the constant knowledge that we serve not only a living God but a loving God and that this God not only knows our troubles but loves and cares about us and our woes. After all, as a human, He has known plenty of woe Himself (*Isa. 53:3, Mark 15:15, John 11:35, Heb. 4:15, 1 Pet. 4:1*). Thus, we can know that whatever happens, if we stay faithful, whatever our mistakes, whatever our shortcomings, God loves us and promises to see us through it all. God also promises us an eternity in bliss. This realization should give us joy and peace that will enable us to better endure whatever difficult circumstances we find ourselves in now.

We must remember, too, that as fruit of the Spirit, joy and peace aren't the same as always feeling happy; instead, joy and peace are what comes from knowing—even though we aren't feeling happy or if circumstances aren't good—that God is close and promises to get us through whatever happens.

How do the following texts help us understand why we should have, if not always happiness, joy and peace in our lives as Christians, regardless of our tight circumstances? *Matt. 6:31, 32; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:11-13; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 21:4.*

Dwell on the above texts (and any other relevant ones you can think of). If you know anyone who is struggling right now, share these texts with that person.

Long-Suffering

Another one of the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5 is “longsuffering.” It comes from a Greek word that means, basically, “patience,” “endurance,” “constancy,” “steadfastness,” and “slowness in avenging wrongs.”

In what ways is the practice of long-suffering a reflection of the character of God? *Exod. 34:6, Rom. 2:4.*

How do the following examples reveal to us the long-suffering of God?

Gen. 15:16

Isa. 5:1-5

Hos. 11:8

Rev. 2:21

“Long-suffering bears something, yea, many things, without seeking to be avenged by word or act.

“‘Long-suffering’ is patience with offence; long endurance. If you are long-suffering, you will not impart to others your supposed knowledge of your brother’s mistakes and errors. You will seek to help and save him because he has been purchased with the blood of Christ. . . . To be long-suffering is not to be gloomy and sad, sour and hardhearted; it is to be exactly the opposite.”—Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, p. 52.

Our patience and long-suffering with others should stem, at least partly, from our realization of God’s patience and long-suffering with us. Imagine if God treated each of us as we often treat one another! Fortunately He doesn’t, and the fact that He is exceedingly patient with us and our faults means we should be patient with others and their faults. As we look in the mirror and see ourselves for what we are and know that God loves and endures with us despite what we see in the mirror, we will be better able to truly manifest this fruit of long-suffering. In and of ourselves, we can’t do it; only as we surrender our will to God and keep before us the Cross and what it represents about God’s long-suffering toward us will we bear the same fruit in our own lives.

How long-suffering have you been with someone who has recently frustrated you, someone who is “hard to love”? What changes do you need to make in order to treat him or her as Christ treats you? What’s the only way to be able to do it?

Gentleness and Goodness

Write out your definition of what you understand as “gentleness and goodness.” What is a person like who reflects these two fruit of the Spirit?

It’s interesting, too (if you haven’t already noticed), how the fruit of the Spirit all reflect aspects of the character of Jesus. Go back over what we’ve looked at so far regarding the fruit of the Spirit: In each case, these attributes are all found in Jesus. Thus, when we look at Christ, we can see the greatest revelation possible of goodness and gentleness, because as God, Jesus reflected these traits perfectly. Thus, as we can see, the more we manifest the fruit of the Spirit, the more we will be like Jesus.

Go back through the Gospels and pick out one example of where you see Jesus exhibiting specifically “goodness” and an example of where He was exhibiting specifically “gentleness.” What can you learn from each of your examples?

Goodness

Gentleness

If, for instance, you took the story of Jesus’ fast in the wilderness (*Matt. 4:1-11*), you would see an aspect of goodness in His denial of self for the good of others. Or if you took the example of Jesus with the woman at the well (*John 4:5-42*) or with the woman taken in adultery (*John 8:3-11*), you saw an example of gentleness consisting of treating people, even those who have done wrong, with courtesy and respect.

Go back over the examples you chose. What can you learn from them about changes you need to make in your own life?

Faith

Read Ephesians 2:8. What does it tell us about where faith comes from?

In English, *faith* and *belief* or *believe* are translated from the same original Greek root. And that makes sense because you have to believe in something first before you can have faith in it. You might get rich from a job you hate, or you might be healed by a doctor you don't trust—but you'll never have faith in a God you don't believe in. Belief is inseparable from faith.

Yet, faith and belief are not the same thing. *Faith* might mean “belief,” but *belief* doesn't automatically mean “faith.” Scripture warns about confusing the two.

Read James 2:19. How does this verse help us to understand the difference between belief and biblical *faith*?

In many ways the key to understanding what James meant in 2:19 is what is found in verse 20. Biblical faith and works are related to each other as human life is to breath: One automatically means the other. An alleged faith that does not lead to surrender to God's will is not genuine but Satan's counterfeit. No living or saving faith is merely theoretical. Rather, it is always experimental and leads to action. Or, as James bluntly put it: “Faith without works is dead” (*vs. 20*), just as a body without breath is dead, as well.

Faith is a gift, a fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22*), but it isn't something that is just supernaturally bestowed upon us and we go on our merry way. A daily cultivation of that faith, based on your love for God and what He has done for you, is crucial to keeping that faith. If faith is not cherished, if it's not nurtured, protected, and strengthened, it will degenerate into mere belief and, maybe eventually, into unbelief. The world is filled with people who, once fervent in faith, don't even believe anymore. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (*Heb. 3:12*).

What things do you do that tend to strengthen your faith, and what weakens it? Dwell on the implications of your answer.

Further Study: First Corinthians 13; Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, “God’s Love for Man,” pp. 9–15; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 302–306, 347, 425–431; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 134, 135; *Education*, pp. 253–255; *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, “The Beatitudes,” pp. 13–18.

Two other fruit of the Spirit are meekness and temperance: “Moses was the greatest man who ever stood as leader of the people of God. He was greatly honored by God, not for the experience which he had gained in the Egyptian court, but because he was the meekest of men. God talked with him face to face, as a man talks with a friend. If men desire to be honored by God, let them be humble. Those who carry forward God’s work should be distinguished from all others by their humility. Of the man who is noted for his meekness, Christ says, He can be trusted.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1113.

“Discipline and control the mental faculties. Self-control is a power that all may possess. It is gained by placing the will wholly on the side of God, taking the will of God for your will.”—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, p. 219.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, talk about the meaning of love. You’ll probably notice that it’s hard to define. Nevertheless, what points do your definitions have in common? What can you learn from these points?
- ❷ Is there someone from your church who is no longer attending, who is struggling with faith? If so, as a class, why not plan on visiting that person or inviting him or her for a dinner or some activity? What things can you do to help him or her regain the faith that has slipped away?
- ❸ Let each person in the class talk about someone, not from the Bible, who exhibited the traits of goodness and gentleness. Do the same with meekness, as well. What can you learn from these examples about the meaning of these terms and how these characteristics should be manifested in our lives?

Never Too Old

Toshiko Kinjo

Toshiko Kinjo, 69, recently received a bachelor's degree in theology from the Adventist seminary in Japan.

Born in southern Japan, she joined a Protestant church while in high school and was sent abroad to study theology. She returned to Okinawa and worked for a Christian mission until it disbanded. She then worked in a church-sponsored kindergarten. She retired in 1996 and opened a day care for kindergarten-age children. Ever the evangelist, she taught the children songs and stories about Jesus. In her first year she led six mothers to Christ through her day care.

Toshiko needed surgery, and her doctor recommended the Adventist hospital in Okinawa. Toshiko had heard that Adventists are heretics, and she refused to read the magazines the staff left in her room. Then she found a book about a murderer who had become an Adventist Christian after reading some literature. His life changed so much that the authorities released him from prison. He enrolled in the Adventist seminary in Japan and became a pastor.

As Toshiko read his story, her careful guard against Adventists was let down. Then she learned that the pastor whose story she had read was scheduled to speak in the hospital chapel. She had to go! Surely if this man had become an Adventist pastor, this church could not be that bad.

Then Toshiko learned of a young man who had committed suicide. Her heart went out to the family, and she asked the Adventist chaplain to allow her to go with him to comfort the family. By association with Adventist Christians, Toshiko's prejudices broke down further. She joined a small group Bible study and discovered many Bible truths she had not known. In addition, she learned many secrets to healthful living. She told her family what she had discovered, and at least one family member has decided to become an Adventist.

Toshiko wanted to share the new truths she loves with others, but felt she needed further study. She learned about a lay workers theology course at the Adventist seminary, and she applied. The school encouraged her to study the full theological curriculum. She graduated in 2004 and now works for her neighbors in Okinawa. She does not want a title; she just wants to work for God any way He wants to use her.

Toshiko Kinjo lives in Okinawa, Japan.

The Christian's Guide



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Luke 2:25-30, John 14:26, John 15:26, 16:12-14, Rom. 8:4, 1 Cor. 12:10.*

Memory Text: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (*John 16:13*).

The death of Jesus for the sins of the world is the most important of all truths. In contrast, what else really matters? And because it is so important, God hasn't left it up to us to try to figure it out on our own. Instead, we have been given the promise of the Holy Spirit, which will guide us in our understanding of this truth. For this reason, in the end, no one will have an excuse in the day of judgment.

Indeed, the Spirit is a gift from God to us as fallen beings. Without the death of Jesus, there would have been no salvation for anyone; at the same time, without the Spirit to guide, regenerate, and empower us, there would be no personal salvation. Jesus and the Spirit are knit into One in order to bring humanity, lost in the wilderness of transgression, back into the presence of the Father. It is the Father's plan to restore, through Jesus and the Spirit, the peace and harmony that reigned between God and humanity before the entrance of sin.

This week we'll look a little more at the crucial operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 27.*

The Spirit, a Guide

“The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (*John 14:26*).

As an ambassador speaks in the name of his home government to a foreign government, so the Spirit will speak to men and women in Jesus’ name and with His authority. Jesus has perpetuated His earthly teaching ministry through the Spirit. “The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 282.

In addition to teaching, what else will the Spirit do? *John 14:26*.

“It was not until after Christ’s ascension to His Father, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, that the disciples fully appreciated the Saviour’s character and mission. After they had received the baptism of the Spirit, they began to realize that they had been in the very presence of the Lord of glory. As the sayings of Christ were brought to their remembrance, their minds were opened to comprehend the prophecies, and to understand the miracles which He had wrought. . . . His lessons, which they had but dimly understood, now came to them as a fresh revelation. The Scriptures became to them a new book.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 507.

What other promises does Jesus give us regarding the Holy Spirit? *John 14:17, John 15:26, 16:12-14*.

The Spirit is a living, personal Teacher. Every time we open the Bible, it is possible to have the Spirit unveil to us the true meaning of what we read. The key to this is daily to surrender ourselves to the Lord, asking Him to open our hearts and minds to truth, whatever it is, wherever it may lead us. In such circumstances the Holy Spirit can surely guide.

Ask yourself how open you are to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Do you listen to Him, or do you make excuses in order to do your own thing?

Flesh and Spirit

Read Romans 8:4. Write in your own words what you believe Paul is saying. Focus specifically on what walking “after the Spirit” means. See also Rom. 13:14, Gal. 5:22-24.

The Christian chooses not to follow his or her own impulses and gratify his or her own inclinations but to follow, instead, the biddings of the Spirit. The dedicated follower of Jesus will never do anything without seeking the advice and guidance of God. “Lord, what do You want me to do?” is the question the Christian continually asks.

Neither is the Christian to dwell in the realm of mere belief or theoretical faith. Our faith will be experimental rather than theoretical. Under the guidance of the Spirit, the heavenly mind-set of belief will be poured into the earthly mold of action and behavior.

Yet, however much the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a miracle of faith, it doesn’t just happen automatically. Few of those who have given their hearts to Christ and have been baptized in the Holy Spirit suddenly find themselves living pure, sanctified lives without diligent effort on their own part. Here is where people make a mistake: Not to rely on your own works for salvation, or even not to rely on your strength in the battle against sin, isn’t the same as not having a daily struggle with self and the flesh. The battle is there, and real, and it will require suffering on our part in order to be victorious. The good news, however, is that we have been promised victory through the indwelling Spirit.

Read 1 Peter 4:1, 2. What is the message there for us regarding the battle against the flesh?

Is there some specific sin that you struggle with that causes you a great deal of suffering in the flesh as you seek to overcome in Christ’s name? What practical things can you do, on a daily basis, that could make you more open to the power of the Spirit in order for Him to give you the victory that is yours for the asking?

The Spirit and the Word

“Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (*Eph. 6:17*).

The Word of God is here called the sword of the Spirit. It was the Spirit that inspired the written revelation, since “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (*2 Pet. 1:21*). This is an important point that all Christians must always keep before them. God promises us His Holy Spirit, but we are also given warnings.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Timothy 4:1, and 1 John 3:24–4:1. What’s the message here for us?

The fact of the matter is, there are lots of various spirits out there teaching all sorts of doctrines. Even in the Christian church, strange beliefs, not to mention strange practices, are promoted by those who claim to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Though, in some cases, the deceptions and counterfeits are so obvious it’s amazing anyone can fall for them; in others, the deceptions can be quite subtle, promoted by people who might be kind, loving, gentle, even sincere. How, then, can someone ultimately test the spirits, whether they be of God or not?

What do these texts teach us about the ultimate test of whether or not teachings are inspired by the Holy Spirit? *Ps. 119:105, Isa. 8:20, Luke 10:26, 16:29-31, Acts 17:11, 2 Tim. 3:15-17.*

John Calvin admonishes: “We ought zealously to apply ourselves both to read and to hearken to Scripture if indeed we want to receive any gain and benefit from the Spirit of God. . . . But lest under his sign the Spirit of Satan should creep in, he would have us recognize him in his own image, which he has stamped upon the Scriptures. He is the Author of the Scriptures: he cannot vary and differ from himself. Hence he must ever remain just as he once revealed himself there.”—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, 9:2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

What kinds of spiritual deceptions have you encountered? How did the Word of God protect you? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

The Work of the Spirit

Read John 16:14. What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit will do?

The work and purpose of the Spirit are centered on Jesus. He does not call attention to Himself, but He directs the attention to Jesus. The litmus test of any alleged workings of the Spirit in believers or organizations is the place they accord Jesus. If they call attention to and glorify self or humanity, and even magnify humanity's spiritual experience, they lack the insignia of the Spirit.

The Spirit was not to present His own ideas or notions but only what Jesus taught. Jesus said, "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (*John 16:14*).

Being the Spirit of truth, He will especially bear witness to Jesus, who is the Truth (*see John 14:6*). And it is only through the Spirit's speaking directly to our hearts that we ever come to a true and living knowledge of Jesus Christ and bear fruit for His glory.

What are other ways the Holy Spirit can glorify our Lord? *John 15:8, Gal. 5:22-25, Eph. 5:9.*

As believers, one of the greatest ways to bring glory to God, both before people and angels (*1 Cor. 4:9*), is by the lives we live, the characters we form, and the way we treat others. These actions and attitudes come through the work of the Holy Spirit in us; to the degree that we cooperate, to the degree that we are willing to die to self and to surrender to God's will, to that degree the Lord can work in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (*Phil. 2:13*). How crucial for all who profess the name of Jesus to live daily in an attitude of faith, thanksgiving, and surrender to His Spirit.

Look at your own life in the past 24 hours. What things did you do that brought glory to God? What things brought shame? What changes do you need to make?

An Example of the Spirit's Guidance

Read Luke 2:25-30 and then answer the following questions:

How did Simeon know when to go to the temple in order to find “the Lord’s Christ” (vs. 26)?

What in these texts reveals why Simeon was so open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit? What’s the important message for us in there?

What was the significance of Simeon’s prayer; that is, what was he doing through it? See *John 15:26, 16:14*. Why is this point the key in understanding the work of the Holy Spirit?

Notice, too, the words of Simeon, under the inspiration of the Spirit, to Mary. What gift of the Spirit was being manifest here? See *Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:10, 13:2*.

Simeon, obviously, enjoyed such an intimate relationship with God that the Spirit told him to go to the temple on the day the child Jesus was being dedicated. From among the several boys who were being dedicated to God that day, he was led to choose Jesus, who, from all outward appearances, surely didn’t look any different from any other baby. Meanwhile, the officiating priest did not recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah; apparently, unlike Simeon, he was not susceptible to the promptings of the Spirit. But Simeon recognized Him because God showed him who was “the Lord’s Christ.” Some of the other boys whom Simeon bypassed might also have been born in Bethlehem as the firstborn child to mothers who were of the tribe of Judah. But only Simeon’s intimate acquaintance and communion with God through the Spirit enabled him to interpret the factual prophetic pieces of information and recognize in Jesus the Promised One of God.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 703–705; *The Great Controversy*, pp. vii, viii, 467–469, 607–610; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 52–55; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 357–361.

“Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 43.

Concerning the statement in John 16:14 that reads “He [the Spirit] shall glorify me,” Ellen G. White says: “In these words Christ declares the crowning work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit glorifies Christ by making Him the object of supreme regard, and the Saviour becomes the delight, the rejoicing, of the human agent in whose heart is wrought this transformation.”—*My Life Today*, p. 49.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, go over your answer to Tuesday’s final question. What are some of the spiritual deceptions people have faced? What things have you learned that could be helpful to others?
- 2 Take two people: One has very good theology but is mean, nasty, vindictive, and judgmental; the other, though theologically suspect, is kind, loving, forgiving, and generous. Which one do you think is revealing more of the Holy Spirit in his or her life? Be prepared to defend your answer.
- 3 How should the church respond to someone who, acting rather strange, claims to be moving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?
- 4 What can you do, as a class, that would bring glory to God? Does it take something fancy, some loud production, in order to do this, or can you, as a group, in a quiet and simple way glorify your Lord? If so, how so?

“Show Me How”

Jere Wallack

“I was confused,” Matt Castner said as we talked. “I felt God’s call to be a minister, but I wondered how God could use *me* in the ministry. But after a week at blind camp, I knew.”

Matt was born blind—both physically and spiritually. “I was deep in sin,” Matt testifies. “Then Jesus got hold of my heart. I wouldn’t be alive today if Jesus hadn’t grabbed me with His love!”

Matt had joined a group of young adults for a week at the National Winter Camp for the Blind in Colorado. For one week they enjoyed skiing, snowmobile riding, snow tubing, basketball, roller skating, and other sports normally reserved for those with sight. The week was filled with laughter and pure joy.

Over dinner one night Matt shared his testimony with me. Then he added, “My greatest desire is to give a public invitation to these campers to give their heart to Jesus.”

I was serving as camp chaplain and invited Matt to do just that on Friday evening. Matt responded with “Hallelujah! God does answer prayer!”

For days Matt prayed about what to say. I prayed; we prayed together. On Friday evening I shared stories, experiences, and Bible texts. Then I invited Matt to stand beside me. I took his hand to guide his steps, and God took his heart to guide Matt’s words. Matt began speaking; powerful words flowed from his heart. Then came his invitation: “Some of you have never given your heart to Jesus. This is the time. Some of you, like me, have given your heart to Jesus, but you’ve dabbled again with sin. Jesus is calling me tonight. I am giving my heart to Him again. Will you join me?”

The silence was broken by the sound of sniffles and shuffling of chairs as one then another camper stood to their feet. Campers stood; staff members stood.

Matt prayed, and I prayed. Until the wee hours of the morning Matt prayed and shared the love of Jesus with individual campers. And that night God confirmed Matt’s call into the ministry.

Later Matt told me, “I was praying, ‘God, this is Your show, don’t let me get in the way! Just move, God. Move on my friends’ hearts.’ God answered my prayer. God used me for His glory! God confirmed His call to me,” Matt said. “I must be a minister.”

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Life Through *the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *John 3:3-6, 15-17; Rom. 8:6-11; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:6, 7; Col. 2:6.*

Memory Text: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are the spirit, and they are life” (*John 6:63*).

The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

What incredible thoughts! What a powerful and precise revelation of the importance of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, we must always remember: In the same way that Jesus never forced Himself upon anyone, neither will the Spirit. We must make a daily choice to cooperate; otherwise, He can do little for us.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 3.*

Salvation and the Spirit

As we've already seen, the Holy Spirit guides us into truth; that means, of course, He guides us to Jesus, for as He Himself said, "I am . . . the truth" (*John 14:6*). Yet, the truth about Jesus isn't just that He is God, which He is, or that He entered into humanity, which He did, or that He lived sinlessly, which is true; instead, the crucial truth about Jesus is that He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. No matter how important everything else about Jesus is, in the end, they all culminate in His substitutionary death in behalf of humanity. Any theology that ignores or weakens this point is deviating from the work of the Holy Spirit, who is to guide us into "all truth" (*John 16:13*), and Christ on the cross as our Substitute is the center of all truth (*1 Cor. 2:2*).

Look up the following texts and write what they tell us about the foundation of our salvation:

John 3:15-17

Rom. 3:22-24

Eph. 1:6, 7

As Christians, the foundation of our hope, our acceptance with God, stems not from anything we can do, not from any works of righteousness we can produce, not even from any fruit of the Spirit but only from the righteousness of Jesus credited to us by faith. This is our surety, our guarantee, the only sure foundation upon which we can have any assurance. Through the merits of Christ's perfect life, granted to us through nothing but God's grace—which is His unmerited favor toward us as wayward sinners—there is no condemnation for us (*Rom. 8:1*), either now or in the judgment. Of all the truth the Holy Spirit could bring us, what could be more precious than this?

Are you struggling with assurance of salvation? Pray over today's study. Make the Bible promises your own. Ask the Spirit to help you learn to trust only in Christ's merits as the basis of your salvation.

Death to Self: The Spirit in Us

No question, the Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth about Jesus. But His work for us doesn't stop there; on the contrary, it only begins there. Leading us to Jesus, pointing us to the way of salvation, is only the first step in the Spirit's work. For not only does the Holy Spirit work for us, guiding us to Jesus; He also works in us, changing us, taking the salvation we have in Jesus and making it manifest in our lives. The Christ who died for us is now the Christ who lives in us, as well.

Of course, the only way Christ can live in men and women is through His Spirit. Jesus infiltrates our minds by the Holy Spirit. The operations of God, in and for humanity, are through His Spirit. Without it, we might know intellectually about Jesus' death, but it would never save us, for it would never become the life-changing force that it must be for all Christians.

Read Romans 8:6-11. In your own words, write out what these verses are saying to you. How do they help you understand what the Spirit does in the lives of all followers of Christ?

Notice the importance Paul placed on the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Though the great preacher of salvation by faith alone, Paul is just as emphatic about the place of holy living and obedience. There is no ambivalence here: If we live after the flesh, we will die; if we don't have the Spirit working in us, we are not Christ's. It's hard to imagine how much plainer he could have been.

According to Paul, we should be dead to the flesh; in other words, our carnal desires, though there, should not dominate us. The same powerful Spirit that raised up Jesus from death is now working in us, making us dead to sin and alive unto righteousness. Paul isn't talking just theory here: This is the reality of salvation in the life of the believer.

What is your own experience with being “dead” in Christ? Does this “death” occur only once, or is it a daily, ongoing process? What does your answer tell you about the day-by-day struggle Christians must face?

The Spirit and Life

Yesterday, we saw how firmly Paul linked the Spirit with life, in contrast to the flesh and death. It's a theme found elsewhere in his writings. Obviously, it's something the apostle considered of major importance. We who were once dead in sin (*Eph. 2:1*) are now, through the Spirit, dead to sin and alive unto God (*Rom. 6:11*). What a radical change!

Read Galatians 5:16-25. Notice the contrast he expresses here between “works” (*vs. 19*) of the flesh and the “fruit” (*vs. 22*) of the Spirit. If you could summarize these texts in a single sentence, what would you write?

Here, too, Paul is very plain: If you do the things of the flesh, you will die, you will be lost. It's that simple: The Spirit brings life, the flesh brings death.

Interesting, too, is how he contrasts “works” of the flesh with the “fruit” of the Spirit. Perhaps Paul was contrasting how we reap from the flesh what we sow from the flesh. In other words, sin is what we work at, suffer with, and finally reap the results of. In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is something that naturally happens in a person who is under the control of the Spirit.

How are we to understand these two phrases (“you are not under the law” [*vs. 18*] and “against such there is no law” [*vs. 23*]) in the above texts?

Paul, for sure, is not saying Christians should no longer follow the Ten Commandments. That would contradict so much not only of what he wrote in other places but of what other parts of the New Testament teach, as well. Instead, he seems to be saying that if you manifest the fruit of the Spirit, you are automatically obeying the law and thus are not being condemned by it. The fruit of the Spirit is an expression of the law just as the works of the flesh are violations of it. The Galatians were Jews who were falling back into legalism; Paul was seeking to lead them toward something higher than dead works, which could not save them. Far from negating the law, he was urging them to live in the Spirit, which is expressed in obedience to the law.

“Born of the Spirit”

Read John 3:3-6. What does Jesus mean by making the distinction between being born in the flesh and being born in the Spirit?

We are all, by nature, born in the flesh. Unless “born again” (which, in the Greek, really means “born from above”) by and through the Holy Spirit, we remain in the flesh and will, of course, die in the flesh.

Our only hope is the new birth, a regeneration and a partaking of the divine nature. The divine nature is imparted or mediated by the Spirit through the Word. Regeneration is, therefore, not our natural life brought up to the highest level of attainment but rather divine life from above imparted to us “who were dead in trespasses and sins” (*Eph. 2:1*). This comes through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us (*see Titus 3:5*).

The new birth, though, isn’t the end of the experience of salvation. It’s the beginning. No matter how life-changing the new birth is, we must daily live out that experience. We’re not just born again and then go happily and obliviously into the kingdom of God. It just doesn’t work that way.

Read Colossians 2:6. What do these words say regarding what it means to live out our new-birth experience?

The life of someone born from above includes self-denial (*Luke 9:23*), self-sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1*), and a surrender of our sinful desires (*Rom. 6:19*). Though in and of ourselves we are not capable of these things, the Holy Spirit working in us will bring us to the point where we have to make the choice to yield to Him as opposed to the flesh. Once that decision is made, He will give us the power to obey. In the end, everything depends upon the right action of the will. We have to make the choices.

The next time you face temptation, consciously dwell upon your free choice at the moment of temptation. Realize that the decision to obey God or to sin is yours. Will you yield to sin, or will you surrender to the Holy Spirit, claim His power, and get the victory?

Connection

Before Jesus died, He gave His followers the promise of the Holy Spirit. Notice, however, what He said specifically in John 14:18: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

The Bible is clear—Jesus is now ministering for us in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:24). What, then, did He mean when He said “I will come to you”?

Jesus is no longer here in the flesh, but He is here in the Spirit, which is His Representative on earth now. Through intimacy with the Spirit, we have intimacy with Christ. The Holy Spirit keeps the presence of Christ alive for us. Through the Spirit we can have a close and intimate walk with Christ.

And this walk is, in many ways, the crucial issue of life through the Holy Spirit. We want to serve God because we love God; we want to be cleansed of sin because we love God and we know what sin has wrought in God’s creation. Sure, life through the Spirit demands surrender, sacrifice, and death to self; but if the Spirit dwells in us, it will keep before us the amazing sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf. If we, day by day, under the unction of the Holy Spirit, dwell upon Jesus and upon the wonderful love manifested toward us through His death on the cross, we will be empowered from above to live as God asks us to live. To be sanctified isn’t just to stop doing bad things; it is to be “set apart” for God, to live for Him in faith, repentance, and surrender. This can happen only through a living connection with Him. “We may leave off many bad habits, and yet not be truly sanctified, because we do not have a connection with God. We must unite with Christ.” —Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 24, 1893.

In your own religious experience, what are the things that allow you to connect with Jesus? Write just what it is that connects you to Him and helps you know and love Him better. At the same time, write alongside your answer whatever Bible verses you find that correspond with your answers. Be prepared to share your response in class.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 226–231; *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 373, 374; *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 38, 39; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 171–176, 209, 210, 388.

“The gift of righteousness is communicated to men through the agency of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:8). Herein lies the difference between the ineffective righteousness man seeks through works and the effective righteousness that comes through faith. In the former the Spirit has no part, for the effort is purely human and thus independent of divine grace.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 977.

“Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.’ Ezek. 36:26. The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle. In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 407.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** As a class, go over your answers to Thursday’s final question. What points do the answers have in common? What can you learn from one another? If you could summarize in a few lines, what’s the key to truly being connected with Christ?
- 2** What advice would you give to someone who says to you “I love Jesus, and I want to obey, but I keep falling into the same sin over and over”?
- 3** As we discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in us, why is it always crucial to remember that the basis of our salvation is what Christ has done for us? What dangers do we face if we ever lose sight of that crucial truth?

The Locked Door

Tabitha Churu

Pastor and Mrs. David Churu of Kenya were living in a second-floor apartment. On Friday night they locked the front door and their bedroom door for extra security before going to bed.

The next morning Mrs. Churu got up to prepare breakfast, but she could not unlock the bedroom door. Her husband tried, but he could not unlock the door either. He tried prying the door open, but it would not budge. After several minutes the couple prayed. “Lord, help us. We need to get to the church where the people are waiting for us, but the door will not open.”

Pastor Churu examined the faulty key, but he could see nothing different about it. It had locked the door the night before; why did it not unlock the door? The couple remembered that their neighbor had duplicate keys to their apartment. They leaned out the window and asked someone to go to the neighbor’s apartment and ask them to bring their keys. Perhaps the spare key would unlock the door.

The neighbor soon appeared outside and tossed the keys up to the pastor, who caught them. The key ring had many keys, and they all looked alike. Which one was the correct key? Pastor Churu chose a key and slipped it into the lock. It turned, and the door slid open. He looked at the key that had opened the door; it was nothing like the key that had been made for the lock. How could this key open the door when their own key couldn’t?

The couple returned the keys and hurried to church for the final meeting of the evangelistic series they were holding. When he called for decisions that day 30 people asked for baptism.

Joyfully the couple returned from church. They stopped and asked their neighbor if they could borrow the keys again to see why the neighbor’s key had opened their door when their own key would not. They tried all the neighbor’s keys, but none of them would unlock the door. Then they tried their own key, the one that would not work that morning. It worked perfectly, and continued to work for as long as they lived in that apartment.

Pastor Churu suspects that the devil did not want them to go to church that day. He thanks God for overcoming the devil’s mischief and freeing them from their room. They thank God even more for using them to free searching people from Satan’s powers.

Tabitha Churu and her pastor husband are students at the University of Eastern Africa in Baraton, Kenya.

The Restorer



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Genesis 1, Jer. 17:9, John 15:13, Rom. 1:21, 5:10-19, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, Titus 1:15, 2 Pet. 1:2-8.*

Memory Text: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (*Philippians 1:6*).

One of the great hopes of all Christians is the hope of eternal life. After all, without that—what? We live, we die, we rot in the ground forever alongside the animals? No, that’s not to be our end. Instead, not only do we have the hope of eternal life—it’s not a continued life here in this world as it now is. Please! Our short existence world is hard enough; *imagine that going on forever!*

Instead, we’re given the wonderful promise: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (*2 Pet. 3:13*). Eternal life isn’t eternal life on this sinful earth but on a new one where there will dwell not sin, not death, not sinners—but “righteousness.”

From the beginning, God has been working toward that goal, that goal of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. And this is where the plan of salvation becomes crucial, for the plan of salvation is how God is working to get us into that new earth. That’s why salvation includes the process of restoration. God is getting us ready for a new heaven and a new earth and the righteousness that will dwell there.

This week we continue our look at what the Holy Spirit is doing in order to prepare us for our new home.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 10.*

Created in God’s Image *(Genesis 1)*

Even the simplest reading of the Genesis Creation account reveals that our existence is no accident. We are not here because of blind, purposeless forces that, given enough time, just happened to coalesce into a people-filled planet. Instead, we are here because God purposely put us here. Verse after verse in Genesis 1 explicitly depicts God as the Agent of Creation. In other words, there was a distinct plan for our existence. Nothing was left to chance. Contrast this view to evolutionary theory, which claims we are here *only* by chance; that there was no plan, no purpose, no intention for us. We are a cosmic accident, nothing more. It’s hard to imagine any view more contradictory to biblical origins than evolution. No wonder Satan works so hard to promote it.

Genesis 1:26, 27 says that God created man and woman in His own image. What does that mean, being created in the image of God? How does 1 John 4:8 help us answer this question?

Whatever being in the image of God means, it must also include the capacity to love. As beings made in the image of a God who Himself “is love,” what else could it be? This ability to love sets us apart distinctly from the rest of what was created in Genesis 1. The moon, the grass, the seas, even the animals—none of which was made in the image of God—don’t have the capacity to love as humans do. Certainly the ability to love, as we have it, has made us different from everything else created in Genesis.

From your own personal experiences, along with what the Bible teaches (see *John 15:13, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, 1 John 4:10*), what is your best understanding of what love is? What does your answer tell you about what Adam and Eve must have been like after first being created? What does your answer tell you about what life on this earth was intended to be like? Be prepared to share your answer in class.

Love and the Fall

Read Genesis 3:1-6. What did Adam and Eve have to possess in order to be able to fall?

Yesterday, we saw we were created in the image of God, and whatever else that must mean, it must, at least, mean we were given the capacity to love. Yet, love, in order to be love, has to be free; that is, God can't force His creatures to love Him, or one another for that matter. Love cannot be coerced. Because we were given the ability to love, we also were given free choice. The Fall is a powerful example of what happens when beings with free choice make the wrong choices.

And we, too, millennia after Eden, have free choice. Yet, our situation is much worse than Adam and Eve's before the Fall. They were perfect beings, living in the full light of God's glory; their natures were not corrupted or sinful. In contrast, we are fallen beings with corrupted, sinful natures steeped in iniquity. It's one thing having free choice while perfect; it's another having that same free choice while corrupted. What's scarier: a kind, gentle, loving person who carries a gun or a nasty, spiteful, and hateful one who wields the same weapon?

What kind of picture do the following texts portray about unregenerate human nature? *Jer. 17:9, Rom. 1:21, 5:12, Eph. 2:3, Titus 1:15.*

The Bible is very clear about the state of fallen human nature. It's bad, very bad, and left unchecked it would lead to death and destruction for the entire human race. All one has to do is look around at the world today, and we can see, everywhere, the results of what our fallen nature has wrought: war, terrorism, addiction, exploitation, prostitution, crime, and on and on. It's only because of the grace of God we haven't destroyed ourselves. No doubt, if given enough time, we would accomplish just that.

What things do you see around you every day that testify to the corruption of human nature? What does your answer tell you about just how desperate our situation would be if left unsolved?

Second Probation

Sunday and Monday we looked at first the creation of humanity and then at the Fall. Our situation, as fallen creatures, was bleak. The actions of Adam and Eve after the Fall perfectly reflected the state of humanity: fearful, alienated from God and each other, guilty, and ashamed. With their children, murder was added to the roster of human wickedness (*Gen. 4:8*), and before long their hearts were “only evil continually” (*Gen. 6:5*).

Of course, we know that God didn’t leave humanity to suffer the full and final results of sin. The whole plan of salvation was initiated by the Lord in order to rescue us from the utter ruin that would otherwise have been ours. Jesus came and went over the same ground as Adam, only where Adam failed Jesus succeeded—and because of what Jesus accomplished, the whole world was given another chance. Through faith in Jesus, anyone, anywhere, can have the promise of eternal life, the promise of having restored everything that was lost through sin.

Look at the following text (*Rom. 5:10-19*). **What is the essential message it is giving to us? Notice the stark contrasts presented here. What brought death, and what brings life?**

Jesus came, and through all He accomplished with His sinless life and then atoning death, the human race has been given another chance. In this sense, the human race, as a whole, has been restored to favor with God. This doesn’t mean the whole race is automatically saved or justified; it means, instead, everyone has been given another chance. The doom that should have been ours through Adam has been averted because of Jesus.

“The word of God declares that we are not our own, that we are bought with a price. It is at an immense cost that we have been placed upon vantage ground, where we can find liberty from the bondage of sin wrought by the fall in Eden. Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery; but by the sacrifice of the Son of God, a second probation was granted to man. In the plan of redemption a way of escape is provided for all who will avail themselves of it.”—Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 15.

Think about what it means to have a “second probation.” Were you ever given a second chance at something? What did you learn from that experience that can help you better appreciate what you now have been given through the Cross?

The Restoration: Part 1

Yesterday, we saw that despite our desperate situation, God did not leave us without hope. On the contrary, we have been given great hope through Jesus Christ, who has paved the way for each of us to return to what we would have been before the Fall.

And the process begins now. The gospel isn't just salvation; it isn't just a change in our legal status before God. The gospel is also restoration. We were originally made in the image of God; the plan of salvation is the process to bring us back to that state. This isn't just something that will happen at the Second Coming: It's a process that begins now. The Holy Spirit is working in us to restore in us what has been lost through sin.

Read 2 Peter 1:2-8. How do these verses, particularly the part where Peter talks about being “partakers of the divine nature,” help us understand the work of restoration that is going on in us right now? How do these verses relate to Genesis 1:26, 27?

God works to change fallen beings into His image by transforming their wills, minds, and desires. In short, the Holy Spirit works on our characters. Partaking of the divine nature, we are being transformed. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). And that image, of course, is the image of God, and this has been revealed to us in no better way than through Jesus, who was “the express image” (Heb. 1:3) of God's person. Yet, because Jesus isn't here in the flesh, the Holy Spirit is here as His Representative, revealing to us the truths that will change and transform our lives. This is a process of restoration that will not be completed until there's a new heaven and a new earth. Until then, God is working on us now, getting us ready for a new existence that has been made available to us through Jesus.

Imagine what your life would be like if you more and more reflected the character of Jesus. What immediate changes would take place, particularly in your relationship with others, were you to start reflecting that character?

The Restoration: Part 2

Write the essential message of each text, and as you write out your answer, ask yourself: How well am I experiencing the promises given in each text?

Rom. 5:1

2 Cor. 5:17

Eph. 4:24

Phil. 2:12, 13

1 Pet. 5:10

The Christian life is a road toward *perfection* (*Rom. 12:2, James 1:4*), a word that in the New Testament comes with the idea of “completion,” “fully grown,” or “mature.” We are to be perfect in our finite and fallen sphere as God is in His infinite and absolute sphere (*Matt. 5:48*).

Apart from Christ, of course, we cannot attain any kind of “perfection.” Instead, it is Christ who “became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (*1 Cor. 1:30, NASB*). In Christ, these qualities constitute our “perfection” before God. He completed, once and for all, our sanctification and redemption. We are “complete in Him” even now (*Col. 2:10*). It is now the work of the Holy Spirit to take these “completed” products and make manifest in our lives the reality of what Christ has done for us. Our growth, our character development, our restoration toward the image of God become the living expression of what it means to “be filled with all the fullness of God” (*Eph. 3:19*). In Christ, the Holy Spirit is making real *in us* the reality of what Christ has done for us. No one can be a Christian without both these aspects of salvation foundational to their new lives in Christ.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44, 45; *Steps to Christ*, “Consecration,” pp. 47, 48; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 21–23; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “The Sower Went Forth to Sow,” pp. 33–69; “Two Worshipers,” pp. 161–163; Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1097, 1098.

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

“Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1101.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, go over your answers to Sunday’s final question. Before you do, have each person write on a card his or her own definition of love and have each person read it before the discussion begins.
- ❷ Read aloud in class the second Ellen G. White quote listed above. How does that idea help us understand the close relationship between faith and works in the life of a Christian?
- ❸ As a class, talk about the idea of a “second probation,” a second chance. Is there anyone you know who needs another chance? If so, why not, as a class, make a determined effort to find that person and let him or her know that he or she has another chance, not only with each of you but, more important, with God?

The Shining Church, Part 1

Mar Dela Fuente

Datu (chief) Lagunday of Migtulod village in the mountains of southern Philippines was the only person in his village who wanted the student missionaries from Mountain View College to come and teach the children. The villagers were sure the new school was a trap to steal the tribe's land. Even the chief's wife resisted the coming of these "outsiders." But the chief prevailed, and the first team of student missionary teachers arrived in 1994.

"If you will not send your children to the village school I will not force you," Chief Lagunday told the people. "But as long as I am chief I will support this school. I believe that some day this village will be a shining light to other villages."

Unfortunately Chief Lagunday died, and the villagers closed the school. But the new chief soon realized that the village needed the school and its selfless young teachers to educate the children. He journeyed to Mountain View College and begged the student missionaries to come back and reopen the school.

Soon the village echoed with children's voices singing praises to God early in the morning. As the people learned the importance of cleanliness, they cleaned themselves and their squalid village. Pigs were no longer permitted to run through the village. The village became the cleanest community on the mountainside; it became a shining light to the villages around it. The children learned quickly, and soon they could compete with students from other villages in the skills they had learned. The parents learned better farming techniques and soon had enough produce to sell in the lowland marketplaces.

The villagers built a church on the hill overlooking their village. They planted lovely flowers along the steep dirt path up the hillside. The church's gas lamp drew villagers up the hillside for evening worships, and on Sabbaths the church was filled with believers who brought their food and stayed all day on the hillside.

Early one morning the wife of the new village chief woke her husband and children to tell them of a bright star shining from the church on the hill. "Truly our church *is* shining to other villages," the chief said.

(Continued next week)

When this was written Mar Dela Fuente was a student missionary teacher at the Adventist mission school in Migtulod Village in southern Philippines.

The Sin Against *the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Matt. 12:22-31, Mark 3:22-30, 10:45, Luke 18:10-14, John 3:14-16, 1 Cor. 15:3, 1 Tim. 1:15, Heb. 2:9.*

Memory Text: “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (*Mark 3:28, 29*).

Of all the hard sayings in the Bible, this memory text has to be among the most difficult. Considering who Jesus was and what He did in order to be able to forgive our sins, the idea of a sin that even the Cross doesn't make provision for should cause us to tremble. Murder, incest, pride, adultery, theft, idolatry, even words spoken against Christ (*Matt. 12:21-32*) can be forgiven (*Eph. 1:7*); yet, in the words of Christ Himself, “he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness” (*Mark 3:29*). That's incredible!

Thus, the logical question is “What is this so-called ‘unpardonable sin’” (a phrase that, by the way, never appears in Scripture)? The whole idea of a sin that can't be forgiven seems so contrary to all we know about the God who went through so much precisely in order to forgive us all our sins. That's why this is a topic so worthy of study—for we all need to be aware of the one thing that, more than anything else, leaves us, as Jesus said, “in danger of eternal damnation” (*vs. 29*).

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 17.*

To Save Sinners

According to 1 Timothy 1:15, what was the purpose of Christ's coming to this earth?

Volumes could be written about the reasons for the incredible story of Jesus Christ, the God who veiled His divinity in humanity and died in our stead the death that we, as sinners, deserve. Among those reasons for the life and death of Jesus are:

1. He came in order to reveal to us just what God was like (*John 14:9*).
2. He came in order to be a Servant of God and show what servanthood was about (*Matt. 20:25-28, Phil. 2:5-7*).
3. He came to leave us an example of how to live (*John 2:6, 1 Pet. 2:21*).
4. He came in order to be a faithful and merciful High Priest in our behalf (*Heb. 2:17, 18*).

All these things, however important, would be meaningless to us without what's undoubtedly the most crucial aspect of Christ's earthly mission.

Read Mark 10:45, John 3:14-16, 1 Cor. 15:3, Heb. 2:9, and 1 John 3:8. What reasons do these texts together give for the life and death of Jesus?

Of all the reasons Jesus came and died, the most important—at least from our perspective—is that He died to save us from the legal penalty of sin, which is death, eternal death. And the great news is that through His work He is able to do just that for anyone who accepts Him. Salvation comes to all who believe, the Jew first and then the Gentile (*Rom. 2:9*). Those who believe are then spared the “eternal damnation” Jesus warned about in numerous places, including Mark 3:29, in which He talked about the one sin that could lead to this damnation. Thus, if through belief in Him we are spared this “eternal damnation,” and if the “unpardonable sin” leads to this damnation, what most likely is this “unpardonable sin” really about?

“All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy”

Read Matthew 12:22-31 and summarize the context in which Jesus said what He did. Notice, too, to whom He was speaking. How does that help us understand what He was saying in regard to the “unpardonable sin”? See also Mark 3:22-30.

Christ’s strong words didn’t appear in a vacuum. Instead, they were expressed in response to a statement by certain Pharisees who, after witnessing a healing performed by Jesus, said He “cast out devils” (*Matt. 12:24*) by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. This attitude was taken in the face of undeniable evidence given them of His divine power: the holiness of His life, which they could but recognize and which they later tacitly admitted (*John 8:46*); His supernatural healing of the sick (*Matt. 8:14-17, Mark 1:29-34, etc.*); His casting out of devils (*Matt. 9:32, 33*); and His raising of the dead (*Luke 7:11-17*).

However, by refusing to admit Christ’s divinity, and by actively opposing Him, these men had placed themselves in such a position that they were forced to explain His works on some other grounds than divine and, hence, assigned to Satan the work of God. They thereby closed their minds to the evidence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit impresses truth upon the mind and heart (*John 14:17, 16:13*) and convicts of sin (*John 16:8*). But although God is long-suffering and merciful and not willing that any should perish (*2 Pet. 3:9*), His Spirit will not labor with the obdurate heart indefinitely (*Gen. 6:3*). If truth is persistently resisted and refused, the Spirit’s promptings cease to be heard, and the soul is left in terrible darkness.

This is possibly the condition to which Paul referred when he described certain consciences as being “seared with a hot iron” (*1 Tim. 4:2*). For a person guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, probation has closed, and there is for him or her “no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment” (*Heb. 10:26, 27*).

From what you’ve read so far this week, what’s your understanding of the sin against the Holy Spirit?

The Unpardonable Sin

Sin is fatal to our existence, but God delights to forgive us our sins. We need not perish, although “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (*Rom. 3:23*). Jesus died to earn the right to forgive repentant sinners.

But there is one sin that is unpardonable and inevitably results in eternal death. When someone refuses to respond to the goodness of God, which is designed to lead unto repentance (*Rom. 2:4*), this continued refusal to accept God’s overtures of grace will finally result in the commission of the unpardonable sin.

Read again Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:29, in their respective contexts. How does this context reveal what’s being expressed in the above paragraph?

The unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Spirit, is persistent rejection of light, the persistent rejection of what Christ has done for us. This rejection inevitably blinds the spiritual eyes and hardens the rejecter’s heart to the wooings of the Spirit, as the example of those leaders in Israel. Finally, there is utter darkness in the soul, and the person is eternally lost because he or she has ruined his or her soul’s perceptivity to the promptings of the Spirit.

Placing one’s self beyond the power of the Holy Spirit is “unpardonable” because we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God. God can’t do anything for us unless He forces us, which He won’t do. We have, through our own choices, cut ourselves off from salvation.

Read again Matthew 12:32 and Mark 3:29; notice how Jesus ties the unpardonable sin with the idea of speaking. Why, considering the above definition, would He do that?

In biblical thought, words are deemed as actions. Words are part of the reality they depict. God spoke, and the world came into existence (*Genesis 1*); Jesus Himself was the “Word . . . made flesh” (*John 1:14*). In the Hebrew, the most common term for “word” (*dabar*) also means “thing,” “history,” “prophecy,” and that’s because words are linked to the reality they refer to. Thus, it seems that Jesus equates speaking against the Holy Spirit as a persistent rejection of the truth the Spirit seeks to bring us. Actions and words are inseparably linked.

Think about the last time someone hurt you with words. That should show you that, indeed, words are “real” things. Make a covenant with God right now to guard carefully your tongue.

Convictions of the Spirit

“When he [the Spirit] comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me” (John 16:8, 9, RSV).

In order to qualify as a candidate for salvation, a person must recognize that he or she is a sinner. No person asks for help of the Savior unless sensing a need. One of our greatest needs is a personal conviction of sin. We cannot bring this conviction about ourselves; it is the Spirit's prerogative and work to convict us of sin. His very first work is to make the sinner aware of his or her sinfulness and, hence, his or her lost condition. The Spirit is not merely the Comforter. He is also—and first—the Convictor of sin. He becomes the Comforter to those who have made peace with God by admitting and confessing their sins.

What dramatic illustration demonstrates the Spirit's power to convince of sin? *Luke 19:8, 9.*

How did Jesus illustrate the availability of salvation for a contrite sinner, while at the same time pointing out the hopelessness of a person who thinks he or she is righteous? *Luke 18:10-14.*

“We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save.” —Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 158.

When a person receives a vision of the righteousness and holiness of God, as did the prophet Isaiah (*Isa. 6:5, 6*), the Holy Spirit will convince that person that he or she is sinful and nothing but judgment and utter destruction will await him or her unless Jesus intervenes. Thus, it's the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that's so important in leading us to Christ. Imagine, then, the hopeless state of people who have, through their own hardness, made themselves immune to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In what ways can guilt be good, a tool used by God? At the same time, at what point does guilt become bad, a tool used by the devil? How can we know the difference?

Repentance and the Unpardonable Sin

At times, there have been church members who have lived in fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. In a sense, it's not hard to understand why. We are sinners; if not moment by moment under the control of the Holy Spirit, we are capable of just about anything. And for a person who has known the Lord, who has gotten a glimpse of God's holiness, his or her own sense of sin can appear horribly damning and condemning. The guilt can be overwhelming. Most Christians, at some point in their walk with the Lord, have had moments of fear, moments of believing their case is hopeless, that they cannot make it, that they, in fact, may have committed the unpardonable sin.

If, however, the “unpardonable sin” is constant rejection of the Holy Spirit, why is someone who fears he or she has committed that sin, someone who clearly has not committed it? See also Ps. 51:1-4, Luke 5:8, 18:13.

The commission of crime or sin is no permanent obstacle to salvation. Jesus can save anyone who is willing to accept salvation. He is not primarily concerned with anyone's dismal past. Any sin and shortcoming may be blotted out through His shed blood. There is one condition for this forgiveness, and that is repentance, and that comes only from the work of the Holy Spirit. As long as we repent, there is forgiveness.

Of course, we must remember that sin cannot be trifled with. Each sin hardens us; every time we fall, we do so only because we have pushed away conviction. The more we do that, the easier it is to do it again and again and again. And though we can always repent and find forgiveness, the more we sin, the more we harden our hearts to the very Person who leads us to repentance, the Holy Spirit.

Thus, how crucial that we, each day, claim the power of God to cleanse us, to regenerate us, to remake us in the image of the Savior. (See 1 Cor. 10:13, Gal. 5:16, Titus 3:5.)

Have you ever felt your case was hopeless, that you were going to be lost even after you had made a decision to follow Christ? What brought those feelings? What caused them finally to leave? What did you learn from that experience that you could use to help someone who feels his or her case is hopeless?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 621, 622; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 321–324, 565–568; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 75, 76; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “Two Worshipers,” pp. 150–152.

“He who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.

“Every impure thought defiles the soul, impairs the moral sense, and tends to obliterate the impressions of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

“But if a man, by repeated refusals of God’s guidance, has lost the ability to recognize goodness when he sees it, if he has got his moral values inverted until evil to him is good and good to him is evil, then, even when he is confronted by Jesus, he is conscious of no sin he cannot repent and therefore he can never be forgiven. That is the sin against the Holy Spirit.”—William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 81.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, imagine if you had to deal with someone who was convinced he or she had committed the unpardonable sin. What have you learned from this week’s study you could use to help that person find hope and forgiveness?
- 2 As a class, go through the Bible and see what examples you can find of those who, apparently, had committed the unpardonable sin. Make a list of these people and discuss their specific cases.
- 3 Read over the above quote from Barclay. What’s the process he is describing? Why is this a danger for everyone, even professed Christians?
- 4 As a class, pray together that each one will be more surrendered to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

The Shining Church, Part 2

Mar Dela Fuente

When Datu (chief) Lagunday invited the student missionary teachers from Mountain View College to start a school in his village, he predicted that one day the village would be a shining light in the mountains of southern Philippines. The school closed briefly when Datu Lagunday died, but soon reopened. The villagers learned God's plan of salvation and accepted Jesus as their Savior. They built a simple church on the hill above the village.

Rainy season turned the dirt path that led to the church into a slippery mass, making it difficult to reach the church. Villagers decided to meet in the church on Sabbath and in the village hall during the week. Some wanted to move the church to the center of the village for easier access.

One evening when a woman returned from midweek service, her husband asked, "Where did you hold your prayer meeting?"

"In the assembly hall," she replied.

"Yes, I thought so. That's where the sound of singing came from. But the church was lit up, as it is when you worship there."

The wife looked in the direction of the church, but it was dark.

"It is dark now," he said, "but when you were worshipping, bright light shone from the church."

The next day a man who lives on a hill opposite the church visited the village. "You had such beautiful music last night during your worship," he said. "And the light from your church shone very brightly!"

On Friday evening the church members gathered for vespers in the village assembly hall. The man's wife, remembering what her husband had said, looked outside toward the hill where the church stood. She saw it was brilliantly lit.

"Look!" she cried, interrupting the song service. "The church is shining!" The worshipers gathered to look at their church on the hill. They stood in awe, some with tears in their eyes, as they realized that their faithful chief's prediction had come true. The church had become a shining light in the mountains. "A host of angels must have come to worship with us," whispered one worshiper.

Your mission offerings support Mountain View College and its student missionary program which has introduced thousands to Christ in southern Philippines.

When this was written Mar Dela Fuente was a student missionary teacher at the Adventist mission school in Migtulod Village in southern Philippines.

The Holy Spirit *in the* Last Days



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Joel 2:28, 29; John 1:9; Acts 2:14-24; Acts 3:19, 20; James 5:7; Rev. 14:6-16; 18:1-5.*

Memory Text: “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (*Isaiah 30:21*).

It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and he will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light.”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Mar. 2, 1897.

What a message is in those words as we end this quarter's study, focusing now on the Holy Spirit in the last days. We'll look at what the Holy Spirit will do in order to prepare a people to spread this gospel and to stand in the final crisis.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 24.*

The Spirit in the Last Days

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (*Joel 2:28, 29*).

Study the above verses, along with Acts 2:14-24. What message do you see here that’s applicable to us? In what ways, if any, have we, today, seen this prophecy fulfilled?

The words of Joel here are some of the most exciting in all Scripture. They point to a time when the Holy Spirit in a mighty way will be poured out just as it was at Pentecost. This outpouring, however, doesn’t happen in a vacuum; it’s all part of a single purpose: to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This point becomes especially clear in Peter’s Pentecost speech, in which, after quoting those verses from Joel, he begins preaching about Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:22-24*).

Joel 2:28 says, too, that He will pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh.” This doesn’t mean all flesh will respond with the surrender and humility needed to receive the blessing of the Spirit. Through the action of the Holy Spirit the Lord is able to touch every soul with conviction. The Bible says: “The true light [Jesus] that enlightens every man was coming into the world” (*John 1:9, RSV*); unfortunately, though, not “every man” responds as God would like.

The good news is that all who do respond, all who will make that surrender, have the promise of eternal life in Christ.

What evidence do you see of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon those who aren’t Christians? What can we do, as Christians, to cooperate with the Spirit in order to help these people see Jesus in a fuller light?

Pentecost and the Last Days

As we saw yesterday, Joel speaks of an abundant outpouring of God's Spirit upon His people, of young men seeing visions, old men dreaming dreams, and sons and daughters prophesying (*Joel 2:28, 29*). He even sets the time frame for this experience. There will be cosmic phenomena with the sun being darkened and the moon turned into blood. Disasters on earth are described cryptically as "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke" (*vs. 30*). All this is to precede immediately "the great and the terrible day of the Lord" (*vs. 31*).

Peter, along with other early Christian believers, viewed Christ's first coming as the last days (*1 Cor. 10:11, Heb. 1:2, 9:26, 1 Pet. 1:20*) and applied Joel's prophecy to the Pentecost experience (*Acts 2:16-21*), linking the gift of prophecy to the gift of tongues.

Read Joel 2:23, which precedes his words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What imagery does he use?

Joel's prophecy of the coming prophetic gift is set in the context of the early and latter rains (*Joel 2:23-32*). The refreshing, life-giving fall rains, which enabled the seed to sprout and take root, are called the early rain. The spring rain, which brought the grain to maturity and readiness for harvest, is called the latter rain. This phenomenon in the Palestinian agricultural cycle is a symbol of the spiritual refreshing God gives to His people through His Spirit (*Hos. 6:3*). Peter, fully believing he was living in the last days, experienced the early rain. The latter rain is yet to come upon God's people at the end of time.

What are we to understand by the meaning of the "latter rain"?

"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

What is your own experience with the "early rain"? Why is it so important to receive the early rain in order to be prepared to receive the "latter rain"? What does it mean "to receive" either rain? What changes do we need to make in our own lives now in order to be ready for the latter rain?

The Latter Rain

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (*James 5:7*).

In the context of what we’ve read so far, how do you understand the words of James above? How does this text show us our utter dependence upon a source outside of ourselves for spiritual power?

As we saw yesterday, Joel uttered his prophecy in the context of “rain.” The terms *rain*, *early rain*, and *latter rain* were borrowed by the Hebrew writers in the context of their agricultural seasons. The former, or early, rain fell in the seventh month, usually just after the Feast of Tabernacles. This corresponds to our autumn, or to September–October. For the Israelites, it was the season for the plowing of the fields and the sowing of barley and wheat. The latter rain fell shortly before the grain harvest in March and early April. This rain enabled the grain to fill out and ripen for harvest.

These terms are used by the Bible writers to symbolize great periods of spiritual refreshing in connection with the preaching of the gospel. The important point is that for the harvest to be reaped, there was the need of both rains.

Look up these few verses: How do they help us understand the significance of the rain imagery, especially in the context of our mission as a church? *Matt. 9:37, 13:30, Rev. 14:15*.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the spiritual “latter rain” is much like the natural one: It’s to prepare the harvest for reaping. What a powerful image regarding the work the Holy Spirit is to do among His people, for they are the ones God has used to preach the gospel message to the world. “While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work.”—Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 334.

The Refreshing

“Repent therefore, and turn again [be converted, KJV], that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus” (*Acts 3:19, 20, RSV*).

Look at this incredible statement by Peter. Notice how closely he links repentance and conversion with the “times of refreshing.” In other words, what happens here in our hearts is linked with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We must never forget the reality of this close tie between heaven and earth.

What three great last-day events is Peter referring to in the text above? What does he say that shows these are, indeed, last-day events?

Peter’s statement contains a most definite temporal element. Under inspiration, Peter is referring to great events of earth’s last days—the mighty outpouring of God’s Spirit and the final blotting out of the sins of the righteous—which are tied to a third climactic event, the second advent of Christ.

Read Revelation 14:6-16. Why do we know that these are events that immediately precede the Second Coming? How do we see in these verses evidences of a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

All through these texts we see evidence of the Holy Spirit working through His people, not only to prepare them to preach the “everlasting gospel” (*vs. 6*) to the world, not only to warn others against worshipping “the beast” (*vs. 9*), but also to prepare them to stand as those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (*vs. 12*). If this isn’t the work of the Holy Spirit among us, nothing is.

As you look at the church today, why is it so evident that we will need a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order for it to do its work? Why is it so evident that you need it, as well?

The Loud Cry

Though we saw at Pentecost a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we believe that in the last days we will see something even more powerful. The whole world needs to know the truth about the Lord Jesus in the context of the three angels of Revelation 14, as opposed to the false doctrines of Babylon that lead to the mark of the beast. And, quite simply, who else, at this point, but Seventh-day Adventists are preaching this distinctive message? And yet, what Adventist, looking at the task ahead, believes we can do it without a supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Thus, we believe that in the very end the Holy Spirit will bring His gifts to the church in a remarkable way. He will have to; otherwise, final events, as portrayed in prophecy, will never happen.

Read Revelation 18:1-5. What evidence do we find in these verses that shows what the results of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church will be?

This “loud cry” extends everywhere, as the Lord uses His church to call out all His people from Babylon, the false religious and political systems of the world united in some final last-day persecuting power. This cry contains the ultimate plea to escape the last plagues (*Revelation 15*) and find shelter under the arms of Jesus, the Savior. In this, the final battle between the followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast, Christ will be exalted through the renewed Pentecostal power that’s to be poured out on the earth (*Rev. 18:1*) through the Holy Spirit. At this time, we will see the harvest reaped through the latter rain.

Thus, in the very last days, the consummation of the Cross and the work of the Cross will reach fruition. All the dead in Christ will rise (*1 Thess. 4:16*), and together with those who are alive, we all will be taken off this sinful planet, once and for all (*vs. 17*). Thus, at the end, we’ll see the climactic manifestation of the Holy Spirit as He works on the hearts, not only of those who are called to proclaim this message but on those who receive it and who stand with us—not only in the last days against the forces of Babylon—but on the sea of glass in heaven, as well (*Rev. 15:1-5*).

What a gift we’ve been given in the Holy Spirit!

Write out a prayer thanking the Lord for the Holy Spirit and asking for the preparation in your own heart that will be needed in order for you to stay faithful, not only during the final crisis but even now.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Education*, pp. 35–38; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 238–243; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 578, 593–595; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 21–23; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 64–68, 506–509.

“We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

“The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, talk about world affairs and trends as they relate to our understanding of last-day events. Though we mustn’t be sensational, what evidence do we see that points to the final crisis? As a class, what things can you do to help your local church understand the times we are living in and the need to prepare to receive the latter rain?
- 2 As a class, think about the work of the Holy Spirit and ask this question: Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of all the work He does for the church, what’s the one thing you believe your local church needs the most? Discuss.
- 3 What did you learn from this quarter’s study that has impacted your life the most? What have you learned that impresses upon you the need for personal change? If the study didn’t touch on some things you wished were touched on, why not pursue studies in that area on your own?

From Pit to Pastorate

Charlotte Ishkanian

Jacob Gore was a Protestant pastor in southern Sudan when he was arrested for teaching children Christian songs in an area where Christianity is forbidden. He was tossed into a deep pit with 71 other condemned men. Food and water were dropped to them, and the only ones allowed out of the pit were never seen or heard from again.

Gore shared his faith in Jesus with his fellow prisoners, who eagerly clung to it as their only hope.

After four months Gore was released from the pit and warned never to preach in that area again. He escaped to an area where he could preach freely, and was assigned to pastor seven churches in a new area. When he arrived he found Adventist lay workers holding Bible seminars. He wanted to attend, but he did not dare. However, he encouraged some of his church members to go and report what they were hearing.

Gore noticed some strong differences between what he believed and what the Adventists taught. He went to visit one of the lay pastors to discuss the Bible. Gore asked many questions, and accepted the lay worker's offer of Bible studies. Eagerly he dug deeper into the Bible.

Gore took his time to sort out what he believed, praying that God would help him know what was the truth. He realized that he had to follow his conscience. He called his congregations together for a meeting.

"My children," he said, "I have discovered that our church does not teach everything the Bible teaches. We have always worshiped on Sunday, but the Bible clearly states that God's true Sabbath has never changed. I have baptized people by sprinkling them with water, but the Bible says we should baptize by immersion."

The church members sat stunned as he explained other differences in beliefs. Then he asked the members to pray and decide what they would do. He returned to his home. Gore hoped that some of the members would follow him, but the next day the leaders came to his house and took everything. "You bought this with money we paid you," they said as they carried away his furniture and clothes, even his food. In the end only four of his former members asked to study the Bible with him. All four eventually were baptized.

Gore's wife, in spite of threats by church members, decided to follow her husband into the Adventist Church.

Gore found himself without a job. After his baptism, the Adventist Church assigned him to work with a senior pastor and continue studying the Bible with him. Then he spent a year holding evangelistic meetings in which 177 were baptized. Today he is a Gospel Outreach volunteer raising up a church in Morobo, southern Sudan. Already he has gathered a small congregation of believers, including another Protestant pastor.

"The people of southern Sudan have been forced to move from place to place over the past 30 or more years. They have heard of Adventists, and they want to know what Adventists believe. These people need a strong faith to hold on to. I am happy that I have found the truth, so I can give them the truth."

Jacob Gore is a gospel evangelist serving in Morobo, southern Sudan. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

This quarter's study will be *The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment*, by Clifford Goldstein. As the title suggests, we're going to look at the judgment in the context of the gospel. It is our hope that you will come away with a greater understanding of Jesus, of the Cross, and of His ministry in heaven for us.

Lesson 1—"Principalities and Powers"

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: "When the Morning Stars Sang" (*Job 1:6; 38:7, 8; Dan. 9:21; Acts 12:7; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 13:2*)

MONDAY: The Devil's Wrath (*Rev. 12:7-9; see also vss. 10-13*)

TUESDAY: "The Accuser of Our Brethren" (*Rev. 12:10*)

WEDNESDAY: "The Lord Rebuke Thee, O Satan" (*Isa. 61:10; Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 3:18*)

THURSDAY: The "Justification" of God (*Rom. 3:25, 26, NIV*)

Memory Text—*1 Corinthians 4:9, NIV*

Sabbath Gem: This week we'll go where the greatest telescopes can't: into the heart of the great moral issues facing not only humanity but all of God's creation.

Lesson 2—Judgment Must Begin

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: Hour of His Judgment (*Read Rom. 2:16 and Rev. 14:6-8*)

MONDAY: Life or Damnation? (*Matt. 25:31-33*)

TUESDAY: House of God (*See Isa. 53:4-6, Matt. 20:28, Rom. 5:8, 2 Cor. 4:14, Eph. 5:2, 1 Thess. 5:10*)

WEDNESDAY: "Every Secret Thing" (*Eccles. 12:14*)

THURSDAY: Reward Is With Him (*Matt. 22:1-13*)

Memory Text—*Romans 2:16*.

Sabbath Gem: This week we will look at what the Bible says about the following questions: How are judgment and the gospel linked? What are the final results of judgment? Are Christians judged? What role do works play in judgment? When is the judgment?

Lessons for the Visually Impaired The regular *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free each month in braille and on audiocassette to sight-impaired and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who, because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact Christian Record Services, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097.