

DAYBREAK

SERIES

Love Challenged and Vindicated



111 Sabbath School Lessons

January, February, March, 1976

Trans-Africa Division

P.O. BOX H.G. 100. HIGHLANDS SALISBURY RHODESIA. AFRICA

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R H 4 1 2 7M. L. MILLS, PRESIDENT
R. E. CLIFFORD, SECRETARY
R. H. RODERICK, TREASURER
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Dear Fellow Sabbath School Members,

Inyazura Secondary School. For many years our Inyazura Secondary School in the Zambesi Union has trained scores of African youth to become not only faithful Seventh-day Adventists, but also prepared them to enter Solusi College to be trained as denominational workers. With an enrolment of over 430 students the present facilities are splitting at the seams. More and more girls are seeking to enrol, and the limited dormitory space must be expanded.

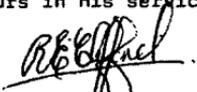
The importance of training the hand as well as the head is receiving renewed emphasis, and a new domestic science building for the girls and expanded provision for teaching industrial arts to the boys is a necessity for this phase of the teaching program to play its vital role. Last but not least, the facilities for the teaching of sciences require upgrading, if this school is to maintain the standard of education expected of it.

Church Buildings, African Homelands. In the interesting territory of the Southern Union we find that in the African homelands, now in the process of development, over fifty-five new towns and cities are being constructed. Over one hundred towns and cities remain to be built! In the nine homelands embracing all these towns and cities, a capital city is to be built for each one of these African states-in-the-making.

Now is the golden day of opportunity, while building lots are available to drive down our stakes, and erect a church and African pastor's home as a center to shepherd the flock and for evangelism in each of these nine capital cities, on strategic and advantageous sites. We must thus arise and "possess the land", provided funds are in hand to meet the usual build-within-two-years restriction clause that is invariably included in the title to the land.

We thank you in anticipation in the name of our Lord and Saviour for your contribution toward the solution of our need.

Yours in His service,


R. E. Clifford
SECRETARY



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Editorial Office: 6840 Eastern Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20012

Lesson Author: Frank Holbrook

Editor: W. Richard Leshner

Editorial Secretary: Florence Wetmore

Circulation Manager: A. R. Mazat

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SABBATH SCHOOL MEMO

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

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

(Signed) _____

DAYBREAK SERIES FOR 1976

This issue of the Adult Lessons begins the second year of the Daybreak Series. This series is a development of the primary principles which emerge from the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. Note that the series is not intended to be a study of Revelation 14 directly.

It may be helpful in studying the lessons to have some idea of how they fit into the series. Thus an explanation is given in the following paragraphs of how each quarter's lessons during 1976 relate to the curriculum plan.

The second angel's message announces Babylon's fall which results from making all nations drink of her wine. This wine represents the teachings of Babylon that are in opposition to the everlasting gospel given by the first angel. The third message warns against worship of the beast or his image. This worship is in opposition to the worship of the Creator called for by the first angel. Thus the second and third messages present opposition to the gospel and the worship of the Creator. The three messages are given in the time of judgment and do not reach their complete fulfillment until the coming of Jesus.

But the opposition of Babylon and the beast to God's message and worship did not begin with the sounding of the three messages. Babylon and the beast reach back into history and are subjects of prophecy. Thus a study of the principles that underlie the actions of Babylon and the beast, as these are revealed in the Bible, can aid us in understanding better the nature of the last day conflict summarized in the second and third angels' messages. To accomplish this purpose we will, during this quarter, identify the principles of rebellion and trace these principles from the rebellion in heaven to the empires of earth; and we will study the prophecies of apostasy within the church.

Next quarter we will return to the area of the curriculum plan relating to the revelation of the everlasting gospel by the first angel and study the ways God reveals Himself to man.

The third quarter will bring us to the area of the curriculum plan emerging from the call of the first angel to fear God. To fear God is to fear to sin. This area includes God's hatred of sin and the separation from God that has resulted from disobedience. This will be approached through a study of the book of Hebrews, where Jesus is seen as the mediator between God and His estranged children.

In the fourth quarter the call to worship God will be made more meaningful by a study of worship in all the Bible.

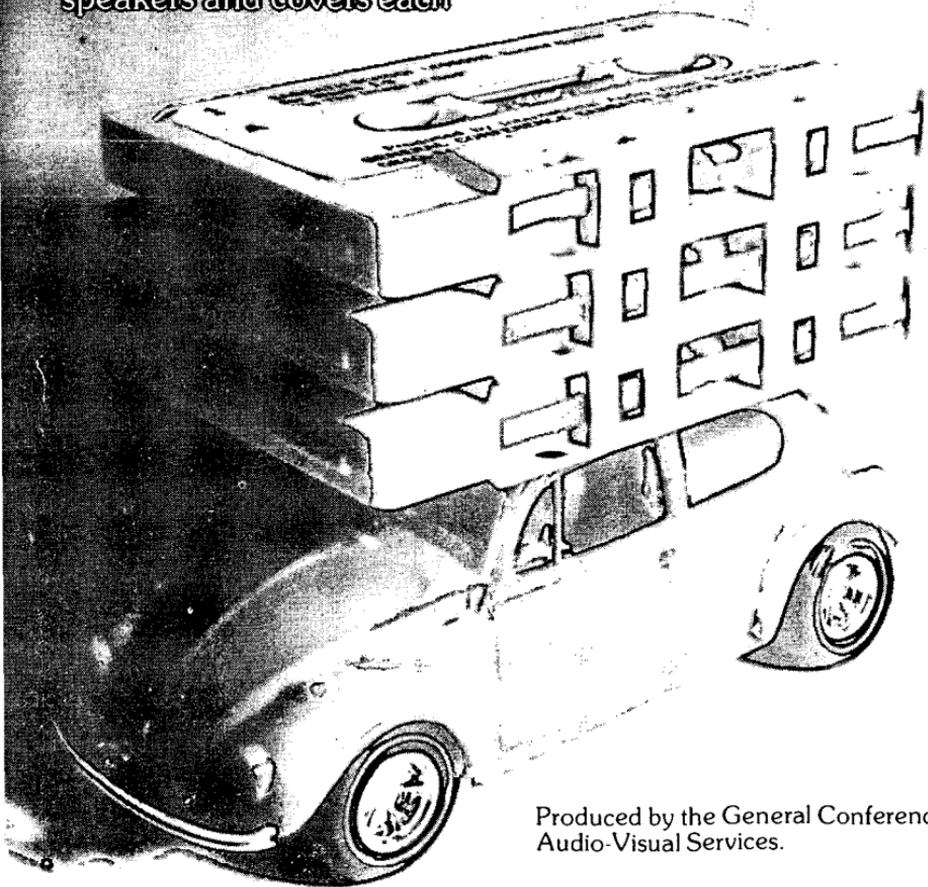
If you find this explanation helpful, you may wish to preserve it during 1976, as this overview will not be repeated this year.

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Review your lesson while you drive to the office, do the ironing or walk on the beach. When you can't study from the Quarterly, use the new Sabbath School lessons on cassette.

The three-cassette tape series is narrated by well-known denominational speakers and covers each

quarter's lessons. Order your Sabbath School Lesson Cassettes, well in advance of each quarter, from your Adventist Book Center. The three-cassette series is available for \$6.90, including postage within the United States. Add state tax if applicable.



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LOVE CHALLENGED AND VINDICATED

Introduction

One does not live very long before one senses that something is wrong, very wrong with the world. The dead mockingbird on the sidewalk, the pet dog flung to the side of the road by a speeding automobile, the thorn on the stem supporting a beautiful flower—these are matters that raise questions in the young opening mind. The shadows and the highlights grow more distinct and sharp as one matures. The human predicament seems mysterious. There seems to be an eternal conflict between happiness and sorrow, between good and evil. Indeed, to many, life seems absurd and senseless.

But in the Bible the veil is drawn aside, and meaning and purpose are given to human experience. The Scriptures begin with a revelation of God, the Creator of all that is good. Man is not the result of mere chance. Rather, he was created in the image of God by One who had beneficent plans and purposes for His creation.

The Scriptures disclose the fact that the marring of the universe has come about by the insurrection of one of the highest intelligent beings close to the throne of God.

What we witness in the earth, behind all the interaction of mankind, is a moral conflict between God and the principles of righteousness on the one hand, and Satan and the principles of unrighteousness on the other. God's will, expressed in His law, is based on a two-fold principle of love (supreme love to God, and impartial love to one's fellow beings). Satan's will, the fallen creature's will, is based on the principle of selfishness. Self is god; others are exploited for the benefit of selfish interests.

These two principles—love and selfishness—have been in conflict since the original rebellion and the later fall of Adam and Eve.

In our lessons this quarter we shall focus on the moral controversy which lies beneath the apparent surface of human existence. We shall begin with a study of God our Creator, for He is the moral Governor of our universe, and all creation is subject to His laws, both physical and moral.

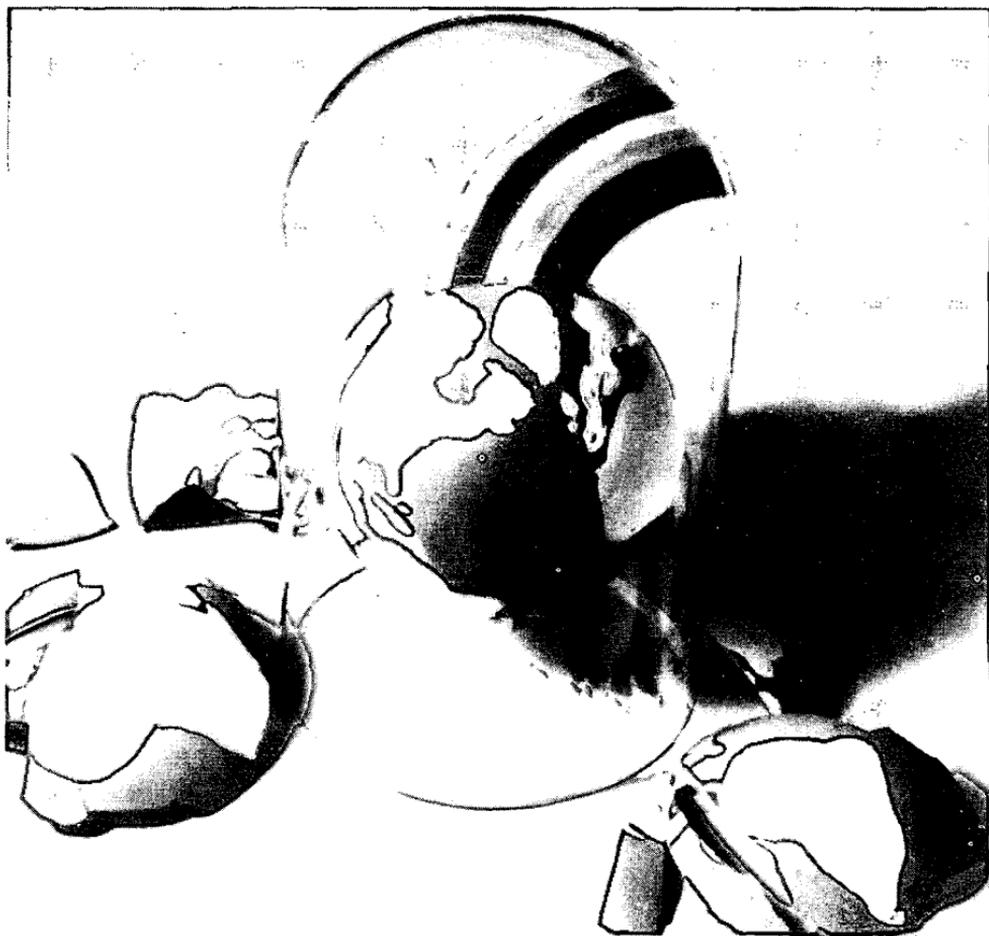
We shall then briefly survey the origin of evil and analyze the issues raised by Lucifer. In subsequent lessons we shall follow the controversy by means of Bible prophecies, especially those of Daniel. Through the prophecies God encourages His people with regard to the outcome of the conflict.

We shall see the outworking of the divine and satanic principles in the lives of individuals and kingdoms. We shall see how Satan has carried on the same controversy through the organized ecclesiastical apostasy foretold by the prophets. We shall note that the conflict is also being fought within the ranks of Christian groups where genuine truth is taught. Every human mind is affected by this conflict. We shall see how the plan of salvation is the answer to the problem of sin and is capable of bringing every penitent sinner into full harmony with the Creator.

Finally, we shall study how God will resolve the issues in this great moral controversy in heaven and earth and will bring an end to the conflict with the full approval of intelligent beings—both those who were loyal to Him and those who rebelled. God will be vindicated; Satan, and all who adhere to his principles, will be condemned and destroyed. "The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 753.

The God Who Is There

Under God's control beauty and purpose are brought into our world; but when God is rejected, life becomes empty and shattered.



“The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne” (Ps. 97:1, 2).

To many thinking persons our times have lost all sense of meaning. Life seems absurd, having no coherence or purpose. The ultimate questions—Where did I come from? Why am I here? What happens when I die?—may not be formally debated in the mind, but the answers are nevertheless being sought out, often in bizarre ways.

Hundreds have dropped out of society to follow simpler and impulsive forms of living. Thousands pursue the philosophy of hedonism, seeking to find meaning in the world’s pleasures, in abandonment to sexual indulgence and reckless living. Still others turn to alcohol or hallucinating drugs to lift them from the dullness of their lives.

Although we live in a scientific age, millions are searching for life’s meaning in the irrational and in the superstitious trappings of paganism. All the facets of the occult are being exploited today; astrology, witchcraft, and spiritism are upsurging. In the religious world thousands are involving themselves in the charismatic movement for an experience in tongues and miracles. The shadow of nuclear disaster never fades; social and political troubles never cease. Security—there seems to be none; frustration and broken hopes are in abundance.

Why this bleak condition in human life? Only the Bible gives the answer. It is no secret. Human happiness depends upon a right relationship with God. Central to the creature’s happiness is his acknowledgment and allegiance to his Creator. Our generation has forgotten

God. Pagan areas are unaware of Him. The people of many so-called Christian lands now deny His existence, and in professedly Christian lands He is simply bypassed and forgotten.

Here is the real cause for life’s lost quality of coherence. When God is acknowledged, there is recognition of and obedience to His sovereignty. The Scriptures present a clear picture of the human predicament and what human life is all about and what purpose God has for His children. When God is central, there is a hope for tomorrow, for the Christian sees what will be the culmination of the divine plan of salvation. Faith in God gives meaning and purpose to life.

“From the beginning it has been Satan’s studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself.”—**Testimonies**, vol. 5, p. 738. Lest we as Christians forget, it is the purpose of this lesson to reexamine the great facts about the Deity as we begin to trace the moral controversy between God and Satan which has affected all human existence.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Eye of Faith (Heb. 11:6)**
2. **Three in One (Mark 12:29; Matt. 28:19)**
3. **His Greatness (Ps. 90:2)**
4. **A God of Love (1 John 4:16)**
5. **A Holy God (Isa. 6:1-3)**
6. **Source of Life and Being (Acts 17:24, 25)**

**Part 1
THE EYE
OF FAITH**

With what basic premise does the Christian view of life begin?

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

The belief in the existence of a personal God who is sovereign in the universe is central to Christian faith. Only God can give meaning and direction to human existence. In a knowledge of God the Christian finds the true nature of his origins and the plan and purpose of life.

What testimony does the natural world give to the existence of God? Acts 14:15-17; Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1.

"Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power."—*Education*, p. 99.

Who has made the fullest disclosure of the character and existence of God? John 1:18; 14:8, 9.

"God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 419.

Nature is blighted by sin; only a few of the human race observed the Saviour. What, then, provides the Christian his only trustworthy source for learning about God and the divine purpose? Heb. 1:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

"God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant."—*Education*, p. 169.

THINK IT THROUGH

What meaning would life hold for me if there were no God?

"The real evidence of a living God is not merely in theory; it is in the conviction that God has written in our hearts, illuminated and explained by His word. It is in the living power in His created works, seen by the eye which the Holy Spirit has enlightened."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 325.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 409-414.

Part 2 · **What two truths about the Deity did Jesus teach?**

THREE IN ONE

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29).

"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).

The paradox of a triune monotheism (Trinity) is not explained in the Scriptures. It is, however, a truth that is vital to the understanding of the plan of salvation.

"The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God; but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. . . . Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion. . . .

"We are as ignorant of God as little children, but as little children we may love and obey Him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 279.

How is God the Father described? How are we to address Him? 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Matt. 6:9.

"All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 286.

Upon occasion what claims and acknowledgments did Jesus make and accept? John 8:58; 10:30; 20:28.

"Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906.

What other divine Person belongs to the Godhead? Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.

"The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. . . . Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

THINK IT THROUGH

What application to daily living are Christians to make from the Bible's teaching about the triune God? John 17:21, 22. In what areas of life ought I to make this application?

"There are three living powers 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."—*Evangelism*, p. 615.

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 613-617.

Part 3
HIS GREATNESS

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2).

The Scriptures reveal five characteristics of the divine nature.

What aspects of the nature of Deity are indicated in each of the following passages?

1. Ps. 90:2 (see text above).
2. Rev. 19:6.
3. Jer. 23:23, 24.
4. Isa. 46:9, 10.
5. Mal. 3:6.

"Let no one venture to explain God. Human beings cannot explain themselves, and how, then, dare they venture to explain the Omniscient One? . . .

"God always has been. He is the great I AM. . . . He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. . . . With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. . . . He is infinite and omnipresent. No words of ours can describe His greatness and majesty."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 92.

What significance do these aspects of our God have for us who love Him?

1. Eternity (everlasting) Ps. 36:9; cf. John 17:2.
2. Omnipotent (all-powerful) Isa. 40:26-31.
3. Omnipresence (everywhere present) Heb. 13:5, 6.
4. Omniscience (all-knowing) Ps. 139:1-6.
5. Immutability (unchanging) Isa. 40:8.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their froned palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

THINK IT THROUGH

Think of ways in which these divine attributes enable the Godhead to carry out the plan of salvation.

"He that ruleth in the heavens is the one who sees the end from the beginning—the one before whom the mysteries of the past and the future are alike outspread, and who, beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, beholds the accomplishment of His own purposes of love and blessing. Though 'clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne.' Psalm 97:2, R.V. And this the inhabitants of the universe, both loyal and disloyal, will one day understand."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 43.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 703, 704.

Part 4
A GOD OF LOVE

What does the apostle declare the fundamental aspect of God's character to be?

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).

The English word, "love," is not so meaningful to us because of its wide range of use. The Greek language employs four main words to describe "love." The New Testament uses only two. The word in our text is *agapē*, the most common New Testament word for love.

The *agapē* kind of love is not a superficial emotion, but a principal attitude of the mind. It is outgoing, and *always seeks the highest good of the person loved, whether that person be good or evil.* See Matt. 5:44-48.

In what forms is the divine attribute of love revealed before the universe? Ex. 33:19. See also 34:5-7.

Mercy, graciousness, long-suffering are different expressions of the quality of love. *Chesed*, the Hebrew equivalent of *agapē* (here translated "goodness") denotes steadfast love, selfless kindness, favor, mercy.

The divine attribute of love ever seeks the highest good of each intelligent being. That highest good may require discipline, but such action will not be vindictive. It will be in the best interests of the creature and the creation.

"God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

In what act did the Godhead disclose the depths and the quality of divine love? 1 John 4:10.

"All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 740.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it important to Christian experience (in daily life or crisis) to have a correct understanding of God's character?

"In order to endure the trial before them, they [commandment keepers] must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 415, 416.

Part 5
A HOLY GOD

"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne. . . . Above it stood the seraphims. . . . And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:1-3).

"Holiness is the foundation of God's throne; sin is the opposite of holiness; sin crucified the Son of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 145. "The crowning glory of Christ's attributes is His holiness. . . . He is declared to be glorious in His holiness. Study the character of God."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 402.

The term "holiness" by which God is described refers to His moral excellence. He is free from moral evil. His character is absolute perfection, infinite purity. Because God is holy, His word is truth. His dealings with the universe are righteous. Because God is holy, He is the source and standard of the right. His will, as expressed in His law, is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Justice is God's holiness expressing His hatred of sin and His judgment upon it.

What effect did an understanding of God's holy character have on Isaiah? Isa. 6:1-8.

"The contrast between the feeble praise which he had been accustomed to bestow upon the Creator and the fervid praises of the seraphim, astonished and humiliated the prophet. He had for the time being the sublime privilege of appreciating the spotless purity of Jehovah's exalted character. . . .

"In the light of this matchless radiance that made manifest all he could bear in the revelation of the divine character, his own inward defilement stood out before him with startling clearness. His very words seemed vile to him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1140.

What standard has God set for His children? 1 Peter 1:15, 16.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would a disclosure of God such as Isaiah experienced affect me? Ponder the question asked in Isaiah 33:14. Read verses 15-17.

"That which our people must have interwoven with their life and character is the unfolding of the plan of redemption and more elevated conceptions of God and His holiness, brought into the life. The washing of the robes of character in the blood of the Lamb is a work that we must attend to earnestly while every defect of character is to be put away."—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 81.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 418-426.

Part 6
SOURCE OF LIFE
AND BEING

In addressing the pagans of Athens how did Paul explain the origin of the earth and of humanity?

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24, 25).

"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."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

What does every human being derive from God? Acts 17:28.

"From Him all life proceeds. Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same—a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin."—*Education*, pp. 99, 100.

What kind of response should every intelligent being make to his Creator? See Rev. 7:11; 14:7 (last part).

"The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

"The true ground of divine worship . . . is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten."—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27." (Quoted in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438.)

When an intelligent being acknowledges God as the Creator of all things and the Sustainer of life, he immediately recognizes that he owes to Him his full allegiance, love, and obedience. He is not his own, but is dependent upon the gracious care of his Maker. He recognizes that he is accountable to God for the use of all his powers and possessions.

THINK IT THROUGH

Some think man evolved from animal ancestry. The Bible depicts life as originating by the creative action of God. How does my personal conviction about the origin of human life affect my daily thought and conduct?

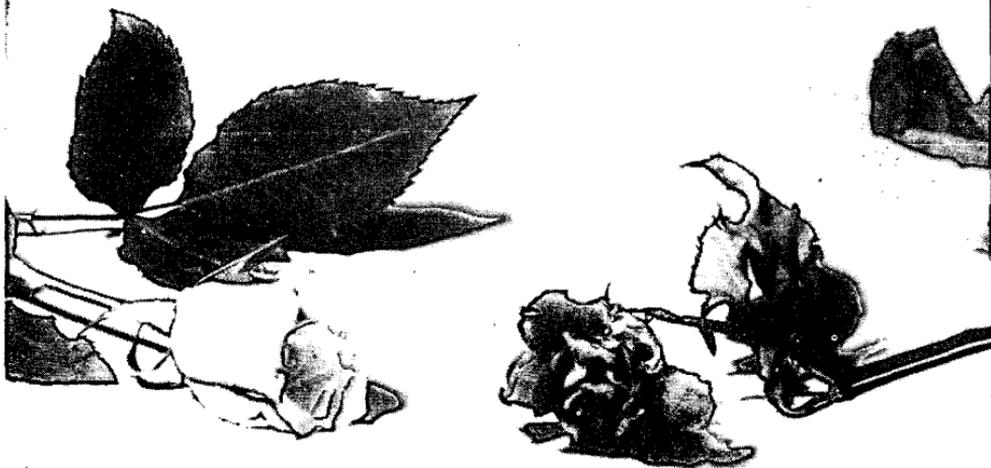
"By the first angel, men are called upon to 'fear God, and give glory to Him' and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: 'Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.' Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 414-417.

The Perfect Provision

**"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world"
(Matt. 13:35).**



“I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 13:35).

When Adam and Eve toppled the human family, so to speak, into the treacherous ocean currents of sin, God did not speculate on the possibility of rescue or question the cost. Before time began, the rescue operation had been carefully devised by a loving and concerned God. It was a divine secret, locked deep in the heart of the Deity.

One of the unique attributes of the Deity is omniscience. “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (Isa. 46:9, 10). Deity foresaw the origin of evil.

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. . . . God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.”—**The Desire of Ages**, p. 22.

Even though the risk was great

and fearful, God laid a plan to meet the terrible contingency of sin. Infinite Wisdom arranged its operations in such a manner that the issues raised by sin and rebellion would be fully met. Intelligent beings would be given ample opportunity to observe the development of the issues so that they might freely approve the divine course. Only thus could the happiness and welfare of all created beings be eternally secured. “Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence.”—**The Great Controversy**, p. 498.

Here and there in the Bible hints are given of the decisions which the Godhead made in eternity when the plan of salvation was formulated. These passages will constitute our study this week.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Provision for Salvation**
(1 Cor. 2:7)
2. **The Lamb Foreordained**
(1 Peter 1:18-20)
3. **Life Only in Christ** (Col. 1:26, 27)
4. **Destinies Determined** (Titus 1:2)
5. **The Plan in Operation**
(Eph. 3:10, 11)
6. **Divine Objectives** (Eph. 1:4, 10)

Part 1
PROVISION FOR
SALVATION

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7).

What is this "mystery" or "hidden wisdom" of which Paul speaks? See Eph. 6:19. When did the Godhead devise it?

"The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 934.

Sometime in eternity before the creation of this earth the Godhead laid the plan of salvation. It was a costly plan that was devised to meet the contingency of rebellion. The divine prescription to meet the moral disease of sin, which one day would convulse the universe, was locked in the heart of infinite love to be "kept secret for long ages." Rom. 16:25, RSV.

What did the Godhead purpose to give mankind if the race sinned? 2 Tim. 1:9, 10.

Grace is God's unlimited, all-inclusive, transforming *love* toward sinful men and women—His attitude of compassion and mercy toward us who are undeserving sinners. The term is also used in the sense of God's *power* to save a sinner from sin.

"We ourselves owe everything to God's free grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our exaltation to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 250.

THINK IT THROUGH

As a Christian why do I wish the gospel plan to be successful?

"Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God."—*Education*, p. 263.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels on Health, p. 222.

Part 2
THE LAMB
FOREORDAINED

According to Peter, what was the central provision of the plan of salvation as the Godhead devised it?

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation . . . ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-20).

"The throne of God must not bear one stain of crime, one taint of sin. In the councils of heaven, before the world was created, the Father and the Son covenanted together that if man proved disloyal to God, Christ, one with the Father, would take the place of the transgressor, and suffer the penalty of justice that must fall upon him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1070.

How does Peter indicate that Christ's death did not happen by mere chance or malice? Acts 2:23.

Neither Roman nor Jew was forced to crucify the Saviour, but, through the choices they made, both the nature of sin and the character of God were revealed.

What did the central provision of a substitute require of God the Son in order to accomplish the atoning death? Phil. 2:5-7. See also John 1:14 (first part).

In taking human nature Christ took Adam's place and thereby became the Head of the race.

"The reconciliation of man to God could be accomplished only through a mediator who was equal with God, possessed of attributes that would dignify, and declare him worthy to treat with the Infinite God in man's behalf, and also represent God to a fallen world. Man's substitute and surety must have man's nature, a connection with the human family whom he was to represent, and, as God's ambassador, he must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1891.

THINK IT THROUGH

"Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1082.

"Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133.

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, p. 315; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63-65.

Part 3
LIFE ONLY
IN CHRIST

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26, 27).

The experience described by the phrase "Christ in you" (see also Gal. 2:20) is accomplished by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Thus the human will is submissive to Christ's will, and the life reflective of His attributes. Christ, through His Spirit, lives on earth again in the person of His child.

Since the sinful human will is not submissive to God, and the sinner's character reflects instead the attributes of Satan, the passage in Colossians 1:26, 27 hints at the provision the Godhead made to break the power of sin in the life and to transform the character.

What is the divine provision to break the controlling power of sin in the life? John 14:16-18.

There are two aspects of sin in human existence that the plan was designed to meet. First, the *penalty* for sin would be met by our divine-human Substitute, Jesus Christ, by His atoning death. Second, the *power* of sin in the life would be broken by the indwelling Christ through the medium of the Holy Spirit.

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . 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."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

What traits will the Holy Spirit be able to develop in the person who is under His control? Gal. 5:22, 23.

"The Spirit that reveals, also works in him the fruits of righteousness. . . . What is the character of the fruit borne?— The fruit of the Spirit is 'love,' not hatred; 'joy,' not discontent and mourning; 'peace,' not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 287.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I tell whether or not I have experienced a new birth as a result of the Holy Spirit's operation?

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, pp. 284-289.

Part 4
DESTINIES
DETERMINED

What ultimate future did the Godhead agree to give those penitent sinners who would accept the plan?

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

"In Him [Christ] was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as his personal Saviour. . . . This is the open fountain of life for the world."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 296, 297.

What also did the Godhead agree to prepare for the redeemed? Matt. 25:34.

The text reads literally in the original, "Inherit the has-been-prepared-for-you kingdom from the foundation of the world." The Greek tense denotes a completed action. Yet the verse points back to a time in eternity when the plan was laid. God envisioned the restored earth before the original earth was created!

"Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. . . .

"There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees. . . . There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

What ultimate destiny did the Godhead also determine for Satan, his angels, and followers? Matt. 25:41.

The Greek tense of the verb "prepared" is the same as in verse 34 and relates back to the same time and councils.

THINK IT THROUGH

What insight into God's character have you gained in knowing that the ultimate destinies of righteousness and rebellion were determined in eternity?

"A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them [those who follow Satan] for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. . . .

"It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 543.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 541-543.

Part 5
THE PLAN IN
OPERATION

What did the Godhead intend for the intelligent universe to see as the plan became operative in the earth?

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11).

God foresaw the origin of evil and the outbreak of rebellion. He knew He would be challenged by intelligent beings created by Him. Divine motives, commands, and sovereignty would be questioned. The plan was, therefore, so devised by Infinite Wisdom that its operation would disclose to the universe the many facets of the divine character and purposes.

God intends that His church on earth should be a demonstration, in embryo as it were, of the final fulfillment of His eternal purposes for the universe. To fallen and unfallen intelligences alike the church is to show forth the wisdom of the perfect principles on which the divine government rests.

What heavenly beings does the apostle Peter describe as desiring to understand the plan of salvation? 1 Peter 1:10-12.

"The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

THINK IT THROUGH

What kind of witness to God's grace do I present to a watching universe in my daily life? in times of crisis?

"The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to cooperate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 18.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 503, 504.

**Part 6
DIVINE
OBJECTIVES**

What was the ultimate goal to be achieved by the plan of salvation?

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. . . .

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:4, 10).

The emergence of sin would bring disharmony into the peaceful universe of holy beings. Rebellion would cause division. To be successful the plan would have to heal a terrible rupture. To restore harmony it would have to meet four basic objectives:

1. To vindicate the character, law, and government of God all of which had been challenged.
2. To secure the loyalty of intelligent beings who had not joined the rebellion but who would be confused by it.
3. To effect the salvation of all repentant members of the rebelling human family.
4. To destroy Satan, the other fallen angels, and impenitent man; and to erase the effects of sin.

In the final executive phase of the judgment, what will both the loyal and disloyal confess? Rom. 14:10-12.

Notice these striking statements from *The Great Controversy*:

"The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God."—Page 668.

"All see that their exclusion from heaven is just."—Page 668.

"Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence."—Page 670.

"With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.'"—Page 671.

With what beautiful picture of coming harmony in a sinless universe does the Bible encourage us? Rev. 21:3, 4.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is my present religious experience a drudgery or a delight? What can I do to make it harmonious with His will?

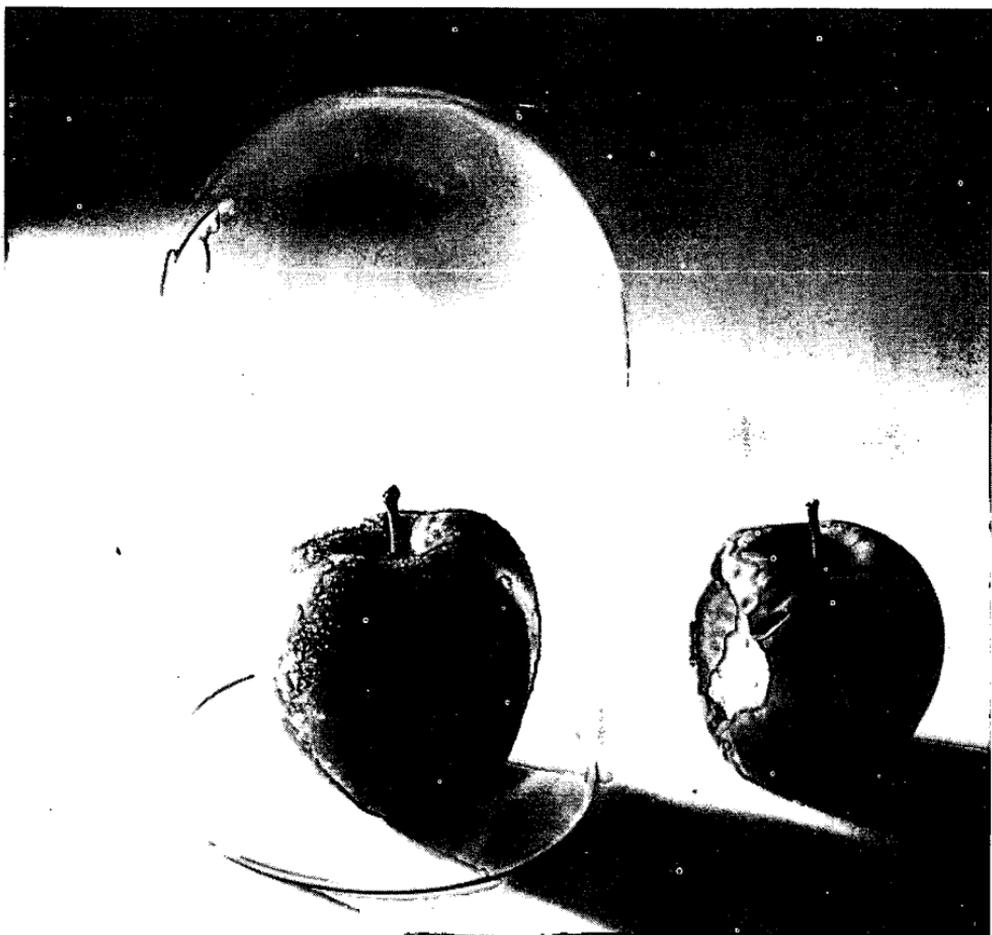
"This earth is the place of preparation for heaven. The time spent here is the Christian's winter. Here the chilly winds of affliction blow upon us, and the waves of trouble roll against us. But in the near future, when Christ comes, sorrow and sighing will be forever ended. Then will be the Christian's summer. All trials will be over, and there will be no more sickness or death."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 988.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 651, 675-678.

The Roots of Wrong

Obedience to God's authority was questioned; and, with the first sin, creation began to experience degeneration and death.



“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

In this passage the apostle John witnesses (in vision) a great ascription of praise to the Deity from all creation.

Our study this week notes that the creation of the universe and of intelligent beings was based on harmony in the divine government, and all creatures rendered loving allegiance to the Creator. But one arose to challenge the divine rule, to question the necessity of living under a governing authority.

That question is still with us today. The fact is, however, that there is no such thing as freedom from all control. Every individual is subject to some kind of authority—whether it be to the will of another person, his own passions, or some craving or habit. The drug or drink addict, for example, finds himself shackled to a cruel and relentless master.

Even inanimate nature is under authority. Music is subject to the laws of harmony. The great jet airliners are subject to the laws of aerodynamics. The simple kite is dependent upon the authority of the cord which holds it, if it is to soar successfully.

The wise person, in everyday living, willingly seeks out meaningful authority. If he is taken with a serious illness, he submits himself to the authority of the best physician he can find. In legal matters he retains a reputable attorney. In education he places himself under the authority of qualified teachers. The search is for the best authority possible.

The quest should be the same in spiritual matters. The question is not How may I escape being subject to authority? but rather Under what authority will life make sense? Will life be meaningful and fruitful?

When we consider the potential of the intelligent beings in the universe—angel, man, inhabitant of other worlds—we sense that the most useful governmental authority for these would be one which would foster the fullest development of the mental, physical, and spiritual powers. Only an authority which seeks the highest good of each being could accomplish these ends. Such was the divine rule of love under which the whole creation came into existence.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **A Perfect Universe (Rom. 1:20)**
2. **Perfect Created Beings (Ps. 148:2, 5)**
3. **Man in the Image of God (Heb. 2:6, 7)**
4. **A Perfect Relationship (Ps. 103:19; 89:14)**
5. **The First Rebel (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)**
6. **Open Revolt (Eze. 28:17; Isa. 14:13, 14)**

Part 1
A PERFECT
UNIVERSE

What witness to God does the natural creation make?

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

"His invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (RSV).

See also Ps. 19:1.

"Why did not our heavenly Father carpet the earth with brown or gray? He chose the color that was most restful, the most acceptable to the senses. . . . Without this covering the air would be filled with dust, and the earth would appear like a desert. Every spire of grass, every opening bud and blooming flower is a token of God's love, and should teach us a lesson of faith and trust in Him."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 75.

Although the Godhead cooperated in the creation of the universe, who was the active agent? Heb. 1:1, 2; John 1:1-3, 10, 14.

"The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us."—*Education*, p. 132.

How extensive is the natural creation? Col. 1:16; Isa. 40:26; 45:12.

For what purpose was the natural universe brought into existence? Rev. 4:11.

"It pleased God to bring the universe into existence and to give life to its creatures. . . . There was nothing desirable from His point of view in being alone in an empty universe. It pleased Him that the universe should be peopled with intelligent beings, capable of appreciating and reflecting His infinite love and perfect character. This was His purpose in creating them."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rev. 4:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

God never intended the natural creation to be worshiped. However, as a Christian how may it minister to my spiritual experience? See Matt. 6:26-30; Psalm 8.

"Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 100.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 44-47.

Part 2
PERFECT
CREATED BEINGS

How did the angels originate? By whose action?

"Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. . . .

"Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created" (Ps. 148:2, 5).

See also Col. 1:16.

With whom are the angels particularly associated? Rev. 5:11; Heb. 1:7; Ps. 103:20.

The term "angel" derives from the Greek word *aggelos* (pronounced ahng'e lōs) meaning "messenger." Angels are also designated "ministers," the Greek word meaning "one who serves in religious or spiritual things."

"Angels are God's ministers, radiant with the light ever flowing from His presence and speeding on rapid wing to execute His will."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

Toward whom has God particularly directed the ministry of angels? Heb. 1:14; Ps. 91:11; Matt. 18:10.

"The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 21.

What Biblical evidence is there that there are other created intelligent beings in the universe besides angels and mankind? Col. 1:16; Rev. 12:12; 1 Peter 3:22; Eph. 3:10, 11.

Peter distinguishes between "angels" and "authorities and powers" who became subject to Christ at His ascension. Since this was not true of fallen angels and earthly powers, it is probably to be understood as referring to the unfallen angels and worlds who then fully acknowledged His lordship.

How can I cooperate with the ministry of the angels in my behalf?

"Angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong . . . , your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 363, 364.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 512, 513; *Education*, p. 305.

Part 3
MAN IN THE
IMAGE OF GOD

What order of intelligent beings did the Godhead bring into existence at some time after the creation of angels?

"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands" (Heb. 2:6, 7).

"Before the creation of man, angels were in existence. . . . Angels are in nature superior to men, for the psalmist says that man was made 'a little lower than the angels.' Psalm 8:5."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 511.

"All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. . . . It was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1081.

How did the Godhead purpose to create mankind? Gen. 1:26, 27.

What does the phrase "image of God" mean? "When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. . . . It was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research."—*Education*, p. 15.

"Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do."—*Education*, p. 17.

Being made in the "image of God" permitted what kind of relationship to be established between the Creator and man? This relationship will be restored in the new earth. See Rev. 21:3; 22:3, 4.

"Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege."—*Education*, p. 15.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God created me in order that He might enjoy fellowship with me, how may I now cultivate this relationship?

"Many of you have a twilight perception of Christ's excellence. . . . Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 318.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 14, 18.

Part 4
A PERFECT
RELATIONSHIP

"What are the characteristics of the divine government under which angels, inhabitants of other worlds, and man were placed at their creation?"

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19).

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps. 89:14).

Since holy love is the chief attribute of God, all created beings were placed under a governing authority that provided the highest good for each individual and the creation as a whole. There existed an atmosphere of love conducive to the perfect growth and development of all the faculties of intelligent beings. "Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

What right has God given to each of the intelligent beings He has created? Deut. 30:19; Jude 6.

The evidence of this right is seen in the simple test required of our first parents (Gen. 2:17), a similar test on other worlds (*Early Writings*, p. 40), and the fact that some of the angels chose to rebel against the divine rule. "God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

What makes it evident that man was placed on probation—that none had a natural immortality? Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

"Like the angels, the dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 53.

THINK IT THROUGH

Some things God has expressly commanded or forbidden. In other areas Christians must make decisions based on principle. Would you prefer a list of dos and don'ts or the freedom to exercise your choice in the light of Biblical principles? Explain your answer.

"God might have created them [our first parents]—without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no development of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced. Therefore He gave them the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience."—*Education*, p. 23.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 52, 53.

Part 5
THE FIRST
REBEL **Among which of the intelligent beings in God's creation did sin and rebellion arise?**

"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4).

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

Do the Scriptures give any hint to suggest that the divine rule of love was at fault to cause the rebellion?

"Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 492, 493.

The angelic revolt developed through the instigation of the angel Lucifer. What was his original position and character? Eze. 28:12-15.

"Evil originated with Lucifer, who rebelled against the government of God. Before his fall he was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like Himself."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1163.

The title, "cherub that covereth" brings to mind the ark of the covenant. Each of two cherubs spread a wing each over the sacred chest. The title suggests that Lucifer stood within the presence of God's glory and assisted in communicating the divine will to the other angels and the universe. The dissatisfaction of such a personage made his deceptions among the angels well-nigh overwhelming.

THINK IT THROUGH **When in pride I flout the legitimate authority of my government, church, school, or home, with whom am I cooperating?**

"There is a grand rebellion in the earthly universe. Is there not a great leader of that rebellion? Is not Satan the life and soul of every species of rebellion which he himself has instigated?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1163.

FURTHER STUDY *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 37-41.

Part 6
OPEN REVOLT

"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Eze. 28:17).

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14).

"I will rival the Most High" (verse 14, Jerusalem Bible).

What do these passages suggest as to how Lucifer began a course of action which eventually led to his revolt?

"Satan fell because of his ambition to be equal with God. He desired to enter into the divine counsels and purposes, from which he was excluded by his own inability, as a created being, to comprehend the wisdom of the Infinite One. It was this ambitious pride that led to his rebellion."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 702.

What appears to have been the spark which started this highly positioned angel in a wrong course of reasoning?

"When God said to His Son, 'Let us make man in our image,' Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred."—*Early Writings*, p. 145.

Of what two sins does Jesus say Lucifer was guilty in heaven? John 8:44. Whom did he murder? See 1 John 3:15.

Unsuspected by his fellow angels because of his position, Lucifer began to poison their minds against God.

When Lucifer gained sufficient support from the angels he had alienated, he openly defied God. What were the results? Rev. 12:7-9.

"Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 497.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are my true feelings when a colleague is promoted above me, or an acquaintance is given special recognition? Why do I react this way?

"Envy is one of the most despicable traits of Satanic character. It is constantly seeking the lifting up of self, by casting slurs upon others. A man who is envious will belittle his neighbor. . . . He hates to hear the praises of another. . . .

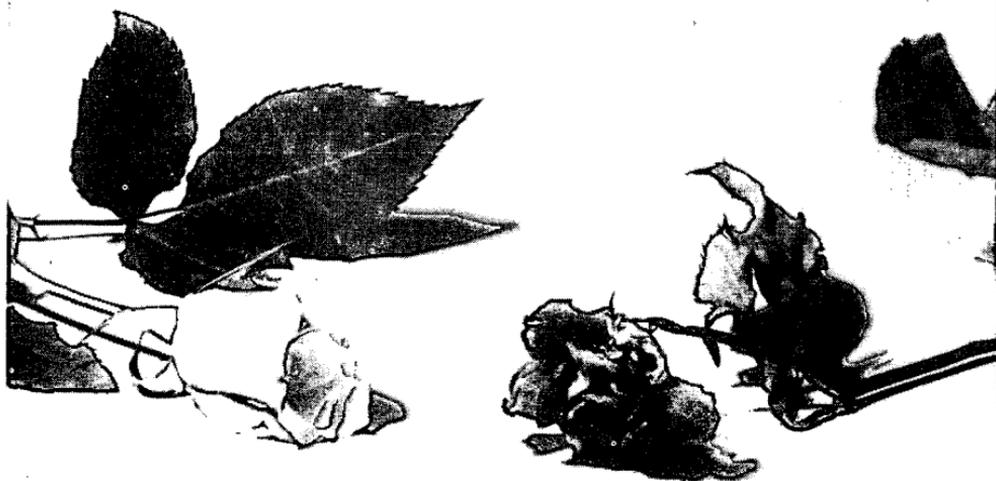
"The great controversy between Christ and the prince of darkness, is carried on in everyday, practical life."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1159.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 495-497.

Principles of Rebellion

**"Shall the thing formed say
to him that formed it, Why hast
thou made me thus?"
(Rom. 9:20).**



"Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20).

Although the apostle Paul is thinking of Israel's challenges to God—a nation He had formed, yet he states a universal truth. The creature is not in a position to challenge his Creator.

It is difficult for us to grasp the enormity of the rebellion instigated by Lucifer. Until his disaffection the divine will had never been challenged. Nothing had marred the universal harmony. Love, pulsating in the hearts of intelligent beings, felt no galling yoke in the divine administration.

Then it was there—discontent, smoldering dissatisfaction, questions, doubts. The divine will was challenged—not by some individual far out on the edge of the star-studded universe, but by the covering cherub at the very throne of God! Never before had any creature formed by the divine hand questioned his Maker.

Our study this week will examine what appear to be the main issues Lucifer raised—the challenges which he flung at his Creator. These issues focus attention upon the Deity. In a sense God was placed on trial by the accusations of Lucifer.

Little did Lucifer, the angels, or the inhabitants of the other worlds realize that the Godhead was prepared for the terrible emergency. The plan of salvation lay hidden in the heart of God. The divine secret would provide the divine answer to the challenges of the creature. Time would be permitted the watching universe to see the operations of the principles of rebellion against the divine government. Then the fullest revelation of the Deity would be given in the person of God the Son.

"For four thousand years, Christ

was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all."—**The Desire of Ages**, p. 759.

Then Christ came to present clearly the plan and the character of God.

"God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law."—**Patriarchs and Prophets**, pp. 338, 339.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Attack on Law and Government**
(1 John 3:4)
2. **Impugning God's Character**
(John 8:44)
3. **Seeking Independence From God**
(Isa. 14:12-14)
4. **Finding Fault With God's Mercy**
(Zech. 3:1-4)
5. **Denying Christ's Authority**
(Matt. 4:8, 9)
6. **God Faces Rebellion** (Rev. 12:9; Rom. 11:33)

Part 1
ATTACK ON
LAW AND
GOVERNMENT

What is the Scripture's definition of sin?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

"Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is 'the transgression of the law,' it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

Does this mean that sin is only the casual breaking of a list of ten rules? Compare Ps. 40:8; Rom. 2:17, 18. With what is the law equated? What really is the law?

"The law is to be presented to its transgressors, not as something apart from God, but rather as an exponent of His mind and character. As the sunlight cannot be separated from the sun, so God's law cannot be rightly presented to man apart from the divine Author."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 371. Sin is thus opposition to the personal will of God.

Are good and just laws, designed for the good of the governed, restrictive? See 1 John 5:3; Deut. 10:12, 13.

Does love place limits? When a mother forbids her child to touch a hot iron, her love has placed limits upon the child by means of her expressed will. Is her law "arbitrary," or is it dictated by her loving concern?

What did Lucifer do? 1 John 3:8. From this verse what may we infer about Lucifer's challenge of the law of God?

"He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 499.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way is today's emphasis on situational ethics a reflection of the original challenge of God's law? How do I know what is the loving thing to do in a given situation?

"This work of opposition to the law of God had its beginning in the courts of heaven, with Lucifer."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 222.

"Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 37, 38.

**Part 2
IMPUGNING
GOD'S
CHARACTER**

Since Lucifer spurned God's law and governing control, what kind of lying among the angels would he have done?

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

In calling God's law into question, Lucifer in effect raised doubts about the character of God. If the divine laws are restrictive and not beneficial, then God must have had bad or ulterior motives in placing the intelligent creation under such laws.

Notice three statements from *The Great Controversy*:

"It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God."—Page 497.

"He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself."—Page 498.

"He . . . had declared that while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, He Himself practiced no self-denial and made no sacrifice."—Page 502.

When God questioned Adam and Eve after their sin, how did they meet the confrontation of their error? Whom did they blame? Gen. 3:9-12.

Neither admitted guilt. Both justified themselves by passing blame, ultimately implying that blame was due to God.

"The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. . . .

"To the very close of the controversy in heaven, the great usurper continued to justify himself."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 498, 499.

THINK IT THROUGH

It is sometimes suggested that the enforcement of rules creates rebellion in the home and school. What do you think?

"With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprov'd, they would never have rebelled."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1162.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 335-339.

Part 3
SEEKING
INDEPENDENCE
FROM GOD

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:12-14).

What do the "I's" inform us about Lucifer's idea of what a creature's relationship should be to his Creator?

The primary sin of the creature is to attempt to be independent of the Creator, to be his own center and god. "Self-idolatry . . . lies at the foundation of all sin."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 114. Lucifer's charges against the law, government, and character of God hid from the angels his real intent: to gain independence from the divine sovereignty.

"Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 21. "Not content with his position, . . . he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 35. "He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

What fundamental truth was God attempting to teach Israel by the 40-year miracle of the manna? Deut. 8:3.

Sin is more than the mere breaking of a rule; it is the assertion of the will to be independent of God. See Romans 14:23. True repentance is more than the confession of a wrong; it is the surrender of the will to God and a dependence upon Him.

In contrast to Lucifer, what perfect example did Jesus give us? John 6:38; Matt. 26:39.

"His confidence in His heavenly Father was unlimited. His obedience and submission were unreserved and perfect."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 107.

THINK IT THROUGH

As a professing Christian, how am I relating to this central issue of self in the sin problem?

"Selfishness is the essence of depravity, and because human beings have yielded to its power, the opposite of allegiance to God is seen in the world today. Nations, families, and individuals are filled with a desire to make self a center. Man longs to rule over his fellow men. Separating himself in his egotism from God and his fellow beings, he follows his unrestrained inclinations. He acts as if the good of others depended on their subjection to his supremacy."—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 24.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 163, 164.

Part 4
FINDING FAULT
WITH GOD'S
MERCY

"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he . . . spake . . . , saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. 3:1-4).

This vision depicts the spiritual condition of the Jewish exiles returned from Babylonian captivity. The priest in filthy clothing is representing the nation in its sinful condition. He is asking for mercy. Satan is depicted as resisting—protesting an act of mercy on God's part to the sinful nation. The vision reflects Lucifer's claim that justice and mercy are incompatible, that God could not in fairness show mercy and forgiveness.

How was this issue reflected at other times in Bible history?
Jude 9; Rev. 12:10.

"In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

How would the Godhead eventually meet this charge?
Rom. 3:23-26.

THINK IT THROUGH **What are my attitudes toward backsliders who have been rebaptized? Do I fellowship with them graciously?**

"Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 762, 763.

**Part 5
DENYING
CHRIST'S
AUTHORITY**

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:8, 9).

The third temptation reflects the bitter antagonism of Satan which he developed in heaven toward Christ. What did he presume to demand of the Son of God?

"It was in seeking to exalt himself above the Son of God that Satan had sinned in heaven."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 129.

"This prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield. . . .

"'Why,' questioned this mighty angel, 'should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?'"—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 494, 495.

"When Satan learned the purpose of God, he was envious at Christ, and jealous because the Father had not consulted him in regard to the creation of man."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 36.

Who at the head of the loyal angels opposed Lucifer and the rebelling angels? Rev. 12:7-9.

"Michael" in Hebrew means "Who is like God?" An identification of Michael may be made by comparing Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; and John 5:28. Christ is the One who is like God and raises the dead. "Michael was known amongst the ancient Jews as the angel or prince who had special charge of the nation of Israel. The very best Jewish writers concur in teaching that the name 'Michael' is the same as the title 'Messiah.'"—Joseph Parker, *The People's Bible*, vol. 16, p. 438; cited in *Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1957), p. 74.

When did Satan's full malice break upon Christ? See Luke 22:53; Eph. 6:12.

"The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God, while all heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 501.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to prevent attitudes of envy and jealousy from taking root in my mind? Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

"God dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. . . . It is in God's order that some shall be of service in one line of work, and others in other lines—all working under the selfsame Spirit. The recognition of this plan will be a safeguard against emulation, pride, envy, or contempt of one another. It will strengthen unity and mutual love."—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, pp. 314, 315.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 600.

Part 6
GOD FACES
REBELLION

What was the divine decision regarding Lucifer and the other rebelling angels when they openly threw off the Creator's authority? Why does this decision seem mysterious?

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

"Many mysteries yet remain unrevealed. How much that is acknowledged to be truth is mysterious and unexplainable to the human mind! How dark seem the dispensations of Providence! What necessity there is for implicit faith and trust in God's moral government!"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1091.

The existence of evil has been, and is, a great perplexity to the human mind. Human suffering is the lot of good and bad. These sufferings often cause sinful man to blame God. And at times even the righteous are perplexed.

Why did the Godhead permit the angelic rebels to live and to exercise their powers?

"Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be placed beyond all question."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 498, 499.

How does the thought that "the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38) relate to the way in which God faces rebellion?

"Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good."—*Education*, p. 253.

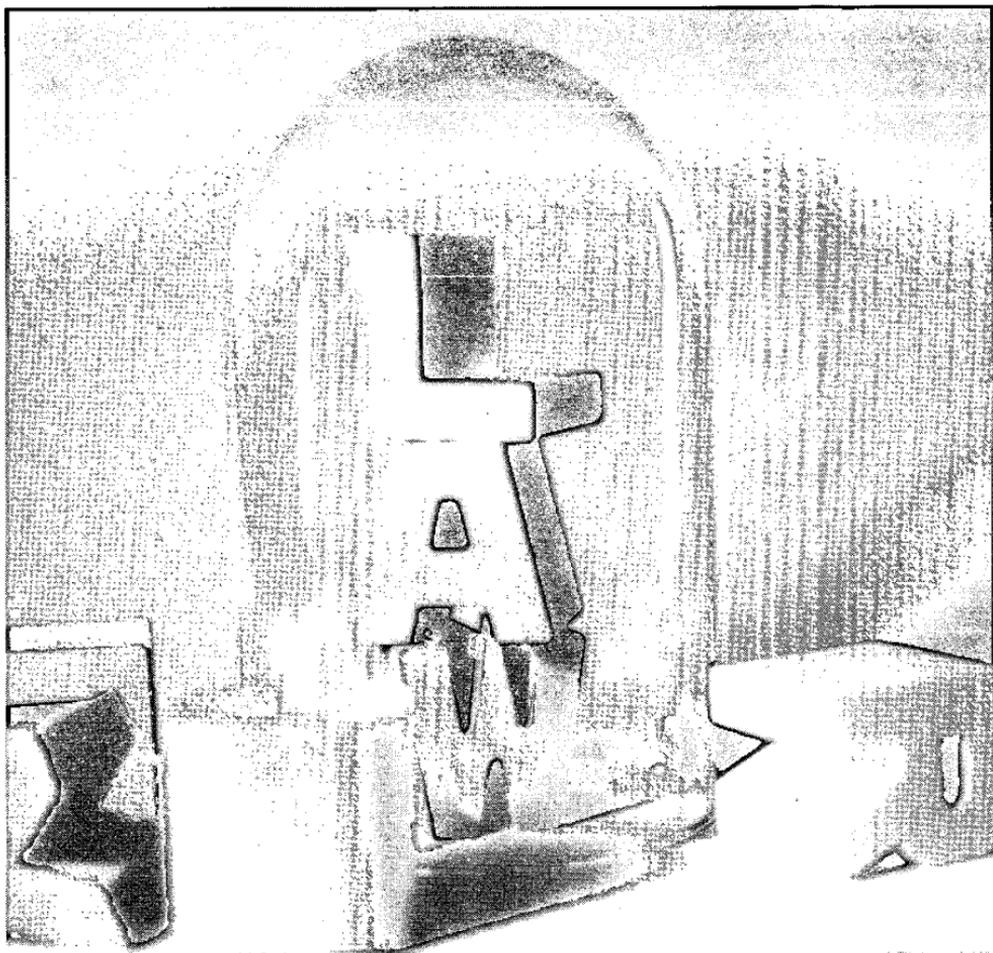
THINK IT THROUGH

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 63-65.

Principles of Righteousness

Where God's law is in effect there is order and stability.
Without this divine law, chaos is inevitable.



"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

In last week's study on the principles of rebellion, as seen in the great controversy between Lucifer and the Deity, we noticed the opposition to the law of God, the expression of His will. The endeavor to assert the independence of the creature's will over that of the Creator's makes the law of God very central in the controversy. Hence, it is important to understand the nature and purpose of law in the universe.

"Law is emblematic of security, stability, faithfulness, uniformity, equality. Absence of law means chaos, with its attendant evils. The world is built on law; the universe is obedient to it. Infraction of universal law would mean annihilation of the creation of God. Every part of creation is related to every other part, and what happens in one place reverberates to the ends of the universe. This makes universal law necessary. One law must control creation everywhere. Two conflicting laws would bring disaster."—M. L. Andreasen, **The Sanctuary Service**, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1947), p. 257.

Just as conflicting laws in the natural world would bring physical disaster, so conflicting laws in the moral world would bring moral anarchy. Today two wills are in conflict—the will of God and the contrary will of those creatures who have chosen to throw off the divine government. The universe of intelligent beings is watching this contest (begun in the courts of heaven) as it is being waged throughout the centuries of human history.

It is essential for us as Christians to have a clear understanding of this

important issue. This week we shall study about divine law and the principles of righteousness both physical and moral, but with particular emphasis upon the latter. We wish to examine the principles upon which divine law rests, its qualities, and its necessity for human happiness.

"Those who profess to cling to Christ, centering their hopes on Him, while they pour contempt upon the moral law, and the prophecies, are in no safer position than were the unbelieving Jews. They cannot understandingly call sinners to repentance, for they are unable to properly explain what they are to repent of. The sinner, upon being exhorted to forsake his sins, has a right to ask, What is sin? Those who respect the law of God can answer, Sin is the transgression of the law. In confirmation of this the apostle Paul says, I had not known sin but by the law.

"Those only who acknowledge the binding claim of the moral law can explain the nature of the atonement."—**Selected Messages**, bk. 1, p. 229.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Laws of Nature (Ps. 119: 90, 91)**
2. **God's Will as Law (Matt. 6:10)**
3. **Basic Relationships (Matt. 22: 37-40)**
4. **Man Learns His Duty (Ps. 119:73)**
5. **A Perfect Law (Ps. 119:96)**
6. **Obedience: Secret of Happiness (Isa. 48:18)**

Part 1
THE LAWS
OF NATURE

Under what governing authority does the natural world function?

"Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants" (Ps. 119:90, 91).

The outreaches of the natural sciences continue to demonstrate that our universe operates under marvelous physical laws. There could be no true study of science if the universe were not orderly. Since God's physical laws have a certain regularity about them, they are used by the psalmist to illustrate the divine faithfulness.

Plants yield seed and fruit in harmony with fixed laws determined by the Creator (Gen. 1:11). Sun, moon, and stars move in precise orbits according to the arrangement and design of the divine will (Gen. 1:14-18). The amazing feat of landing man on the moon would not have been possible without a knowledge of and a cooperation with the physical laws that govern the universe.

"Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

Physical laws as they function in nature are really descriptions of whose operation? Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17.

"Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotation."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 260.

What lessons may the operations of divine power through physical laws in an orderly universe teach us about God? Isa. 40:26-29; Psalm 19.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it wise always to live in harmony with the laws of nature?

"As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 216.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 259-261.

Part 2
GOD'S WILL
AS LAW**"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).**

God is the moral Governor of the universe. His will is the basis of moral law under which all the intelligent beings of His creation live.

"While everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of His creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 216.

The phrase "man alone" means that as far as *this earth* is concerned, man is the only creature on earth amenable to moral law. Intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe are also amenable.

How do loyal angels regard the will of God as it is expressed to them in divine commands? Ps. 103:20.

"Everything in nature . . . is under law. . . . So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God's law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

Since moral law is grounded in the will and character of God, how permanent would it be? Ps. 90:2; Mal. 3:6.

"The moral law was never a type or a shadow. It existed before man's creation, and will endure as long as God's throne remains. God could not change or alter one precept of His law in order to save man; for the law is the foundation of His government. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite, and eternal."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1097.

THINK IT THROUGH**Why are divine laws sometimes compared to a "path"? See Ps. 119:35. What is the significance of the figure?**

"Many are the temptations and besetments on every side to ruin the prospects of young men, both for this world and the next. But the only path of safety is for young and old to live in strict conformity to the principles of physical and moral law. The path of obedience is the only path that leads to heaven."—*Temperance*, p. 60.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Spirituality of the Law," pp. 45-51.

Part 3
BASIC
RELATIONSHIPS

According to Jesus, upon what two principles does the Old Testament—"the law and the prophets"—rest?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

Old Testament instruction is in reality an exposition and an application of the moral law, and we have in Jesus' statement the essential principles of that law. It is this great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.

"Before the entrance of evil there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator's will. Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

"The law given upon Sinai was the enunciation of the principle of love, a revelation to earth of the law of heaven."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 46.

How were our first parents created? With what kind of attitudes and character? Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 John 4:16.

In view of the principles expressed by Paul in Romans 13:8-10, what should have been Adam's natural response to any of God's commands? Would this also be true of other holy intelligences in the universe?

"In heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. . . . Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 109.

THINK IT THROUGH

What was natural for holy angel and sinless man is unnatural for me. How may I attain to their willing obedience?

"No man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Like Unto Leaven," pp. 97, 98.

Part 4
MAN LEARNS
HIS DUTY**What does the psalmist ask the Creator to do for him?**

"Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments" (Ps. 119:73.)

What was true of the converted psalmist would have also been true of perfect man before the Fall, and is true of penitent man after the Fall. Those who truly love God desire to know His will. They delight to obey.

"The law of God existed before man was created. The angels were governed by it. Satan fell because he transgressed the principles of God's government. After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them his law. It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 295.

"These two great principles [of the law] embrace the first four commandments, showing the duty of man to God, and the last six, showing the duty of man to his fellowman. The principles were more explicitly stated to man after the fall, and worded to meet the case of fallen intelligences. This was necessary in consequence of the minds of men being blinded by transgression."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1104.

What Biblical evidence is there for inferring that Adam's descendants knew the ten precepts of the Decalogue before the giving of the law at Sinai? First table: Gen. 35:1-4; 2:1-3. Second table: Gen. 4:8-11; 6:5, 11; 9:22, 23; 12:11-19; 27:11-13, 35, 36; 31:30, 32; 39:7-9.

The book of Genesis briefly sketches the first 2500 years of human history, so we cannot expect too much detail. However, these passages, and others which could be cited, give clear evidence that mankind had a sense of right and wrong as defined by the Decalogue. Since the Bible indicates that the law was not *written* down until Sinai, we infer that the Lord gave it orally to Adam, who in turn transmitted it to his progeny.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does obedience to God's moral law of the Ten Commandments promote physical health?

"The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all hatred, selfishness, and envy; for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. There is health in obedience to God's law. The affections of the obedient are drawn out after God. Looking unto the Lord Jesus, we may encourage and serve one another. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our souls, and there is no dissension and strife among us."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1105.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 220, 229, 230.

Part 5
A PERFECT LAW

**"I see that all things come to an end,
but thy commandment has no limit" (Ps. 119:96, NEB).**

The moral law of the Ten Commandments is no mere check-list of rules. Its precepts reflect the character of its Author; its spiritual nature reaches into the intents and motives of the heart.

Examine the following passages and compare the attributes of God's character with the descriptions of the law.

<i>God</i>	<i>Moral Law</i>
a. 1 Peter 1:16	a. Rom. 7:12
b. Rev. 15:3	b. Rom. 7:12; 1 John 5:3
c. Ps. 25:8	c. Rom. 7:12
d. Ps. 11:7	d. Ps. 119:172
e. 1 John 4:8	e. Matt. 22:36-40; Rom. 13:8-10
f. Matt. 5:48	f. Ps. 19:7
g. Ps. 90:2	g. Ps. 111:7, 8

How do the above passages show that it would be impossible for God to abolish the Ten Commandments?

"The God of heaven has placed a benediction upon them that keep the commandments of God. Shall we stand as a peculiar people of God, or shall we trample upon the law of God and say it is not binding? God might just as well have abolished Himself. In the law every specification is the character of the infinite God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1104.

"Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of this last message of mercy to the world. God's law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1104, 1105.

How do the Ten Commandments differ from human codes of conduct? Rom. 7:12, 14; Matt. 5:27, 28.

"The law of God . . . reaches to the thoughts and feelings. . . . If the law extended to the outward conduct only, men would not be guilty in their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 211.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that no true obedience can be rendered to God without a genuine conversion?

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 216-220.

Part 6
OBEDIENCE:
SECRET OF
HAPPINESS

"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48:18).

In this passage what did God imply was the secret for true and lasting happiness for the nation of Israel?

God intended Israel to illustrate the divine principles to the populations of earth and heaven. Peace and happiness would have followed upon their obedience. Just so, happiness would have deepened in the sinless universe if Lucifer had not persisted in his challenges.

Carried out in everyday life, the principle of impartial love would lead to honor and respect for lawful authority—parental, church, school, and state. It would lead one to do all those things which would tend to promote the health, happiness, and welfare of one's fellow beings.

If God were loved supremely, He alone would have first place in the life. He would be worshiped in spirit and in truth. All that was holy and sacred to God would be revered and respected. The holy Sabbath would be as a golden clasp, binding the child of God to the heavenly Father. A vertical love relationship with God would motivate such a horizontal love relationship with all other members of society that it would seem that heaven had come to earth!

Such was the society of heaven before Lucifer's disaffection. Such will be the society of the redeemed when the plan of salvation is completed.

After an elusive quest for happiness, what did the wise man conclude was best for man? Ecc. 12:13.

"Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. 'Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them' (Ps. 119:165)."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 218, 219.

THINK IT THROUGH

What fruits has disobedience to the Creator's will brought to human society? My personal disobedience has brought what results to me?

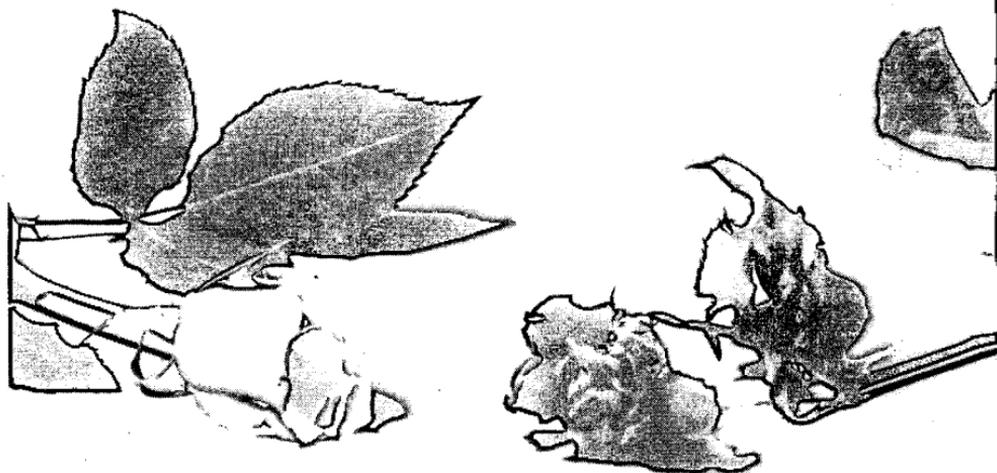
"Our world is a vast lazar house, a scene of misery that we dare not allow even our thoughts to dwell upon. Did we realize it as it is, the burden would be too terrible. Yet God feels it all. In order to destroy sin and its results He gave His best Beloved, and He has put it in our power, through co-operation with Him, to bring this scene of misery to an end."—*Education*, p. 264.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 221-225.

A World Astray

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).



“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).

With the expulsion of Lucifer and his angels from heaven, the controversy over the law and authority of God was transferred to earth. The fall of Adam and Eve was a signal victory for Satan—exhibit A—in his challenge that the law of God was arbitrary and impossible to keep. Depraved by sin, the human mind is now self-centered as is Satan’s. It ever seeks to be independent of the divine will.

And so the course of rebellion continued to run and to widen in the earth, Satan’s beachhead on the periphery of God’s universe. The issue remains the same. “From Adam’s day to the present time the great controversy has been concerning obedience to God’s law.”—**Patriarchs and Prophets**, p. 73.

But if this earth is the devil’s beachhead, it has also become a stage upon which is being enacted the principles of both Creator and rebel—the principle of love and the principle of selfishness. The plan of salvation and the participants in it are displaying the character of God and the results of obedience to His law. The course of rebellion is dis-

closing the fruits of disobedience. And the universe of intelligent beings is watching it all.

“When Satan was thrust out of heaven, he determined to make the earth his kingdom. When he tempted and overcame Adam and Eve, he thought that he had gained possession of this world; ‘because,’ said he, ‘they have chosen me as their ruler.’ He claimed that it was impossible that forgiveness should be granted to the sinner, and therefore the fallen race were his rightful subjects, and the world was his. But God gave His own dear Son—one equal with Himself—to bear the penalty of transgression, and thus He provided a way by which they might be restored to His favor, and brought back to their Eden home. Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his.”—**Patriarchs and Prophets**, p. 69.

The results of throwing off the yoke of the divine government are rapidly seen in all their dark colors in man’s forgetfulness of God, his arrogance, his inhumanity to his fellows, and the depths of moral degradation to which he descends in just a few short centuries. With the call of Abraham and the establishment of Israel, God begins in an organized manner to reveal the goodness of the divine government.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Fall of Man (Rom. 5:12)**
2. **Cain and Abel (1 John 3:12)**
3. **Before the Flood (Rom. 1:21)**
4. **The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1, 2)**
5. **Sodom (Rom. 1:28)**
6. **Abraham and Israel (Gen. 12:1-3)**

Part 1
FALL OF MAN**How did humanity become involved in the angelic revolt?**

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

"God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. . . . Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49.

Analyze the temptation and Fall in Gen. 3:1-6. Eve took three steps which Adam also eventually took. What was the first step by which Satan (by means of the serpent) created an atmosphere?

Having succeeded in planting in Eve's mind a doubt and a distrust of God, Satan suspected that she would take two further steps on her own. What were they?

"There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was *distrust* of God's goodness, *disbelief* of His word, and *rejection* of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error."—*Education*, p. 25.

The similarity between the fall of Eve (and later Adam) and that of Lucifer should be noted. Eve came to cherish a *distrust* of God's character. Distrust led her to *disbelieve* the necessity of His command. The next step was open *disobedience*. The sequence was triggered by a suggested appeal to assert her independence and become like God. Adam traversed the same steps under Eve as his temptress.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does God view so seriously what we regard as small sins?

"Adam yielded to temptation and as we have the matter of sin and its consequence laid so distinctly before us, we can read from cause to effect and see the greatness of the act is not that which constitutes sin; but the disobedience of God's expressed will, which is a virtual denial of God, refusing the laws of His government."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1083.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 52-62.

Part 2 **Of whose spirit did Cain partake which prompted him to murder Abel?**
CAIN AND ABEL

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12).

"He [Cain] permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall—indulging the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.

In the account of Cain and Abel we catch a glimpse of the deadly serious controversy as it began to appear in the earth. At times it is seen in a warfare against the "seed of the woman" (God's followers) by the "seed" of the serpent (Satan's followers). The first fruit of the satanic principle of self was self-justification (Gen. 3:9-13); the second was murder.

What was the experience which produced such anger in Cain's mind against Abel? Gen. 4:2-5.

In the brief account we see two reactions to the law and authority of God. Abel loved God supremely. Touched by the divine compassion which had provided a plan, he offered the prescribed typical sacrifice, trusting in the merits of the coming Saviour (Heb. 11:4). His love for God led him to have a concern for Cain. The older brother, however, showed his contempt for the Creator by the kind of offering he brought. Thus without the fear of God before his eyes, he was led in his anger at Abel's loyalty to break the law's second principle and to murder his own brother.

What was Cain's punishment? Gen. 4:11-15. What was the divine purpose in sparing his life?

"In sparing the life of the first murderer, God presented before the whole universe a lesson bearing upon the great controversy. . . . Fifteen centuries after the sentence pronounced upon Cain, the universe witnessed the fruition of his influence and example, in the crime and pollution that flooded the earth."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 78.

THINK IT THROUGH **What influence do loyal, radiant Christians have on me? Do they anger or humble me?**

"There are many who have outgrown their advent faith. They are living for the world, and while saying in their hearts, as they desire it shall be, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' they are beating their fellow servants. They do this for the same reason that Cain killed Abel."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 77.

FURTHER STUDY *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 71-79.

**Part 3
BEFORE THE
FLOOD**

How did mankind in the antediluvian world attempt to dispense with the claims of the first table of the law?

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21).

What was one of the prime factors in the deepening rebellion against God in the earth? Gen. 6:1, 2.

"The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain's descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. . . . Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment were disregarded, 'and they took them wives of all which they chose.' . . . Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 81, 82.

What was the result of displacing God from the center of life in that age? Luke 17:26, 27; Gen. 6:5, 11.

"The holy inhabitants of other worlds were watching with the deepest interest. . . . In the condition of the world that existed before the Flood they saw illustrated the results of the administration which Lucifer had endeavored to establish in heaven, in rejecting the authority of Christ and casting aside the law of God. In those high-handed sinners of the antediluvian world . . . every emotion, every impulse and imagination, was at war with the divine principles of purity and peace and love. It was an example of the awful depravity resulting from Satan's policy to remove from God's creatures the restraint of His holy law."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 78, 79.

What message and with what success did Noah offer those sin-hardened generations? 2 Peter 2:5; Heb. 11:7.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is today's lawlessness, its physical and moral pollution, saying to me, and with what success? See Luke 17:26, 27.

"The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations. . . . The picture . . . of the antediluvian world represents . . . the condition to which modern society is fast hastening. . . . There are crimes daily perpetrated as black and terrible as those for which the old-world sinners were destroyed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 102.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 90-97.

Part 4
THE TOWER
OF BABEL

As the descendants of Noah began to multiply, a group of them migrated away from the others to establish themselves in what area?

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there" (Gen. 11:1, 2).

See also Dan. 1:1, 2.

"As their numbers increased, apostasy soon led to division. Those who desired to forget their Creator and to cast off the restraint of His law felt a constant annoyance from the teaching and example of their God-fearing associates, and after a time they decided to separate from the worshipers of God." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 118.

What instruction had God originally given Adam and had repeated to Noah? Gen. 1:28; 9:1.

In opposition to the divine plan what did the people in Shinar decide to do? What were they apparently attempting to establish? Gen. 11:3, 4; 10:8-10.

The founding of the world's first kingdom at Babel appears also to have been the first organized attempt to defy the authority and government of God. While the records are brief, it is clear that the decision to build the city and the tower was in opposition to the divine command to scatter over the earth and subdue it. The sin was not in building a city but in rejecting the divine authority which had commanded dispersion for the future good of all.

"This confederacy was born of rebellion against God. The dwellers on the plain of Shinar established their kingdom for self-exaltation, not for the glory of God. Had they succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness and inaugurating a new religion. The world would have been demoralized. . . . The law of Jehovah would have been ignored and forgotten."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 213, 214.

THINK IT THROUGH

As a Christian, what encouragement may I derive from the Babel account? See Gen. 11:5-8.

"God bears long with the perversity of men, giving them ample opportunity for repentance; but He marks all their devices to resist the authority of His just and holy law. From time to time the unseen hand that holds the scepter of government is stretched out to restrain iniquity. Unmistakable evidence is given that the Creator of the universe, . . . is the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, and that none can with impunity defy His power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 123.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 117-124.

Part 5 When men insist on following their own evil purposes,
SODOM what does God permit?

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:28).

In asserting his independence of God the individual thinks to gain a more exalted state of existence and vast freedom. But the long history of sin has proved a fundamental truth: If man will not worship what is above him, he will worship that which is beneath him. Sodom is an exhibit of the depth of moral degradation and pollution to which the human mind can descend when self is made the center of existence.

What were some of the factors which led the inhabitants of Sodom into a preoccupation with sexual perversion? Eze. 16:49, 50.

"The people openly defied God and His law and delighted in deeds of violence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 157. Note the violations of the divine principles. The people were proud, haughty, self-centered, and independent of God. Abundantly supplied with food, they did not need to engage in physically tiring labor; this situation also provided them with much leisure. They had no care for the less fortunate among them. Turned inward upon themselves, they sought meaning in degrading perversions of their physical powers.

Because God does not immediately punish men in their rebellion and sins, how do they often react? Eccl. 8:11.

When Lot endeavored to warn his sons-in-law of the impending doom of the vile city, "he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting" (Gen. 19:14, RSV).

What warning did God intend the judgment and destruction of Sodom to give to succeeding generations of men? Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6.

THINK IT THROUGH In what profitable ways am I using my leisure time?

"There is nothing more desired among men than riches and leisure, and yet these gave birth to the sins that brought destruction upon the cities of the plain. Their useless, idle life made them a prey to Satan's temptations, and they defaced the image of God. . . . Idleness is the greatest curse that can fall upon man, for vice and crime follow in its train. . . . Satan lies in ambush. . . . He is never more successful than when he comes to men in their idle hours."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 156, 157.

FURTHER STUDY *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 166-170.

**Part 6
ABRAHAM
AND ISRAEL**

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, . . . unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation . . . : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

"The Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

With the call of Abraham God initiated a new program from the divine side of the controversy. He would organize Abraham's descendants into a nation to whom He would entrust a true knowledge of Himself, His law, and His plan of salvation. As the nation lived in obedience to God, they would reveal to the earth and the universe the blessed fruits of supreme love for God and impartial love for one's fellows. The nation would be His agent to earth's inhabitants, and through it would come the Redeemer of all mankind.

When the nation was organized at Sinai, what did God say they would be? Ex. 19:5, 6.

To assist them in discharging their task, where did the Lord strategically place Israel? Eze. 5:5.

With what did the Lord entrust the nation? Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5.

"God had separated them [Israel] from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He had made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself. Thus the light of heaven was to shine out to a world enshrouded in darkness." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 314.

As God's agent what would Israel offer to the world which was following satanic principles? John 4:22. What did God intend His temple in Israel to become? Isa. 56:6, 7.

Israel was to be a model of the divine rule; the other nations would reflect the principles of Satan.

THINK IT THROUGH

What kind of witness do I give of the divine rule in my life which will attract others to God?

"Only through a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour is it possible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. If we would draw sinners out of the swift-running current, our own feet must be firmly set upon the Rock, Christ Jesus." —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 469, 470.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pp. 284-290.

Righteousness Exalts a Nation

In a world controlled by Satanic agencies, those who remain true to God are protected by His love.



"It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness" (Prov. 16:12).

"In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress."—**Selected Messages**, bk. 2, p. 109.

In the second millennium BC (about 1950 BC) Abraham was born. God chose him to be the father of a nation that would preserve the principles of His law and the truths of the plan of salvation. In the same millennium, about the nineteenth century BC, Assyria first appears in secular history. Assyria became one of the great nations of antiquity through whom Satan sought to work out his principles and to control the earth.

The period of Assyrian dominance came in what might be termed its empire period between 933 and 612 BC. The nation became very strong, ruling at times over all Mesopotamia and neighboring areas, Syria, Palestine, parts of Anatolia (Asia Minor), and, for a short time, Egypt.

During the empire period the nations of the Hebrews and Assyrians came into close contact. The Hebrew people represented the Creator and were in possession of His law defining man's duty to God and to his fellows. Assyria eventually came under the full control of Satan, violating the principles of both tables of the law. Proud in its independence, the nation became a bloody military machine whose worship of the god Ashur was fulfilled in acts of war.

"The Assyrian monuments abundantly depict how captives were flayed, decapitated, impaled alive, or hanged by hands and feet to die in

slow torture. These and other inhuman practices reveal the cruelty of this nation. Their royal inscriptions continually exult over the number of enemies killed, captives carried off, cities razed and plundered, lands wasted, and fruit trees destroyed."—**SDA Bible Commentary**, on Nahum 3:1.

Assyria reflected the working out of satanic principles. Again the universe, as well as man, could see the fruits of throwing off the restraints of divine law and trampling upon the principles upon which that law rested.

Through Jonah, God sought to rescue the Ninevites from satanic leading and to give them an opportunity to know the principles of righteousness. He sought to prevent an unfortunate alliance between the two nations in the time of Isaiah, lest His people be drawn away from the truth. Finally, in justice God abased this haughty power, utterly destroying it. The pride and fall of Assyria are an object lesson to us in history. This week we shall study some of the admonitions or warnings to be gained from Assyria's experience.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. God's Concern for Nations (Jonah 1:1, 2)**
- 2. A Preacher Provided (Jonah 3:1, 2)**
- 3. Human Alliances Unwise (Isa. 8:10)**
- 4. Nations Under God's Control (Deut. 28:1)**
- 5. A God In Israel (2 Chron. 32:7, 8)**
- 6. Pride and Overthrow (Prov. 16:18; Luke 14:11)**

Part 1
GOD'S CONCERN
FOR NATIONS

Why was Jonah, a prophet of Israel, sent on a mission to Nineveh?

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jonah 1:1, 2).

Nineveh, one of the great cities of antiquity and sometime capital of the Assyrian kingdom, was built by Nimrod after the dispersion from Babel (Gen. 10:8-11, RSV; see *SDA Bible Commentary*). The walls, still discernible, indicate a perimeter of about seven and one-half miles, enclosing 1640 acres. Since no city in Palestine exceeded 20 acres, except Jerusalem (86 acres), the Assyrian capital appeared as "an exceeding great city."

In what spiritual condition was this pagan city? Jonah 1:2; 3:8; 4:11.

"In the time of its temporal prosperity Nineveh was a center of crime and wickedness. . . .

"Yet Nineveh, wicked though it had become, was not wholly given over to evil. . . . [God] perceived in that city many who were reaching out after something better and higher, and who, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, would put away their evil deeds and worship Him."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 265, 266.

The situation that was fast obtaining in Nineveh was similar to that of the antediluvian world. The satanic principle of selfishness ruled, with the natural result of the violation of the second table of the law. But the principles of righteousness were not wholly effaced, and a representative from God's organized people was sent to warn them of coming judgment. The intent was to awaken the people to their deep spiritual need.

In another age how did Paul also appeal to the still existing moral sense of pagans? Acts 17:30, 31; 24:25.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to reach my neighbors with Christ's last message in the place where I live?

"God's messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. . . . In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. Thousands may thus be reached with saving truth and be led to receive Christ as a personal Saviour."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 277.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 274-278.

Part 2
A PREACHER
PROVIDED

How many times did God request Jonah to go with His message to Nineveh? Why do you suppose the prophet was so reluctant?

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:1, 2).

"As the prophet thought of the difficulties and seeming impossibilities of this commission, he was tempted to question the wisdom of the call. From a human viewpoint it seemed as if nothing could be gained by proclaiming such a message in that proud city. He forgot for the moment that the God whom he served was all-wise and all-powerful. While he hesitated, still doubting, Satan overwhelmed him with discouragement."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 266.

As the Spirit of God convicted the consciences of the people under Jonah's preaching, what amazing thing took place? Jonah 3:5-9; Matt. 12:41.

What was the Creator's response to the repentance of the Assyrians? Jonah 3:10.

"Their doom was averted, the God of Israel was exalted and honored throughout the heathen world, and His law revered."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 271.

The success of Jonah's preaching among that portion of the human family whose knowledge of God had largely faded is encouraging, for the task is still before the church to witness to similar cultures in our times.

Unfortunately, how did Jonah, in the face of heaven's success, fail to represent God's character? Jonah 4:1-11.

"He should have been the first to rejoice because of God's amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls of that wretched city."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 271.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I a modern Jonah, reluctant to share my faith? How can I overcome this reserve?

"As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. . . . We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 340.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 265-273.

Part 3
HUMAN
ALLIANCES
UNWISE

"Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught: speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us" (Isa. 8:10).

The story of Jonah and his relations with Nineveh indicates that God is concerned for the safety and salvation of heathen nations. But this does not mean that God's chosen people were to feel free to turn to those nations for help in time of national danger. God is the only true source of help when the enemy threatens. See 2 Chron. 16:1-8.

In this part of the lesson we see how Ahaz, king of Judah (about 734 BC) was threatened by two political powers to the north of his kingdom, Syria and Israel (Isa. 7:1).

In his concern for national safety he thought of allying himself with Assyria in order to avert danger. But God sent a message to him through Isaiah (Isa. 7:3-7). Ahaz was not to worry about human threats, because God had everything in control.

To assure Ahaz that God would protect Judah, what did God offer to do? With what response? Isa. 7:10-12.

Rather than trust in the omnipotent God, what political alliance did Ahaz form to solve his problem? 2 Kings 16:7-9.

Ahaz made a serious mistake in allying two governments built on diametrically opposing principles. Judah was grounded in God's law which made God central in the life, resulting in impartial love to man. Self was god in Assyria, and cruelty to man was commonplace.

What important counsel did the prophet give Ahaz and his people who wished to rely on Assyria? Isa. 8:12, 13.

Ahaz came under the rebuke of God because he chose to trust in a heathen power for help rather than in the Lord, the true Ruler. This double allegiance was designated by God as spiritual adultery. See Eze. 16:14, 15, 17. Isaiah appealed for freedom from any compromising entanglements.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I have any connections with unbelievers which tend to draw me away from Christ? See 2 Cor. 6:14-18. Should I cut all relationships with those not of my faith? John 17:15 helps to clarify this question.

"Let the watchmen on the walls of Zion not join with . . . the confederacy of infidelity, popery, and Protestantism in exalting tradition above Scripture, reason above revelation, and human talent above the divine influence and the vital power of godliness."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1141, 1142.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 322-330.

Part 4
NATIONS
UNDER GOD'S
CONTROL

What spiritual factor was important to Israel's civil success?

"If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth" (Deut. 28:1, RSV).

Governments have been ordained by God for the happiness of human life. See Rom. 13:1. Governments rule in the sphere of the second table of the law to provide orderly social life. Governments may not know of the Creator, but they are responsible nevertheless for the just care of their peoples and fair dealings with other nations. Violation of the principle undergirding the second table of the law by any government is sowing the seeds of its own destruction. This is the lesson of history.

"To understand these things,—to understand that righteousness exalteth a nation' . . .,—this is to understand the philosophy of history. . . .

"In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 502.

Because Ahaz and the nation failed to trust God, what did God permit the "ally" to do? Isa. 8:7, 8.

Although God overruled the invasions of Assyria to discipline sinful Judah, what really motivated the Assyrians? Isa. 10:5-14.

The Assyrians developed an efficient army, including siege machines and cavalry. They were cruel to the conquered, at times decapitating, piling their heads at the gates of the ruined city, or impaling the victims on stakes. Spared captives were stripped naked at times to be led away. Entire populations were often transplanted. The arrogant Assyrians reflected the spirit of Satan. No government built on human slaughter can long exist.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are my aims in life? Is it sometimes necessary to "tread on a few toes" to establish a principle?

"A well-nigh universal disregard of the law of Jehovah is rapidly making the world like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. . . . Iniquity and crime of every order are found in the high places of the earth, and those who assent to these wrongs are seeking to shield the guilty ones from punishment. . . .

"The Lord is permitting these men to expose one another in their evil deeds."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 457.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 500-502.

Part 5
A GOD IN ISRAEL

Why did Hezekiah believe that Judah (loyal to God at this time) would not be subjugated by Assyria?

“Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles” (2 Chron. 32:7, 8).

Approximately a hundred years earlier God had been gracious to the Assyrian nation through the preaching of Jonah. But Assyria had long since lost the fear of God and was now attempting the conquest of Judah, the remnant of God's people.

“The rulers of Assyria, instead of using their unusual blessings for the benefit of mankind, became the scourge of many lands. Merciless, with no thought of God or their fellow men, they pursued the fixed policy of causing all nations to acknowledge the supremacy of the gods of Nineveh, whom they exalted above the Most High. God had sent Jonah to them with a message of warning, and for a season they humbled themselves before the Lord of hosts and sought forgiveness. But soon they turned again to idol worship and to the conquest of the world.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 363.

In his last invasion of Palestine what boastful message did Sennacherib send to the Hebrew nation in an attempt to frighten the people into surrender? Isa. 36:18-20.

Sennacherib was diverted with part of his force to meet an Egyptian army advancing into Palestine from the south. Before the other portion of his army besieged Jerusalem, he sent another challenge in the form of a letter.

What was the substance of Hezekiah's prayer as he spread this letter out before the Lord? Isa. 37:19, 20.

What was God's response through Isaiah and through His angel messenger? Isa. 37:33-38.

“The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 361.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do I react when a crisis comes into my life?

“He [God] has often permitted matters with nations, with families, and with individuals to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has let the fact be known that there is a God in Israel who would sustain and vindicated His people.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 353.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 349-361.

Part 6
PRIDE AND
OVERTHROW

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 14:11).

To what pinnacle of self-adulation had Nineveh and Assyria reached a century and a half after Jonah? Zeph. 2:15.

In this proud boast, "I am, and there is none beside me," the Assyrians usurped the place of God and violated the first table of the law. Satan was speaking again through this earthly power.

The book of Nahum announces the day of judgment on Nineveh and Assyria. What statement does God make three times? What is the significance of the repetition? Nahum 1:2, 3.

God is jealous in the sense that He will not accept a divided allegiance. Once Nineveh had repented and had turned to Him. But in time the Assyrians went back to their idolatry, becoming merciless in their conquests of other peoples. The blood of their inhuman slaughters called for justice.

How effective would be the final destruction of the Assyrians and their capital? Nahum 1:8-10, 14.

So closely did Assyria assimilate the proud, self-centered spirit of Satan that its judgment of total extinction is a type of the final eradication of sin. Sin will never arise again, because "a tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 504.

How does Nahum describe the battle of Nineveh? Nahum 2:1, 3, 4; 3:1-3.

In 612 BC the combined armies of Nabopolassar and Cyaxares, kings of Babylon and of the Medes respectively, attacked Nineveh. In three months the city fell. Assyria's day of grace was spent.

THINK IT THROUGH

What would God have me to learn from Assyria about the seriousness of probationary time?

"With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps account with the nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account remains open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath begins. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. Mercy no longer pleads in their behalf."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 364.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 104-106.

The Rise and Fall of Empires

"I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:9, 10).



“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9, 10).

The great moral controversy between God and Satan has become involved in human existence, because Satan tries to dominate the earth. Here the archrebel endeavors to carry out the principles of his authority through nations as well as through individuals.

The nations, characterized in Bible prophecy as wild beasts, do not rise and fall simply because of their prowess or lack of it. The Scriptures make it evident that their existence, and success or failure, is intimately connected with the moral controversy—with their adherence to or their violation of the principles of God’s law.

From the narrow viewpoint of our humanity it seems that human history could continue on forever as a struggle for dominion between this power or that, unless in a moment of madness some nation should instigate a nuclear war, blotting out all human life.

God, however, has foretold in the prophecies of Daniel the basic sequence of events to come. The assurance is also given of the ultimate defeat of Satan and the full establishment of the victorious kingdom of God on earth.

In the history presented in advance to the prophet we may also trace the reason why those nations—and others like them—declined and fell, giving way to other governments. In the episodes of the book of Daniel we shall see this week how Babylon and her kings related to the

God of heaven and His law. The story of Assyria is repeated. Sometimes there is submission; but eventual rejection of the divine principles of righteousness brought dissolution.

“Read the book of Daniel. Call up, point by point, the history of the kingdoms there represented. Behold statesmen, councils, powerful armies, and see how God wrought to abase the pride of men, and lay human glory in the dust. God alone is represented as great. In the vision of the prophet He is seen casting down one mighty ruler, and setting up another. He is revealed as the monarch of the universe, about to set up His everlasting kingdom—the Ancient of days, the living God; the Source of all wisdom, the Ruler of the present, the Revealer of the future. Read, and understand how poor, how frail, how short-lived, how erring, how guilty is man in lifting up his soul unto vanity.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1166.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **A God in Heaven (Dan. 2:28)**
2. **Loyalty to God (Dan. 1:8)**
3. **Obedience Vindicated (Dan. 3:14, 15)**
4. **Rulers by Permission (Dan. 4:17)**
5. **Results of Self-exaltation (Isa. 47:1, 7, 8)**
6. **Consequences of Wrongdoing (Dan. 5:23)**

Part 1
A GOD IN
HEAVEN

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28).

As the Assyrian power vanished in the Near East near the close of the seventh century BC, the neo-Babylonian Empire arose under Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar to fill the political vacuum. It was during the reign of the latter that God revealed to him through the prophet Daniel that there was a God in heaven who was in control of the rise and fall of political kingdoms until the end of human history when God himself would establish His eternal kingdom.

What was the substance of Nebuchadnezzar's dream which none could tell him except God's prophet? Dan. 2:31-35.

Give Daniel's brief but comprehensive interpretation of the dream. With what kingdom did it begin? Dan. 2:36-45.

It has been generally accepted by Christians that the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream depicted the four world kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The division of the Roman Empire, symbolized by the iron and clay and representing the nations of Western Europe, would be followed by the destruction of all human kingdoms and the setting up of the divine rule over the earth.

Thus in a sweeping prophetic portrayal we are informed of the outcome of the great controversy between the principles of righteousness and of evil—between God and Satan—as it is being fought out in the political arena of human life.

How were these four powers, and the division of the fourth, depicted to Daniel on a later occasion? Dan. 7:1-7, 15-18, 23, 24.

Daniel 2 presents a simple outline of succeeding powers. But Daniel 7 portrays them as wild, rapacious beasts and discloses the satanic endeavor to work through these kingdoms. Haughty and despotic at times, they acted as though they were not amenable to either God or man. At times God revealed His principles of righteousness to their leaders by His representatives with some success.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are political powers not permanent? What is the spiritual dimension to human government?

Babylon, which "seemed so stable and enduring, . . . has perished. . . . So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 548.

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pp. 374, 375.

Part 2
LOYALTY TO GOD

As captives required to study in the schools of Babylon, what did Daniel and his friends decide to do about the king's diet supplied to them?

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8).

At the outset of Daniel's captivity the lesser officers of the Babylonian court were given an example of fidelity to the law of the God of heaven by Daniel and his three friends. Although the Bible does not mention the other royal captives of Judah, we have this record that Daniel and his friends chose not to eat the king's food.

"A portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king's table was consecrated to idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join. Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism, and to dishonor the principles of the law of God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 481.

While the prince of the eunuchs was unwilling to change their diet, what plan did Daniel courteously present to Melzar who had the immediate charge of them? Dan. 1:11-16.

What success did these young men attain in their studies under the Babylonians? Dan. 1:17-20.

"They followed the rules of life that could not fail to give them strength of intellect. They sought to acquire knowledge for one purpose—that they might honor God. They realized that in order to stand as representatives of true religion amid the false religions of heathenism they must have clearness of intellect and must perfect a Christian character. . . . Constantly praying, conscientiously studying, keeping in touch with the Unseen, they walked with God as did Enoch."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 486.

THINK IT THROUGH

What relationship exists between spiritual development and mental acumen?

"As in the case of Daniel, in exact proportion as the spiritual character is developed, the intellectual capabilities are increased. He who loves God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself, attains this position through the working of the Holy Spirit upon mind and heart."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1898.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 479-490.

Part 3
OBEDIENCE
VINDICATED

What satanic principle did Nebuchadnezzar display in his angry command to the three Hebrew young men?

"Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? . . . If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Dan. 3:14, 15).

"Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them." —Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 976.

What was the significance of the king's building an image entirely of gold and commanding its worship? Dan. 3:1-6.

When Daniel revealed the king's forgotten dream and gave its meaning, Nebuchadnezzar was amazed and openly acknowledged "your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings" (Dan. 2:47). But his pride eventually reasserted itself. The dream indicated that Babylon was only a head of gold—that it would pass away. He would make an entire image of gold—like the one he had seen in the dream—"symbolic throughout of Babylon as an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 504. This was a defiant act inspired by Satan.

How was the true God signally honored before that vast concourse of officials by the loyalty of the Hebrews? How did the king personally spread the honor of the true God? Dan. 3:19-29.

"The tidings of their wonderful deliverance were carried to many countries by the representatives of the different nations that had been invited by Nebuchadnezzar to the dedication. Through the faithfulness of His children, God was glorified in all the earth." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 512.

THINK IT THROUGH

What would have been the effect on the king, his officials, and the cause of truth if the three worthies had yielded to the pressure of their peers?

"Never be ashamed of your colors; put them on, unfurl them to the gaze of men and angels. Do not be controlled by false modesty, by false prudence which suggests to you a course of action contrary to this advice." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 28.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 503-513.

Part 4
RULERS BY
PERMISSION

While Satan "the prince of this world" (John 12:31) and mighty men seem to govern earth's affairs, who truly rules, working out His purposes?

"To the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17).

The great moral controversy between God and Satan greatly complicates for human understanding the affairs of this world. Satan, prince of this world by usurpation, seeks to rule and control the earth through various kingdoms and agencies. Because of the nature of the controversy, God, the rightful Ruler, *permits* Satan's operations, for thus the fruits of the satanic principles are demonstrated. On the other hand God must *limit* Satan by His divine *intervention* lest Satan totally corrupt and destroy the race. God also rules by *initiating* events to disclose the principles of righteousness.

"God has revealed in His law the principles that underlie all true prosperity both of nations and of individuals. 'This is your wisdom and your understanding,' Moses declared to the Israelites of the law of God. 'It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.' Deuteronomy 4:6; 32:47. The blessings thus assured to Israel are, on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and every individual. . . .

"The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends."—*Education*, p. 174.

How did God illustrate to Nebuchadnezzar the true purpose of government and the secret of political success? Dan. 4:19-27. Note especially verse 21.

Ellen White, commenting on the philosophy of history, noted that a nation's strength is related to its fulfillment of the purpose of God. She observed that Nebuchadnezzar was symbolized by a large tree, and that the purposes served by the tree represent "the character of a government that fulfills God's purpose—a government that protects and upbuilds the nation."—*Education*, p. 175.

THINK IT THROUGH

What part did loyal witnessing have to do with the conversion of the king, or was it due only to the acts of God?

"King Nebuchadnezzar, before whom Daniel so often honored the name of God, was finally thoroughly converted, and learned to 'praise and extol and honour the King of heaven.'" —Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1170.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 514-521.

Part 5 What satanic attribute eventually became the main characteristic of the Babylonian Empire?
RESULTS OF

SELF-EXALTATION "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne. . . .

"Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it . . . thou . . . sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me" (Isa. 47:1, 7, 8).

In what way did this haughty pride involve the violation of the first table of the law? Jer. 50:14, 24, 29, 38.

In what manner did this same despotic spirit violate the principle undergirding the second table of the law? Isa. 14:4-6; Hab. 2:5, 12.

In these portrayals of Babylon we do not see "the glory of the kingdoms" (Isa. 13:19), but we see the "lion"—proud, despotic, and cruel—reflecting the attributes of the devil who similarly walks about "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

"Instead of being a protector of men, Babylon became a proud and cruel oppressor. The words of Inspiration picturing the cruelty and greed of rulers in Israel reveal the secret of Babylon's fall and of the fall of many another kingdom since the world began."—*Education*, p. 176.

Although Satan largely controlled Babylon, what did God seek to do for its rulers and peoples? Jer. 51:9.

Since Israel as a nation was in apostasy, God's acts in behalf of Babylon had to be done through individuals. "Yet through the very humiliations that Israel's departure from Him had invited, God gave Babylon evidence of His supremacy, of the holiness of His requirements, and of the sure results of obedience. And this testimony He gave, as alone it could be given, through those who were loyal to Him."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 480.

THINK IT THROUGH What lessons may I learn from the pride and conceit of the rulers of Babylon?

"God cannot connect with those who live to please themselves, to make themselves first. Those who do this will in the end be last of all. The sin that is most nearly hopeless and incurable is pride of opinion, self-conceit. This stands in the way of all growth."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 199, 200.

"Every man who praises himself brushes the luster from his best efforts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 607.

FURTHER STUDY *Education*, pp. 173, 238.

Part 6
CONSEQUENCES
OF WRONG-
DOING

What was Babylon's last impious act performed by Belshazzar?

"But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Dan. 5:23).

Whose vessels were used? Dan. 5:1-4.

"In that last night of mad folly, Belshazzar and his lords had filled up the measure of their guilt and the guilt of the Chaldean kingdom. No longer could God's restraining hand ward off the impending evil. Through manifold providences, God had sought to teach them reverence for His law. . . . Because of the strange perversity of the human heart, God had at last found it necessary to pass the irrevocable sentence. Belshazzar was to fall, and his kingdom was to pass into other hands."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 530.

What act of God suddenly threw the blasphemous revelry into confusion? Dan. 5:5-9.

"Hushed was the boisterous mirth, while men and women, seized with nameless terror, watched the hand slowly tracing the mysterious characters. Before them passed, as in panoramic view, the deeds of their evil lives; they seemed to be arraigned before the judgment bar of the eternal God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 524.

Before interpreting the strange words, what history did Daniel recall to the king? What should he have learned from this? Dan. 5:18-24.

What was the meaning of the strange words written on the wall? Dan. 5:25-28.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent can divine counsel given to another be applied to me?

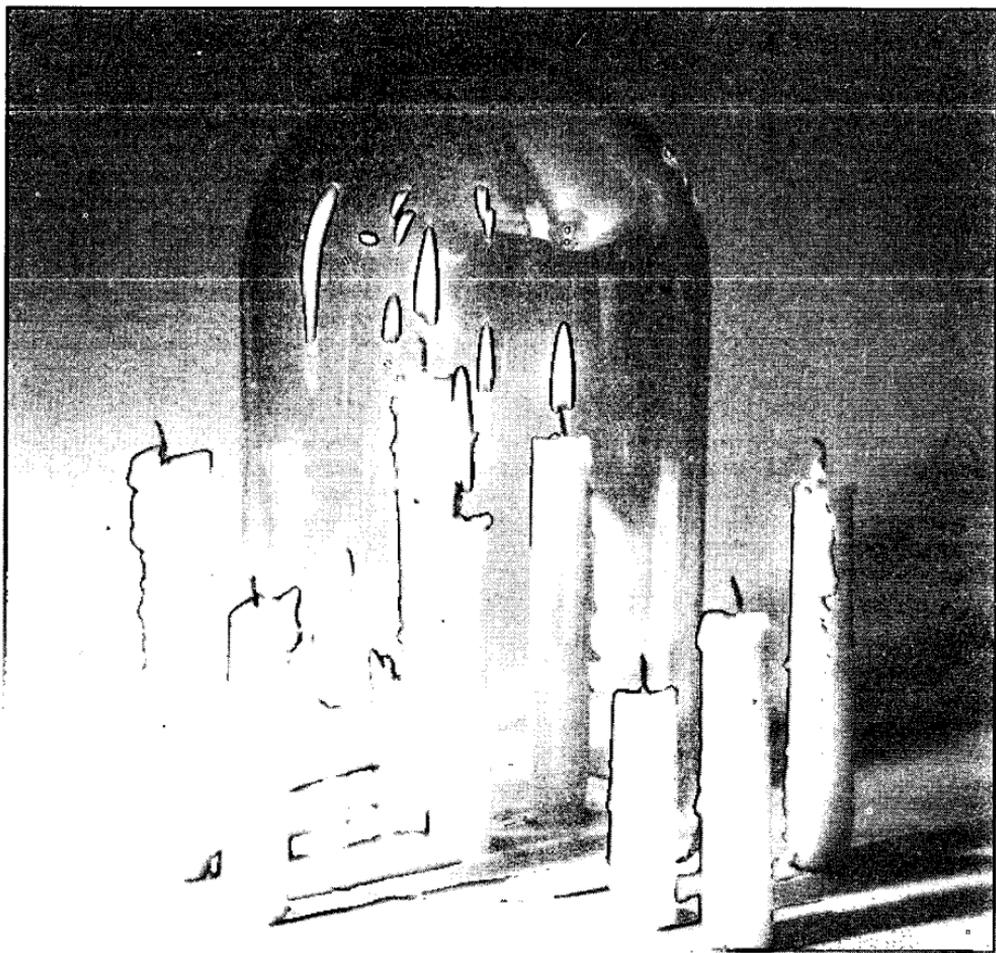
"When the Lord singles out individual cases and specifies their wrongs, others, who have not been shown in vision, frequently take it for granted that they are right, or nearly so. If one is reprov'd for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed and wherein they have been guilty of the same sin. . . . In rebuking the wrongs of one, He designs to correct the many."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 112.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 522-538.

God's True People

Scattered throughout the earth, God's protected and chosen people are to bring light and hope to those in darkness.



"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).

Of the four world kingdoms, probably that of Medo-Persia was the most responsive to the will of God in carrying out His plan. It was Cyrus the Persian who was moved by the ancient prophecies of Isaiah to permit the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, and to furnish the materials for the rebuilding of the temple. Darius I and Artaxerxes I likewise favored God's people with special decrees that led to the restoration of both the temple and state.

On the other hand Satan nearly caused the death of Daniel through the self-flattering decree of Darius the Mede, and the proposed extermination of the nation by the fickle Ahasuerus (Xerxes).

The dispersion of the Jews caused by the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom (eighth century BC) and the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom (sixth century BC) continued in the Grecian period, as Jews found it easy to move to many parts of the Hellenized world. It has been estimated that the Jews residing within the Roman Empire alone in the first century AD numbered approximately 4.5 million out of a total empire population of 55 million, a million Jews being in Palestine. Thus, in God's overruling providence, the Jews were scattered throughout the empire.

Wherever Jews settled, synagogues were established, ten males being required to form a congregation. In the intertestamental years the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. As this language had become the main means of communication throughout the then known world, so this version came

to be used among Greek-speaking Jews in the empire.

Between 50 BC and AD 70 a great influx of Gentiles crowded the synagogues of the Jews. The old pagan religions were losing their influence. There was a deep yearning among the people to know a better way of life. That way seemed to be offered in the Hebrew faith. Some Gentiles became full proselytes of the faith, but many thousands simply attended the services and adopted the Jewish religion in part. Multitudes of non-Jews thereby came to be acquainted with the Scriptures and with the true God.

Thus in the intertestamental period when the Grecian Empire (and her divisions) and Rome controlled the political sphere, God was overruling to prepare the way for Christ and Christianity. Every synagogue provided Christian missionaries a pulpit for at least one presentation of Christ! The Scriptures were known to many Gentiles before the apostles came preaching. The result was that many of the Gentiles who attended the synagogue responded to the Christian mission with alacrity. A church was born within the empire, overnight as it were, and for about thirty years was shielded somewhat from Roman interference by the legal umbrella of Judaism. The darkness of the intertestamental period was preparation time for a new dawn.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. God Protects (Dan. 2:32, 39; 7:5)**
- 2. God Provides (Ezra 4:4, 5)**
- 3. God Overrides (Esther 4:14)**
- 4. Decrees and Prophets (Ezra 6:14)**
- 5. Preparation for the First Advent (Dan. 2:39; 7:6)**
- 6. Rome and God's People (Dan. 2:40; 7:7)**

Part 1
GOD PROTECTS

"This image's . . . breast and his arms [were] of silver. . . . Another kingdom inferior to thee" (Dan. 2:32, 39).

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh" (Dan. 7:5).

See also Dan. 8:3, 4, 20.

These are the prophetic descriptions of Medo-Persia, the early dual nature of the monarchy being symbolized by the manner of the bear's rising. The three ribs represent Lydia (Asia Minor), Babylon, and Egypt—the three principal areas of its conquests.

What plan which appealed to the pride of Darius the Mede was devised by jealous underlings to destroy Daniel, the leading president? Dan. 6:4-15. See Eph. 6:12.

"In the conspiracy thus formed, Satan had played an important part. The prophet was high in command in the kingdom, and evil angels feared that his influence would weaken their control over its rulers. It was these satanic agencies who had stirred the princes to envy and jealousy; it was they who had inspired the plan for Daniel's destruction."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 540.

God overruled the satanic plot by such a marvelous deliverance (Dan. 6:16-23), that not only was Darius constrained to inform his entire dominion of the God of Daniel (6:25-27), but Cyrus the Great, who shortly succeeded him, was impressed to do just what Satan wished to prevent.

What predictions had God made about Cyrus about 150 years before his conquest of Babylon? Isa. 44:28; 45:1-5, 13.

"The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 557.

In response to these prophecies of Isaiah, what decree did King Cyrus issue? Ezra 1:1-4.

In this incident we have a striking example of an earthly kingdom openly and willingly responding to and cooperating with the will of God. Without the intervention of God the captivity of Israel might have become the cemetery of God's plan of salvation, but the participation of a Persian ruler forwarded it.

THINK IT THROUGH

What providential overrulings can you trace in your life?

"All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. . . . We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 542.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 539-548.

Part 2
GOD PROVIDES **How did the Samaritans attempt to hinder the returning Jews from building the temple as commanded by Cyrus?**

"Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia" (Ezra 4:4, 5).

Cyrus issued his decree in the summer of 537 BC. After organizing the return, the exiles under Zerubbabel probably started homeward in the spring of 536 BC. In the fall they set up the altar, kept the Feast of Tabernacles, and submitted their orders for material to the proper Persian officials (Ezra 3:1-7). The following year the temple cornerstone and the foundation were laid (Ezra 3:8-13).

At this time the Samaritans requested permission to join the Jews in building the temple, but they were refused (4:1-3). They retaliated with continuous attempts to halt the work and to hinder the Jews from establishing themselves. They hired legal help to work at court to prevent the implementation of the decree.

How did Daniel react to opposition to the restoration of the nation and the temple? Dan. 10:2, 3.

After three weeks of earnest prayer by Daniel, Gabriel appeared. What had he been doing? Dan. 10:12, 13.

Supernatural forces operate behind the scenes. "While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. . . . Through the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel's aid. . . . The victory was finally gained."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 571, 572.

THINK IT THROUGH **Does the work of the Lord seem hindered in your area? What can you do to get it moving again?**

"Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 453.

FURTHER STUDY *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 560-572.

Part 3
GOD
OVERRULES

Through a series of strange events, who found herself in a position of influence at a critical time for Israel?

"For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, RSV).

"Occasions of indulgence such as are pictured in the first chapter of Esther, do not glorify God. But the Lord accomplishes His will through men who are nevertheless misleading others. . . .

"Through the experience that brought Esther to the Medo-Persian throne, God was working for the accomplishment of His purposes for His people. That which was done under the influence of much wine worked out for good to Israel."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1139.

Mordecai's ancestors were part of the 10,000 captives Nebuchadnezzar took into captivity in 597 BC along with their king, Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) (see Esther 2:6). He, and many other dispersed Jews, did not return to Palestine but continued to live in Mesopotamia.

Ahasuerus (known in secular history as Xerxes; 486-465 BC) ruled a far-flung empire, some 3000 miles from east to west (Esther 1:1). Esther apparently entered the Persian court soon after his return from his defeat at the hands of the Greeks (Salamis, 480 BC).

What plot did Haman, a high official in the court, persuade Ahasuerus to decree? Why? Esther 3:5, 6, 8-11, 13.

Haman simply reflected the thoughts and intents of another. "Satan himself, the hidden instigator of the scheme, was trying to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 601.

In the great controversy between good and evil God is never caught by surprise. How was Israel spared destruction? Esther 7: 1-6, 10; 8:4-8.

THINK IT THROUGH

What lessons may modern Sabbath keepers derive from the capricious cruelty of the Persian king?

"The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God's people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 605.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 598-606.

**Part 4
DECREES AND
PROPHETS**

What three Persian rulers made and implemented decrees which eventually restored the Jewish state?

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (Ezra 6:14).

Although neither Cyrus nor his son Cambyses countermanded the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, the anti-temple policy of the False Smerdis resulted in halting the work. In the latter part of August, 520 BC, approximately 16 years after the decree of Cyrus, Haggai the prophet was inspired to encourage the leaders and people to arise and complete the temple. Two months later Zechariah also gave messages to encourage the people.

When Tatnai, governor of the region, inquired of Darius I if the Jews had a right to build as they claimed, what further decree did this monarch make? Ezra 6:6-13.

With this implementation in 519 BC the Jews speedily finished the temple, dedicating it in 515 BC (Ezra 6:15).

Under the reign of Artaxerxes I what final political rights did the nation receive? Ezra 7:13, 14, 24-26.

From his title it would appear that Ezra was an official in charge of Jewish affairs in the imperial court. He was commissioned to take back to Palestine all Jews who wished to go, and to reorganize the nation's judicial system along the lines of the mosaic code with full authority over life and death. Thus the Jewish state (under Persian sovereignty) was fully restored. The decree of Artaxerxes was made in 457 BC, becoming operative in the early fall of that same year. This important date became the starting point of Daniel's time prophecy of the first advent of the Messiah (Dan. 9:25).

In 444 BC, 13 years later, whom did Artaxerxes send as governor of Judah to rebuild Jerusalem? Neh. 2:1-8.

THINK IT THROUGH

"We must in our work not only strike the iron when it is hot but make the iron hot by striking. Slow, easy, indolent movements will do nothing for us in this work. We must be instant in season, out of season. These are critical times for work. By hesitation and delay we lose many good opportunities."—*Evangelism*, p. 647.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 607-614.

Part 5
PREPARATION
FOR THE
FIRST ADVENT

What world empire succeeded the power of Medo-Persia?

"Another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (Dan. 2:39).

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (Dan. 7:6).

How was it described in another vision? What did the "great horn" and the "four notable ones" represent? Dan. 8:5-8, 21, 22.

At this point in the prophecies of Daniel we enter into the silent span of the intertestamental period. There are no inspired writers, and so we are not given any insight into the controversy between God and Satan at this time. Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets (about 425 BC), presents a discouraging picture of a sin-blinded, complacent Israel who refuses correction.

Daniel 2, 7, and 8 predict the rise of Grecia. The latter prophecy names the empire and refers to its first king, Alexander the Great, and the subsequent divisions of his conquests.

"The conquest of the ancient East by Alexander the Great (331 B.C.) was followed by a more permanent cultural invasion by Greek language, customs, ideas, and religion. Eventually, attempts by Antiochus Epiphanes to Hellenize the Jews, that is, to compel them to adopt Greek culture, provoked the most determined resistance. . . . Led by Judas Maccabaeus and other members of his family, later known as Maccabees or Hasmonaeans, the Jews heroically defeated the forces of Antiochus and secured their own freedom (164 B.C.). Among the Jews, particularly those of the more wealthy and educated classes and those residing beyond the borders of Palestine, there was a gradual tendency to adopt Greek culture. Such Jews were known as Hellenists and constituted the liberal element of Jewish society. But most of those who lived in Judea clung tenaciously to the customs and religion of their forefathers."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 51.

While Satan sought to corrupt the true faith through the spreading of Greek culture, God was overruling. Greek became the common language of the Mediterranean world, thus providing a widely understood tongue for the broad distribution of the Scriptures and facilitating communication between diverse peoples. Without violating man's will, God was preparing the world for the spread of Christianity.

THINK IT THROUGH

How should I line up my life's energies, seeing that the cause of God will ultimately triumph?

"The complicated play of human events is under divine control."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 536.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 17 ff.

**Part 6
ROME AND
GOD'S PEOPLE**

What world kingdom succeeded the Grecian? What aspects of this power are particularly noted?

"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron: . . . and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise" (Dan. 2:40).

"And behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it" (Dan. 7:7).

"Rome won her territory by the force or the fear of her armed might. . . . Crushing one opponent after another, she finally became the aggressive, irresistible conqueror of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 2:40.

Under the symbol of a little horn what land did Rome subjugate? How was it treated? Dan. 8:9, 10, 24.

Palestine became a part of the Empire of Rome in 63 BC. Some 12,000 Jews alone were slain in Pompey's capture of the temple site. Later revolts cost the lives of others. Herod the Great's reconquest of the Jews (40-37 BC) resulted in further carnage. The land lay under the bloody hand of the wily Edomite who did not scruple to destroy Bethlehem's infants if perchance he might destroy Jesus, an apparent rival.

According to Gabriel, when would the Messiah appear, minister, and die? Dan. 9:25-27.

Applying the year-day principle, we find that the period of sixty-nine weeks (483 days = years) from the fall of 457 BC (Artaxerxes' decree restoring the Jewish state) extends to the autumn of AD 27, when Jesus was baptized by water and the Holy Spirit and began His official ministry as the Messiah. After a ministry of three and one half years, Jesus was crucified by Roman authority in the spring of AD 31; but His disciples continued to preach to the Jews until AD 34, at which time the gospel was also given to the Gentiles.

Satan's attempts, through Rome, to crush the true faith—and the Messiah as well—were foiled. The iron legions which broke all national resistance also brought political unity to the empire from Britain to the Euphrates. The Jewish religion was given legal status. Well-established roads and routes of travel, together with the freedom and safety to move at all times, provided the climate for the rapid spread of Christianity in the apostolic age.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why is it that heavy oppression often forwards God's cause instead of hindering it?**

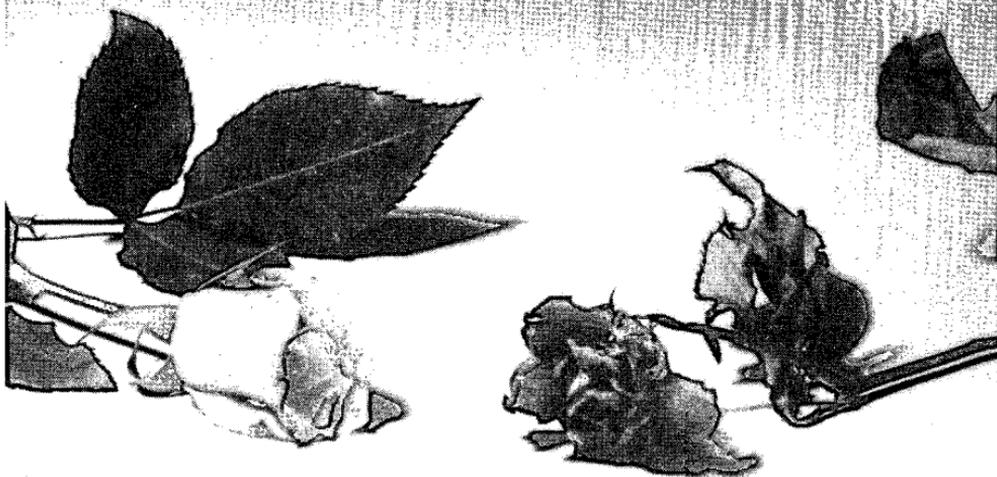
"The Lord is able to render futile every agency that works for the defeat of His chosen ones."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 487.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 31-35.

The Voice of a False Authority

**"And the woman which thou
sawest is that great city, which
reigneth over the kings of the
earth" (Rev. 17:18).**



“Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:1, 2).

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (verse 18).

As we have seen in our previous studies, the moral controversy between God and Satan has deeply involved the universe of intelligent beings. Satan has been permitted to live and to develop the principle of selfishness in all its forms, while the plan of salvation was activated to save man and to disclose the nature of divine love.

Satan's operations have not only involved individuals whose lives—their thoughts and actions—have revealed the sad results of sin, but they have also involved whole nations. We have looked at the lessons which the histories of Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Rome have given us.

One of the masterstrokes of Satan has been his perversion of Christianity. By means of the Christian apostasy, which developed in the early centuries of the Christian era, Satan has succeeded in carrying on his warfare on an even wider scale than he did in antiquity. As the prophecies indicated, the organized apostasy pictured as a fallen woman has had through the centuries many deeply entangling relationships with the political powers of the earth. Her perspectives and viewpoints, both political and religious—like the symbolic wine—have often been accepted, and the national mind (as

well as that of the individual) has been confused so that divine truth has not been easily perceived.

In our study this week we shall see that the prophecies have indicated that Satan would continue through a Christian organization to foster the same issues which he raised in heaven. Since the papacy has often been considered by mankind to be the one important moral force in the earth, Satan's actions have been thereby rendered even more deceptive and difficult to discern. Thus, under the guise of the Christian faith, the controversy is still being waged as another object lesson to the watching universe.

Some Christians feel that to study such prophecies is to attack an organization. God loves the people of all nations and churches; and there are people of all nations and churches who honestly and sincerely love and serve God. However, the prophecies disclose the working of Satan through a system of Christian apostasy. It is essential for our spiritual safety to be able to distinguish between truth and error. We must cling to truth. And we should lovingly help those blinded by error to see the truth as it is in Jesus.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. A False Claim (2 Thess. 2:3, 4)**
- 2. A False Sabbath (Dan. 7:25; 8:12)**
- 3. False Teaching (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:6)**
- 4. A False Role (2 Thess. 2:4)**
- 5. False Mediation (Dan. 8:11, 12; Rev. 13:6)**
- 6. A False Spirit and Power (Dan. 7:21, 25; Rev. 13:7)**

Part 1
A FALSE
CLAIM

According to Paul's prediction how did the "man of sin" system come into existence?

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

Satan first continued his controversy with God on a large scale through pagan nations whom he sought to control. In the Christian era he brought about a compromised form of the Christian religion through which he has influenced the lives of millions.

From early times Christians have recognized that the "little horn" (Daniel 7), "the man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2), and the leopardlike beast (Revelation 13) depict the same power.

"This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of 'the man of sin' foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 50.

What clues does Daniel provide to identify this power? Dan. 7:8, 20, 21, 24, 25.

Note the following: (1) Location: It would rise in Western Europe (among the ten horns). (2) Time: It would rise "after them," that is, sometime subsequent to AD 476, the date assigned for Western Rome's final dissolution. (3) Its rise would succeed the overthrow of three of the other horn powers. (4) It would differ from the other horns in that it deals also with religious matters. (5) It would be a blaspheming power speaking "great words against the most High." (6) It would be a persecuting power which would "wear out the saints of the most High." (7) This power would hold supremacy for a symbolic "time and times and the dividing of time," interpreted in Revelation as 1260 symbolic days, that is, 1260 literal years (Rev. 12:6, 14).

These identifying marks do not deal with personalities, but point unerringly to the papal system, a church organization which developed out of Christianity, and whose bishop was legally recognized as the head of Christendom in the sixth century.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why would Satan be more successful working through a Christian organization than through pagan nations?

"The path of error often appears to lie close to the path of truth."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 290.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 49-51.

Part 2
A FALSE
SABBATH

"And he shall . . . think to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25).

"And it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered" (Dan. 8:12).

Daniel 7 covers the same ground as Daniel 2, but with emphasis on the fourth beast and its little horn and the heavenly judgment scene. Daniel 8 covers essentially the same area with its little horn representing *both the pagan and papal phases of Rome.*

Satan in heaven challenged the law of God. Through the Christian church how has he continued this attack?

"The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws' . . . (translated from Lucius Ferraris, 'Papa II,' *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, pp. 25-29)."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 7:25 (p. 831).

The most important change Rome has attempted to make in the Ten Commandments has been that of promoting Sunday sacredness in place of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Historical records indicate that "the church at Rome early developed a preference for Sunday; and the increasing importance attached to Sunday in the early church, at the expense of the Sabbath, closely parallels Rome's gradual rise to power. . . . Roman influence prevailed to make the observance of Sunday a matter of church law, as it did with many other practices such as the worship of Mary, the veneration of saints and angels, the use of images, and prayers for the dead."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 7:25 (p. 833).

Why would Satan seek to make an attack upon the fourth commandment? Ex. 20:8-11.

"The great apostate . . . had dared to change the only precept of the divine law that unmistakably points all mankind to the true and living God. In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator. . . . It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest day for man. It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship. Satan strives to turn men from their allegiance to God . . . ; therefore he directs his efforts especially against that commandment which points to God as the Creator."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 53, 54.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is the basic principle involved in the Sabbath-Sunday issue?**

Satan's "master stroke has been an attempt to change the law itself, so as to lead men to violate its precepts while professing to obey it."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 178.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 179-189.

Part 3
FALSE
TEACHING

"And he shall speak great words against the most High" (Dan. 7:25).

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name" (Rev. 13:6).

Blasphemy may be defined as an indignity offered to God in words, writing, etc., or in claiming the attributes or prerogatives of the Deity.

According to the prophecies, of what would the Christian apostasy be guilty?

In his original charges Satan questioned the character of God and misrepresented the Deity to the angels and the other intelligent beings in the universe. Through the Christian apostasy he continues to distort God's character.

What position does the leadership of this apostasy assume in Christendom? 2 Thess. 2:4.

Since this Christian apostasy claims to represent God on earth, it is evident that its acts and teachings will be regarded by the multitudes as reflecting the character of the Christian's God.

Such non-Scriptural doctrines as eternal torment, limbo, and purgatory distort the divine character into that of a tyrant. The hundreds of years of intolerance and persecution likewise belie God's true character, and that spirit still prevails.

"It is Satan's constant effort to misrepresent the character of God, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy. His sophistry lessens the obligation of the divine law and gives men license to sin. At the same time he causes them to cherish false conceptions of God so that they regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love. The cruelty inherent in his own character is attributed to the Creator; it is embodied in systems of religion and expressed in modes of worship."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 569.

What symbol is used to indicate the corrupted nature of the teachings of the apostasy which distorts the divine character? Rev. 17:1, 2, 4. See also 1 Cor. 11:25.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is the Christian apostasy so appealing to the minds of millions both educated and uneducated?

"The papacy . . . is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 572.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 567-570.

Part 4
A FALSE ROLE

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

The papacy has always been characterized by its extensive claims to speak and act for God.

Writes a Roman authority: "The pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God. . . .

"The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions' . . . (translated from Lucius Ferraris, 'Papa II,' *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, pp. 25-29)."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 7:25 (p. 831).

The apostasy has arrogated to itself the power to absolve sins, a right belonging only to God (Luke 5:20, 21). It has interposed a human priesthood between God and man, asserting that divine grace is to be found in the sacraments administered by that priesthood. Other un-Biblical assumptions include papal infallibility and the claim of the priesthood to be able to change bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ in the mass.

How extensively has this Christian apostasy controlled mankind religiously and politically in the past? What is prophesied of the future? Rev. 13:3, 7, 8.

"The Roman Catholic Church, with all its ramifications throughout the world, forms one vast organization under the control, and designed to serve the interests, of the papal see. Its millions of communicants, in every country on the globe, are instructed to hold themselves as bound in allegiance to the pope. . . .

"History testifies of her artful and persistent efforts to insinuate herself into the affairs of nations; and having gained a foothold, to further her own aims, even at the ruin of princes and people."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 580.

The usurpation of authority over the lives and consciences of others reflects the continuing aim of Satan to assert his independence of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

The Scriptures teach the priesthood of every believer. What is meant by this doctrine?

"All can now approach God through the merits of Christ. . . . They need not depend on priest or ceremonial sacrifice. Liberty is given to all to go directly to God through a personal Saviour."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 564-567.

Part 5
FALSE
MEDIATION

"Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground" (Dan. 8:11, 12).

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God . . . and his tabernacle" (Rev. 13:6).

According to these prophecies what would the Christian apostasy take away, cast down, and blaspheme?

The Hebrew word translated "daily" is *tamid* and has the sense of "continual." It is often used in connection with the earthly sanctuary with reference to the continual functioning of the altars, the lamps, and the table of shewbread. Thus the phrase "daily sacrifice" stands for the ministration in the sanctuary.

Since the "little horn" of Daniel 8 represents Rome in both its pagan and its papal phases, the casting down of the sanctuary could refer to either the earthly type or the heavenly reality. However, since the Christian apostasy occurred in the Christian era, the emphasis of the prophecy is upon the heavenly sanctuary (see Heb. 8:1, 2) and Christ's priestly ministration there.

"Pagan Rome took away the 'daily,' and cast down the sanctuary. But pagan Rome was succeeded by papal Rome, which in just as marked a manner has 'taken way' the 'daily' ministry of Christ in His heavenly sanctuary. Christ 'ever liveth to make intercession' for those who 'come unto God by Him.' . . . But the papacy has called attention away from the heavenly intercessor and His sanctuary ministry, and focused it on a system of salvation by works, on the confessional, and on the sacrifice of the mass instead of on Christ's mediation as our High Priest in heaven. The system has almost completely diverted attention from Christ as mediator and has deprived men of the benefits of His ministry, and thus has 'trodden down' or defiled the sanctuary."—T. H. Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, (Pacific Press, 1959), p. 217.

Satan originally charged that God could not be both just and merciful. But the plan of salvation marvelously blends these two attributes. Hence, his warfare continues through the apostasy to divert earth's millions from a true understanding of the atoning death of Christ and His mediatorial ministry in their behalf. Thus also continues the war against Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH **What do you know to be the heart of the Christian gospel?**

"If you . . . accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous."
—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

FURTHER STUDY *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 913, 914.

**Part 6
A FALSE
SPIRIT AND
POWER**

According to the prophecies how would the great Christian apostasy deal with Christians who differed with it?

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. . . .

"And he shall . . . wear out the saints of the most High . . . : and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:21, 25).

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev. 13:7).

The papacy acknowledges that it has persecuted, and it defends its actions. It has never renounced the use of force. The "Holy Office" of the Inquisition, formally established by Pope Innocent III (1215), became a cruel instrument in the hands of the apostasy to root out dissent. The universe must have watched in horror as professed Christians slaughtered their fellow Christians.

"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 59.

How does the Bible symbolize this aspect of the Christian apostasy? Rev. 17:6.

In heaven Satan sought to subvert the loyalty of the angels. On earth he wars against God's people, employing both deception and force. The papal violations of the first table of the law in usurping the authority of God has inevitably led to persecution and oppression when it has been in its power to employ such.

How does prophecy foretell the rise of persecution similar to the past? Rev. 13:11-17.

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 445.

THINK IT THROUGH

The spirit of intolerance seems at times to fade. Why is this so? Why does it never truly die out?

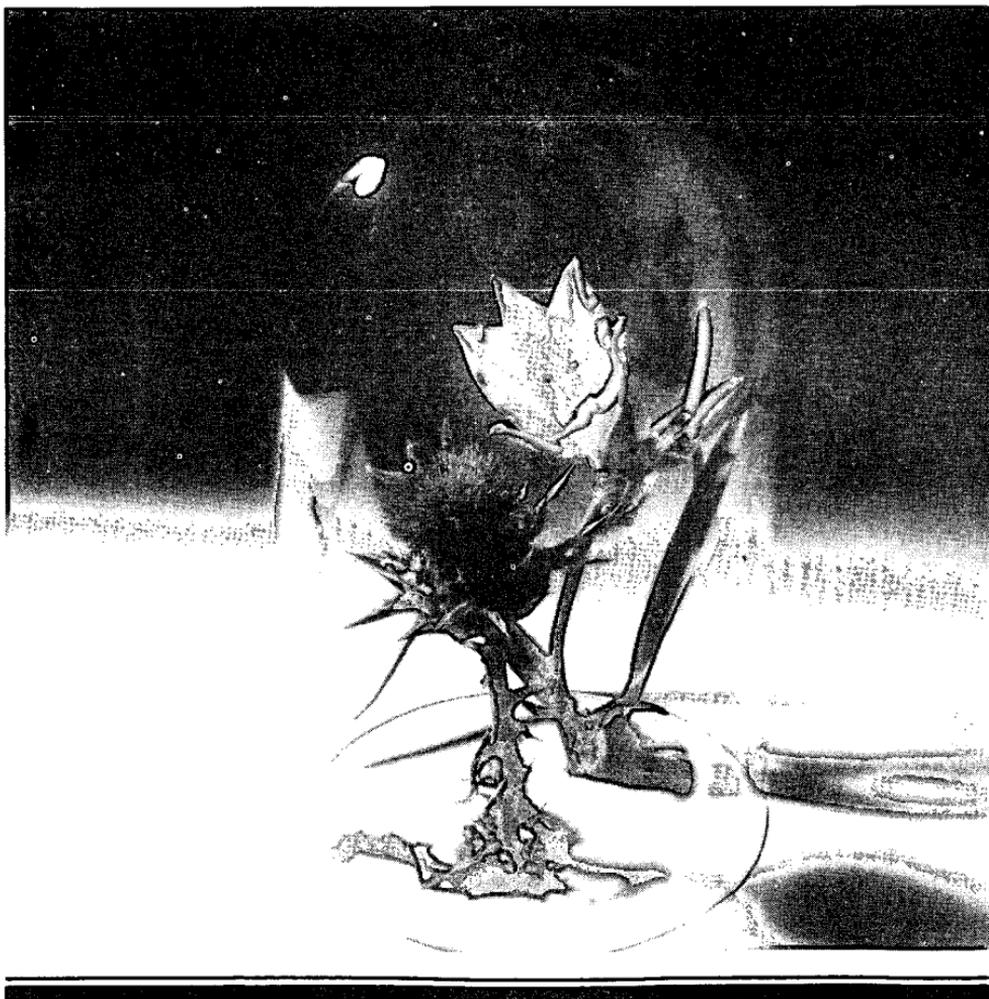
"Wherever there are any who will stand in vindication of the righteousness of the law of God, the same spirit will be manifested against them [such as Cain's against Abel]. It is the spirit that through all the ages has set up the stake and kindled the burning pile for the disciples of Christ."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 77.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 442-445.

Conflicts Within the Church

Within the circle of Christianity are those who profess to be followers of Christ but whose allegiance is committed to Satan.



“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away” (Matt. 13:47, 48).

“The casting of the net is the preaching of the gospel. This gathers both good and evil into the church. When the mission of the gospel is completed, the judgment will accomplish the work of separation. Christ saw how the existence of false brethren in the church would cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of. The world would revile the gospel because of the inconsistent lives of false professors. Even Christians would be caused to stumble as they saw that many who bore Christ’s name were not controlled by His Spirit. Because these sinners were in the church, men would be in danger of thinking that God excused their sins. Therefore Christ lifts the veil from the future and bids all to behold that it is character, not position, which decides man’s destiny.”—**Christ’s Object Lessons**, pp. 122, 123.

The parables of the net and of the wheat and tares point out the fact that the great controversy between God and Satan operates not only in national life and through organized apostasy, but also within the circle of true Christianity. This fact needs to be clearly recognized. The church is not an art gallery of plaster-cast saints, but a hospital for sinners. Divine grace is able to cure all, but unfortunately not all are willing to be healed.

In our study this week we shall see Satan’s purpose to introduce tares among the wheat, how he succeeds in developing professing Christians within the church who will live according to his principles.

We shall see how a tare comes into being. Then we shall note in what form tare characteristics may be seen in the church. It may be seen in abuse or misuse of authority on the part of some leaders. It may be seen in the formulating by some of divisive teachings and attacks upon the church from within. On this point Ellen White has written:

“When men arise, claiming to have a message from God, but instead of warring against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, they form a hollow square, and turn the weapons of warfare against the church militant, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials. God has not given them any such burden of labor. They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message.”—**Testimonies to Ministers**, pp. 22, 23.

The evidence of the conflict is also seen in the daily lives of the Christian community. Self is either marring our witness to those about us, or the spirit of love and self-sacrifice is healing and winning, attracting hearts to heaven.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Good and Bad (Matt. 13:24-26)**
2. **The Secret of Goodness (Luke 8:13)**
3. **True Leadership (3 John 9, 10)**
4. **Divisive Doctrines (2 Tim. 2:17-19)**
5. **Love and Selfishness (Acts 4:36, 37)**
6. **Unity in Love (John 13:34, 35)**

Part 1
GOOD AND BAD

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also" (Matt. 13:24-26).

What instruction did the householder give his servants when they asked if they should weed out the tares? Matt. 13:27-30.

Summarize Christ's explanation of His parable of the wheat and tares. Matt. 13:37-43.

The good seed, sown in the field of the world, springs up as loyal followers of God; that is, true believers in the Christian church. Since the tares are sown *among* the good seed, the parable presents a picture of the *church*—all professed followers of God—but in reality a mixture of genuine and false believers.

"The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. . . .

"By bringing into the church those who bear Christ's name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 70, 71.

Sometimes new Christians are discouraged by the pride and sin which they discover in the church. Nonmembers may be repulsed by some misrepresentation of Christ. Both groups fail to realize that the great moral controversy is reflected in the heart of every human being, even where Christian principles are espoused. "Children of the wicked one" may be professed Christians who reflect the satanic attitudes toward God's law. They are represented as being an offense and as doing "iniquity" (verse 41); that is, they are in their words and actions violating the principles of God's law.

How long will the evidence of this moral conflict be seen in the church? Matt. 13:30, 39-41.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that Jesus has authorized the church to disfellowship in some instances (Matt. 16:19; 18:15-18), but not in others? Matt. 13:28-30.

"Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. . . . Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 71.

FURTHER STUDY

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

Part 2
THE SECRET
OF GOODNESS

"They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13).

The parable dealing with four kinds of soil into which the seed of truth may fall gives us an insight into why some Christians apostatize.

What is it that causes spiritual life to die out in the heart of a stony-ground hearer?

"Many who make a profession of religion are stony-ground hearers. Like the rock underlying the layer of earth, the selfishness of the natural heart underlies the soil of their good desires and aspirations. The love of self is not subdued."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 46.

"The effort to serve both self and Christ makes one a stony-ground hearer, and he will not endure when the test comes upon him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 50.

The spirit of self-centeredness, of independence of God, is reflected in some Christians. Such an attitude violates the first table of the law by putting self before God. True conversion brings about a full surrender of the will, a full dependence upon God.

"The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1075.

What counsels are given the truly converted to prevent them from becoming tarelike? Heb. 3:12-14; 2 Peter 3:17.

"The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. . . . Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching, we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95.

THINK IT THROUGH

The secret of true Christian growth is to cultivate under God's Spirit a deeper love for God. Why is this so?

"All true obedience comes from the heart. . . . If we consent, He [Christ] will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. . . . Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Sower Went Forth to Sow" ("In Stony Places"), pp. 46-50.

Part 3
TRUE
LEADERSHIP

Diotrephes was probably an elder in a local church. How does John describe his abuse of authority?

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. . . . [He prates] against us with malicious words: . . . neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9, 10).

Diotrephes was a tare in the church, lording his authority over the members under him. He reflected the haughty spirit of Satan.

What desire sometimes created strife even among the Master's twelve disciples? Matt. 18:1; Luke 22:24.

"The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above. . . . Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 435, 436.

What counsel did Christ and the apostle Peter give for those who would be leaders in the church? Matt. 20:26-28; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

What are some of the qualities of a good pastor? What attitude is to be rejected? John 10:11-13; 1 Thess. 2:3-9; Phil. 2:19-21.

"Those who occupy the position of undershepherds are to exercise a watchful diligence over the Lord's flock. This is not to be a dictatorial vigilance, but one that tends to encourage and strengthen and uplift. . . .

"The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. He loses sight of self in order that he may work the works of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 526, 527.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why should a Christian not neglect attending the services of the church even if he feels that its leadership is not representative of the gospel? See Matt. 23:1-3.

"While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 46.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 434-442.

Part 4
DIVISIVE
DOCTRINE

From time to time how does Satan seek to weaken and to divide the cause of God on earth?

"And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:17-19).

"Christians are often content to rely upon those in the church who are considered special students of the Bible, instead of diligently studying the Scriptures for themselves. Consequently, when error is presented they are often at a loss to distinguish between it and truth."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 2 Tim. 2:18.

How do false teachers arrive at their divisive doctrinal teachings which make them very deceptive? 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

A common practice of false teachers who have arisen through the years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is commented on by Ellen White: "It will be found that those who bear false messages will not have a high sense of honor and integrity. They will deceive the people, and mix up with their error the *Testimonies* of Sister White, and use her name to give influence to their work. They make such selections from the *Testimonies* as they think they can twist to support their positions, and place them in a setting of falsehood, so that their error may have weight and be accepted by the people."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 42.

Of what have Christians been warned to expect within the church? 2 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Matt. 24:24.

The introduction of divisive teachings into the ranks of God's people recalls Satan's procedure in heaven of misrepresenting the character of God. This is one way in which the "dragon" makes war with the "remnant" of God's people (Rev. 12:17).

THINK IT THROUGH

As a child of God in what way may I best prepare myself to avoid being deceived by false teachings presented within or without the church?

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 22, 23.

Part 5
LOVE AND
SELFISHNESS

When many of the early Christians in Judea were cut off from their former employments because of their faith, what unselfish act did Barnabas (and others) do to meet the need?

"And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:36, 37).

Barnabas and his brethren demonstrated the beauty of lives that were in harmony with the divine law. Supreme love for God led them to deny themselves and to show a loving concern for their needy brethren even at personal sacrifice.

"Thus it was in the early church; and when in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellowmen may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 71.

In contrast to the unselfish spirit of Barnabas how did Ananias and Sapphira falsify their giving? Acts 5:1-11.

"Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. . . . It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 73, 74.

What motivated Demas, a long-time minister, to desert Paul when he was imprisoned in a Roman dungeon? 2 Tim. 4:10.

"For worldly gain, Demas bartered every high and noble consideration."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 455.

In contrast to Demas's perfidy, how did Paul describe the steadfastness of Aquila and Priscilla? Rom. 16:3-5.

The experiences of Ananias and Sapphira and of Demas indicate that Christianity has never been without its tares. The truth is perfect, but the people are imperfect, revealing the controversy in each life. Christ is the perfect Pattern to emulate (Matt. 16:24).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the most important thing the Holy Spirit can do for us with respect to the conflict between love and selfishness?

"Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. . . . When we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 641.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 70-76.

Part 6

UNITY IN LOVE

What is the true evidence of discipleship?

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35).

"When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

What is the source of love? Rom. 5:5.

"God's law is fulfilled only as men love Him with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. It is the manifestation of this love that brings glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men. The Lord is glorified when the great end of His law is attained. It is the work of the Holy Spirit from age to age to impart love to human hearts, for love is the living principle of brotherhood."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 139.

Unfortunately, what tarelike conduct at times mars the church? 1 Cor. 3:3; 6:1-8, 18-20.

"Lawsuits between brethren are a reproach to the cause of truth. Christians who go to law with one another expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are wounding Christ afresh and putting Him to open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church, they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 306.

What is the basic secret for preserving unity in the family of God? Eph. 4:1-3, 31, 32.

THINK IT THROUGH

What am I personally doing to promote unity and cooperation in my church?

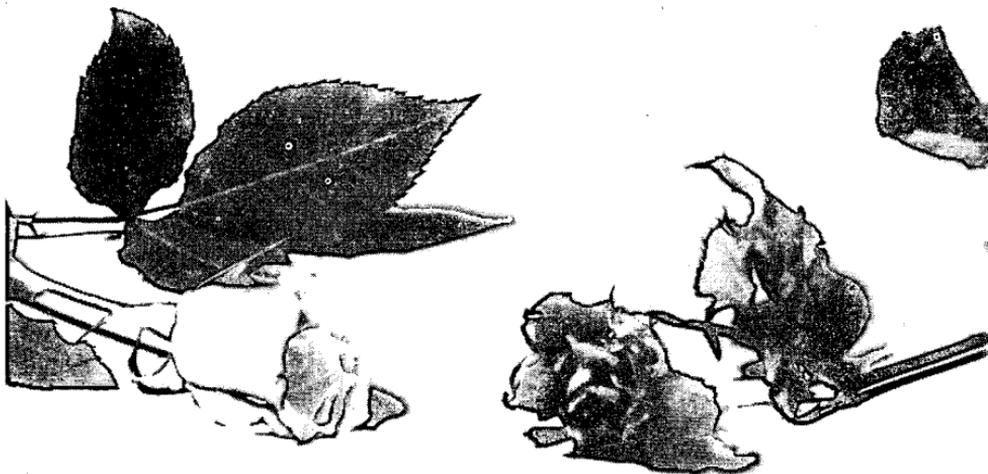
"The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 259.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 327.

God's People Vindicated

**"He hath appointed a day,
in the which he will judge the
world in righteousness by
that man whom he hath
ordained" (Acts 17:31).**



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

In the sanctuary service Israel's religious year closed with the Day of Atonement, a type of judgment. Thus was foreshadowed the fact that the plan of salvation would end with a final day of judgment.

The Scriptures make frequent references to the day of judgment. However, the “day of judgment” is not simply one “day,” nor is it simply the act of giving rewards. Rather, the “day of judgment” involves three phases, extending from 1844 to the destruction of the wicked and the creation of a new earth at the close of the millennium.

There is (1) the investigative phase in which those whose names are in the book of life will be examined. This is the judgment which precedes the second advent; it began in 1844 and ends with the close of human probation. This phase is followed by (2) a review in which the redeemed, during their millennial reign with Christ in heaven, will review the cases of the lost. Finally, (3) there is the executive phase at which time Satan, his angels, and the impenitent will be judged and destroyed by the lake of fire, and the new earth will be given to the redeemed as their eternal inheritance. In each phase some portion of the intelligent creation will be given the opportunity to understand the issues in the controversy and to approve of the divine actions.

The judgment in heaven preceding the second advent in one sense is the most crucial of the three phases. From the viewpoint of the doctrine of the sanctuary, this judg-

ment will declare the genuine people of God trustworthy through the merits of Christ, and they will be secured as jewels for His kingdom.

“The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to ‘the first dominion.’ Micah 4:8. Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man's creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.”—**The Great Controversy**, pp. 483, 484.

It is this first phase of the “day of judgment” that we will study in this week's lesson.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Type of the Judgment (Lev. 23:27)**
2. **The Records for Judgment (Rom. 14:10, 12)**
3. **The Need for Judgment (Matt. 13:47, 48)**
4. **Acquittal in the Judgment (Matt. 22:11-14)**
5. **The Time of the Judgment—I (Dan. 8:14)**
6. **The Time of the Judgment—II (Dan. 9:24)**

Part 1
THE TYPE OF
THE JUDGMENT

What ritual, conducted by the high priest once a year, climaxed the sanctuary services of Israel?

"Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. 23:27).

The sanctuary ritual illustrated to Israel in type and shadow the plan of salvation.

In the daily service penitent sinners confessed their sins and were forgiven as they trusted in the merits of the promised Redeemer, typified in the sacrifices. By means of the ritual their confessed sins were transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In this sense the sanctuary became defiled. It was cleansed on the Day of Atonement by a special ritual.

The daily ritual had to do with the cleansing of persons; the yearly had to do with the cleansing of the sanctuary. In other words, the daily ritual taught in type that aspect of the plan of salvation which was concerned with saving the sinner from his sins and in restoring him to the image of God. The yearly ritual taught in type the final eradication of sin and Satan, the banishment of sin and its effects from the universe.

"Once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 358.

The yearly ritual centered on two goats—one for the Lord and one for Azazel ("scapegoat," see margin). What was the function of each goat? Lev. 16:8, 9, 15-22.

This figurative eradication of sin typified the final judgment when God will set things right.

Who was intimately involved in this typical judgment scene? Lev. 16:30, 34.

The two goats typify Christ and Satan, and imply by type the final resolution of the great controversy begun in heaven. The death of Christ, typified by the shedding of the blood of the Lord's goat fully atones for all who have placed their trust in Him. This is the heart of God's answer to the problem of sin. The banished scapegoat (for Azazel) typified Satan upon whom the final responsibility for sin will be placed. Like the goat he will be banished to the wilderness of this chaotic earth during the millennium and will die in the destruction of sin at its end.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 355-358.

Part 2
THE RECORDS
FOR JUDGMENT

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . .

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10, 12).

What supplies the evidence of the thoughts, motives, and acts of each individual in the judgment? Rev. 20:12; Jer. 2:22; Mal. 3:16.

"The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

The Bible states plainly that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23); hence, all are under the divine judgment of death (Rom. 6:23). When a penitent sinner accepts the gospel, where is his name recorded? Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3.

In the typical service moral responsibility for sins was figuratively transferred from the penitent to the sanctuary. In reality, how is it transferred, and to whom? Heb. 9:28; 10:12; 1 John 1:9.

"In the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

The sanctuary type makes it evident that when sin was forgiven it was not blotted out. The sinner was freely forgiven, but the sin remained in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement. This shows another aspect of God's dealing with sin that goes beyond the forgiveness of the individual. For the moment the sanctuary had assumed responsibility; the sinner was free. So Christ is our Substitute and Surety as we put our trust in Him.

Since all whose names are not in the book of life are already under condemnation, who are the persons involved in the investigative phase of the judgment?

"In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why should a genuine Christian have no fear of the investigative phase of the judgment?

"If Christ is my Saviour, my sacrifice, my atonement, then I shall never perish. Believing on Him, I have life forevermore."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 381.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 420-422.

Part 3
THE NEED FOR
JUDGMENT

What kind of persons does the gospel net bring into the kingdom of grace? What is represented by the sorting?

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away" (Matt. 13: 47, 48).

"When the mission of the gospel is completed, the judgment will accomplish the work of separation."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 122.

Sometimes it is asked why it is necessary for God to investigate in judgment those who have professed faith in Christ. In answer we must note that the investigative phase of judgment is not for the omniscient God who reads the future as the present and who is acquainted with every life. This judgment is for the benefit of loyal beings in the universe who are not omniscient. Here they have an opportunity to see God's fairness in dealing with man.

One purpose of the investigative phase is to sift out the genuine believer from the false. The parables of the net, the wheat and tares, and the ten virgins show that not all whose names are in the book of life remain faithful or will be saved.

What basic test will be applied in this judgment? Matt. 7:21-23; James 2:8-12.

When the life record of a genuine believer is examined, what will his High Priest do for him? Rev. 3:5. What must He do if the professed believer is a false disciple? Ex. 32:33.

Christ's second-apartment ministry in the heavenly court is His last work in behalf of His true people. God will clear those who have trusted in the provisions of the plan of salvation. The loyal universe would question the taking of sinners into heaven; Satan would protest too. The records depict the sins and failures of God's people, but they also demonstrate how Christians have laid hold of the merits of Christ, surrendering their lives fully to Him. "Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and . . . [claims] for them forgiveness."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 484. On this basis He secures their acquittal and blots out the record of their sins.

The prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 and the doctrine of the sanctuary focus on the heavenly judgment scene in which God's people are cleared to enter the kingdom at the second advent.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 479-491.

Part 4
ACQUITTAL IN
THE JUDGMENT

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? . . . Bind him hand and foot, and take him away. . . . For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:11-14).

The parable of the wedding garment sketches the gospel invitation in the Christian era. Two appeals are made to the nation of Israel (by Christ before the cross; by the apostles after the cross, verses 3, 4). The invitation is rejected; the messengers mistreated. In turn Israel is rejected as God's agent. Jerusalem is destroyed and the nation scattered (verse 7). The third invitation goes to the world (verses 8, 9).

Throughout the Christian era what kinds of persons have responded to the gospel invitation? Matt. 22:10.

Before the invited guests participate in the wedding feast, an inspection by the king takes place. What does this inspection of professed Christians represent? Matt. 22:11-14.

"By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. . . .

"It is while men are still dwelling upon the earth that the work of investigative judgment takes place in the courts of heaven. The lives of all His professed followers pass in review before God. All are examined according to the record of the books of heaven, and according to his deeds the destiny of each is forever fixed."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 310.

What does the garment, a gift from the king, represent? What did Paul wish to be found having? Phil. 3:8, 9.

"When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Without a Wedding Garment," pp. 307-319.

Part 5
THE TIME
OF THE
JUDGMENT—1

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

The Hebrew reads: "Unto evening morning two thousand and three hundred." The sequence of *evening-morning* reflects the Hebrew concept of a "day" as given in the Creation account: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Gen. 1:5, RSV.) Thus the expression in Daniel 8:14 means simply "two thousand and three hundred days." The Jewish translators of the Greek Septuagint evidently understood the expression this way since their translation reads: "Unto evening and morning."

This time period distressed Daniel. He apparently thought there was to be a delay in the return of Israel.

To what prophecies did Daniel turn to study in his perplexity? Dan. 9:1, 2. See also Jer. 25:1-14; 29:1-14.

It was now the first year of Darius the Mede (538 BC). Reckoning from his own captivity (605 BC), the prophet realized that the 70-year exile was nearly over. He now sought God in prayer to fulfill His promises (Dan. 9:3-19).

What explanation of the 2300-day prophecy did Gabriel later give? Dan. 9:21-27.

In stating that the 70 weeks (a prophetic expression in which a day symbolizes a year: $7 \times 70 = 490$ days-years) were to be set apart for Israel, Gabriel, in effect, assured Daniel that the exiles and the temple would be restored. He now announces the time for the advent of the Messiah.

Since the 70 weeks (490 years) logically make up the first part of the 2300 years, what starting point for both did Gabriel give? Dan. 9:25.

The decree of Artaxerxes I which restored Jewish autonomy became effective in the fall of 457 BC. Twenty-three hundred years from that date brings us to the fall of 1844. Since this date falls in the Christian era, the cleansing of the sanctuary concerns Christ's final ministry in the *heavenly* sanctuary.

"While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14.

"When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 410, 417.

Part 6
THE TIME
OF THE
JUDGMENT—II

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Dan. 9:24).

This 490-year period was a time of high destiny for Israel, the climax to which all their history and worship focused—Messiah’s appearance and redemption. “To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness” refer to the redemptive acts of Christ. The supreme sacrifice of Calvary (verses 26, 27) makes possible the final destruction of sin, atonement for penitent sinners, and righteousness through His merits.

According to the prophecy, what was to be anointed?

The Hebrew phrase *qodesh qodashim* translated “the most Holy” is used more than forty times in the Old Testament in connection with the sanctuary and its related objects, and not to persons. The RSV translates the phrase in Dan. 9:24 as “a most holy place.” What “most holy place” is referred to?

“In view of the fact that the Hebrew phrase cannot elsewhere be shown to refer definitely to a person, and in view of the fact that the heavenly sanctuary is under discussion in the larger aspects of the vision . . . , it is reasonable to conclude that Daniel is here speaking of the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary prior to the time of Christ’s inauguration as high priest.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 9:24.

What other prophecies foretold the priestly ministry of the Messiah? Ps. 110:1, 4; Isa. 53:12.

The prophecies foretold that the Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now in Daniel the anointing of a sanctuary in connection with the Messiah is announced. The divine spotlight thus shifts within the continuous visions of chapters 8, 9 from the earthly typical sanctuary, which ceased to have meaning at the cross (see Dan. 9:27; Matt. 27:51), to the heavenly antitypical sanctuary.

The 490-year portion of the visions thus pointed to the redemptive acts of Christ on earth and to His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary as man’s High Priest. The 2300-year portion focuses upon His closing ministration there, a work of judgment, cleansing and restoring it to its rightful state.

THINK IT THROUGH

While God the Father is over all (Dan. 7:9, 10), why has He entrusted all judgment to Christ? See John 5:22, 27.

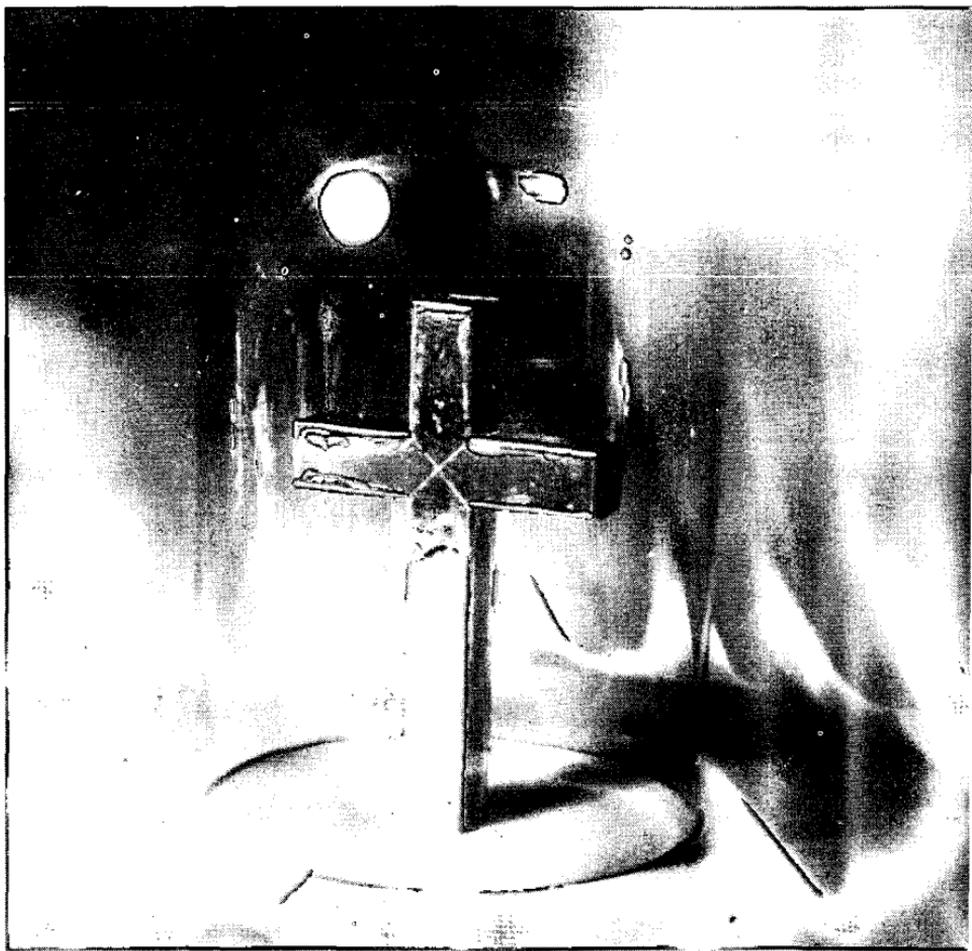
“He who took humanity upon Himself, and in this world lived a perfect life, is to judge us.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 185.

FURTHER STUDY

**Prophets and Kings*, pp. 698, 699.

God's Rule Vindicated

Out of the fires of persecution and trial in the last days, God's church will emerge as a vindication of His love and righteousness.



"The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17).

In last week's lesson we studied the first of three phases of the "day of judgment." This week the second and third phases will be examined; that is, (2) the court of review during the millennium, and (3) the executive phase after the millennium.

The Scriptures testify to the existence of God and that He is the moral Governor of the universe of intelligent beings He has created. Subjects may rebel against the divine authority, but the prophecies foretell that a court of judgment will sit in heaven to resolve the issues between righteousness and sin, between God and Satan.

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14) directs attention to the time set by God for the beginning of the judgment, composed of three phases.

In Daniel 7 it is the "little horn" power, one of the agencies of Satan, that is brought into judgment. Through the Christian apostasy Satan has continued those challenges which he originally raised in heaven. The heavenly court of judgment will try the "little horn" power and will render a verdict of guilty. In that

judgment will be weighed the issues and charges made by Satan against God. The judgment is first of all a judgment on the original issues in favor of God, and a condemnation of Satan and his rebellion with the concurring approval by the watching loyal inhabitants of the universe.

In that court the observers will see by the light of Calvary and the plan of salvation that God's character is infinite love. His law will be seen to be in the best interests of His creatures. It will be evident that intelligent life finds its fullest meaning under the divine government. The cross will have demonstrated that justice and mercy are not incompatible. God has been righteous in all His dealings with His creatures both loyal and disloyal. It will then be seen that the spirit of self-sacrifice is the spirit of heaven, for Deity willingly stooped to save the sinner. God will be vindicated. Henceforth, the universe, under His sovereignty, will be eternally secure.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. Vindication by His People (Rev. 14:12, 14)**
- 2. Vindication by the Judgment—I (Dan. 7:9, 10)**
- 3. Vindication by the Judgment—II (Dan. 8:13, 14)**
- 4. Rebellion Condemned (Dan. 7:26; 8:25)**
- 5. Judging the Wicked (Rev. 20:4)**
- 6. Execution of Sentence (2 Cor. 5:10)**

Part 1
VINDICATION
BY HIS PEOPLE

Considering the issues of the moral controversy we have been studying, how will the last generation of God's true believers vindicate Him on the earth?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. . . .

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle" (Rev. 14: 12, 14).

God will close the great moral controversy between Satan and Himself on two planes: (1) By divine action in the heavenly sanctuary court. Here God's people will be vindicated. (2) By a final movement on earth of His people who will come into full harmony with His law, and will remain loyal to Him at all costs as they preach God's last messages of appeal to the world. Thus, the people that God vindicates in the judgment have contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the vindication of God.

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fulness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

What are the basic points of the last appeal from God to be given to the entire earth? Rev. 14:6-12, 14.

The last appeal continues to be "the everlasting gospel," with special warnings about the last-day situation.

Since the emphases of the second and the third angels come later than the first angel, and since the second advent is not a formal judgment, it is reasonable to conclude that the first angel's announcement, "the hour of his judgment is come," refers to the opening of the heavenly sanctuary court of judgment in heaven in 1844. Thus, since that date, the final vindication of God has been going on in heaven and in earth.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways does my life testify favorably to the character of the God I profess to serve?

"The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle."—*Education*, p. 225.

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, p. 695.

Part 2
VINDICATION
BY THE
JUDGMENT—1

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

Since the "Ancient of days" represents God the Father, where is this solemn judgment held? See "The Great Controversy," pages 479, 480.

"Thousand thousands. These represent the heavenly angels who wait before the Lord and are ever attendant on His will. The angels perform an important part in the judgment. They function as both 'ministers and witnesses' (GC 479).

"Was set. Or, 'began to sit.' Daniel is shown the final judgment in both its phases, investigative and executive."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 7:10.

In comparing Daniel 2 and 7 we see that the latter vision introduces *two* new features: (1) The rise and career of the horn with the eyes and mouth of a man which we have earlier identified as the Christian apostasy, and (2) the scene depicting final judgment in the court of heaven.

The importance of this vision is underscored by the fact that its essential elements are stated three times: verses 1-14, 15-22, and 23-27.

According to the context of this vision who is especially being reviewed and judged? Dan. 7:11, 21, 22, 26.

It is clear that one aspect of this judgment deals with the matter: Who is going to have the dominion? Four world kingdoms sought for control; likewise the little horn. The judgment sits at some time *after* the horn's special period of rule (1260 days-years: AD 538 to AD 1798). Decisions will be made *in favor* of Christ and His people, but *against* the horn whose destruction is decreed (verses 11, 26).

THINK IT THROUGH

The judgment pronounced upon the serpent (Gen. 3:14, 15) was really upon whom? The judgment pronouncement upon the little horn is really a final judgment on whom?

"In the judgment of the universe God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 58.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Daniel 7.

Part 3
VINDICATION
BY THE
JUDGMENT—II

The cleansing of the sanctuary was to take place at the close of what period of time?

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

"The prophecy of Dan. 8:14 announces the time for the beginning of this special work [of the antitypical Day of Atonement]. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary comprehends the entire work of final judgment, beginning with the investigative phase and ending with the executive phase, which results in the permanent eradication of sin from the universe.

"A significant feature of the final judgment is the vindication of God's character before all the intelligences of the universe. The false charges that Satan has lodged against the government of God must be demonstrated as utterly groundless. God must be shown to have been entirely fair in the selection of certain individuals to make up His future kingdom, and in the barring of others from entrance there. The final acts of God will evoke from men the confessions, 'Just and true are thy ways' (Rev. 15:3), 'Thou art righteous, O Lord' (Rev. 16:5), and, 'True and righteous are thy judgments' (Rev. 16:7)." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Dan. 8:14 (p. 845).

What was Daniel shown about a desolating little horn power? What was Gabriel's explanation? Dan. 8:9-12, 23-25.

Gabriel does not name the little horn power, but a comparison of this horn with the terrible nondescript beast of chapter 7 and the daring words and actions of its little horn leave no doubt that the horn of chapter 8 is symbolizing the careers of the same two powers, that is *pagan and papal Rome*.

What would the horn attack and cast down which would in time be cleansed and restored? Dan. 8:11-14.

Pagan Rome destroyed the temple in Jerusalem (AD 70), but Papal Rome has defamed the throne of God by depriving men of the true knowledge of saving righteousness through Christ, man's Mediator and High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. The fact that the horn represents (in part) the Papal phase, functioning in the Christian era, points us to the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:1, 2) and the divine actions which will there take place at the appointed time.

FURTHER STUDY

SDA Bible Commentary, on Daniel 8.

Part 4
REBELLION
CONDEMNED

In the heavenly sanctuary court of judgment what verdict and sentence will be pronounced upon the power represented by a horn?

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (Dan. 7:26).

"He shall be broken without hand" (Dan. 8:25).

Through the spyglass of prophecy we are permitted to glance ahead and see that all the accusations Satan made in heaven (lesson 4) will be condemned in the day of judgment.

In a sense, God—His character, law, government—has been on trial before the universe ever since Lucifer raised his challenges. The divine answer to the rebellion has been the plan of salvation, centering in Christ's sinless life, atoning death, and mediatorial ministry. The universe has watched the out-working of the satanic principle of selfishness and the divine principle of love. In a very real sense, God will be cleared—and Satan condemned—by the entire universe.

"The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; . . . but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. . . . The act of Christ in dying . . . would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and results of sin." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

Satan's high-handed charges defiled the divine throne. He was expelled from heaven. On earth he has continued to "blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle" (Rev. 13:6). The prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 (and related ones in 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13 and 17) show that Satan has continued to promote the same challenges and to usurp God's authority through the activities of the "little horn."

Through this power Satan has succeeded far beyond what he could have done through pagan nations, since it has become a moral voice in the world. Millions regard the Christian apostasy as the only moral force worth reckoning with today.

Thus the judgment in the heavenly sanctuary which declares the "little horn" guilty and orders its destruction renders, in effect, a verdict against Satan. The judgment of the horn is a final judgment on Satan and a vindication of God with the full approval of the loyal universe. The issues raised by Satan will thus be decided in the heavenly court in favor of God.

Part 5
JUDGING THE
WICKED

Who will sit on these thrones of judgment in heaven? (See Rev. 20:6.) Who will be judged?

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

When will this judgment take place? Where? See verse 6; 1 Thess. 4:16-18.

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. . . . At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. . . . In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.

How extensive will this judgment be? Who besides mankind will be examined? 1 Cor. 6:2, 3.

Human probation closes with the completion of Christ's work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 15:5-8). This was a ministry of judgment and vindication, and, as far as man was concerned, dealt with those whose names were written in the book of life. The judgment of fallen angels and impenitent sinners by the saints during their millennial reign with Christ in heaven is an examination and a review of the issues involved in the controversy as begun and carried out by Satan and the fallen angels. There would naturally be many questions why persons were lost. The millennial phase of the judgment will provide an opportunity for the *redeemed* to be fully satisfied with all of God's acts in dealing with the sin problem, just as the investigative phase will satisfy the *unfallen universe*.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it particularly fitting for John to be shown martyrs and persecuted saints on the thrones in judgment?

"The day of His vengeance hastens, when all who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people will meet the just recompense of their deeds; when every act of cruelty or injustice toward God's faithful ones will be punished as though done to Christ Himself."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 48.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 658-661.

**Part 6
EXECUTION
OF SENTENCE**

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

Inasmuch as the intelligent creation resides in a universe which is under moral law, amenability to God cannot be escaped. All mankind, and the fallen angels as well, must stand at the bar of God.

When does the executive phase of the judgment take place? Where? Rev. 20:11-15. See also Matt. 25:31-33; Prov. 11:31.

All mankind will be present: the redeemed within the city; the lost and the fallen angels outside. The loyal universe will witness. "The judgment scene will take place in the presence of all the worlds; for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and His law will stand forth as 'holy, and just, and good.' . . . Sin will not then appear attractive, but will be seen in all its hideous magnitude."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 986.

What will the intelligent creation involved in this phase of judgment confess? Rom. 14:10, 11.

"As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just . . . how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God."

"It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death."

"Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. . . . His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 666, 668, 670.

The executive phase of judgment will elicit from the *lost* a free admission of the rightness of God in His acts. Thus the judgment in its three phases fully vindicates God.

According to Jesus, on what principle of the law will acquittal or condemnation hang? Matt. 25:34-46.

Lack of love for their fellowmen (a violation of the second table of the law) indicates that self is central (a violation of the first table). Only divine grace received into the life can produce supreme love to God and impartial love to others.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 668-673.

Lessons for 2nd Quarter / 1976

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1976 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "God Is Not Silent."

First Lesson

HE REVEALS HIMSELF. Memory verse, Isa. 46:9.

1. *His Unsearchable Greatness (Ps. 145:3).*
2. *His Immeasurable Condescension (Isa. 57:15).*
3. *His Inimitable Attributes (Ex. 34:6).*
4. *His Supreme Transcendence (1 Chron. 16:23-27).*
5. *His Beneficent Activity (Ex. 34:10).*
6. *His Life-giving Power (John 17:3).*

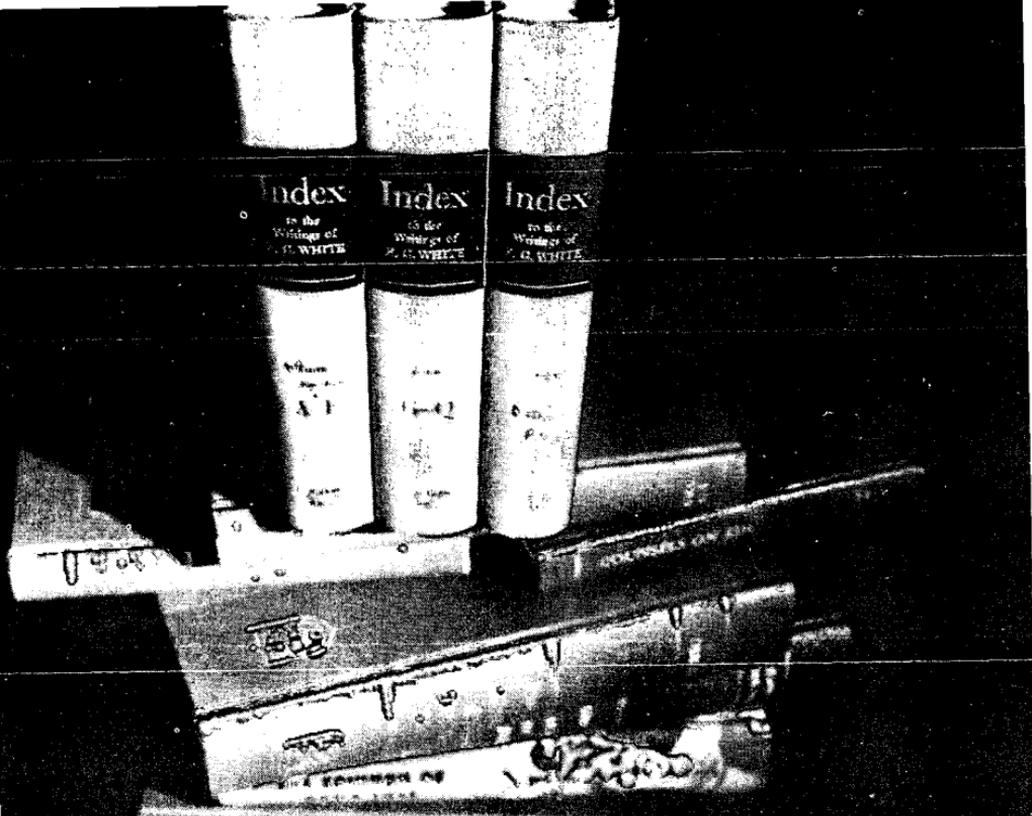
Second Lesson

CHANNELS OF HIS REVELATION. Memory verse, Gal. 1:12.

1. *Visible Reflects Invisible (Rom. 1:20).*
2. *The Message of History (Ex. 19:4).*
3. *Revelation in Jesus (Heb. 1:1, 2).*
4. *The Witness of Men (Heb. 2:3).*
5. *The Written Record (Luke 1:3, 4).*
6. *God Speaks Today (John 16:13).*

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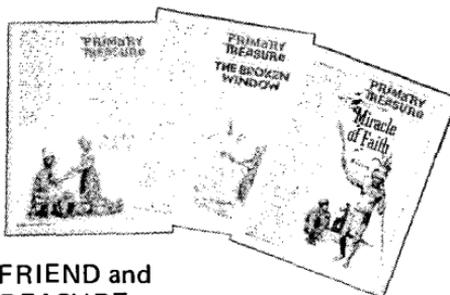
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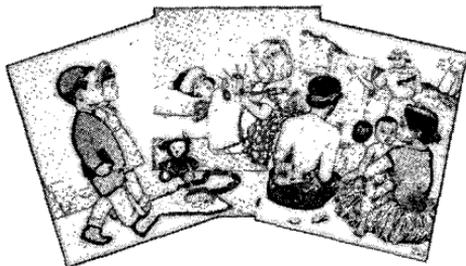
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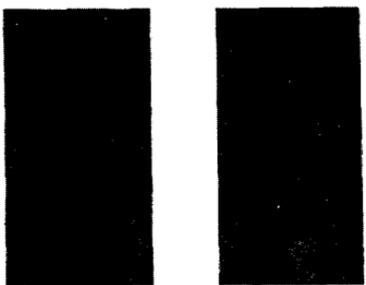
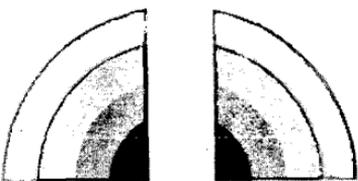


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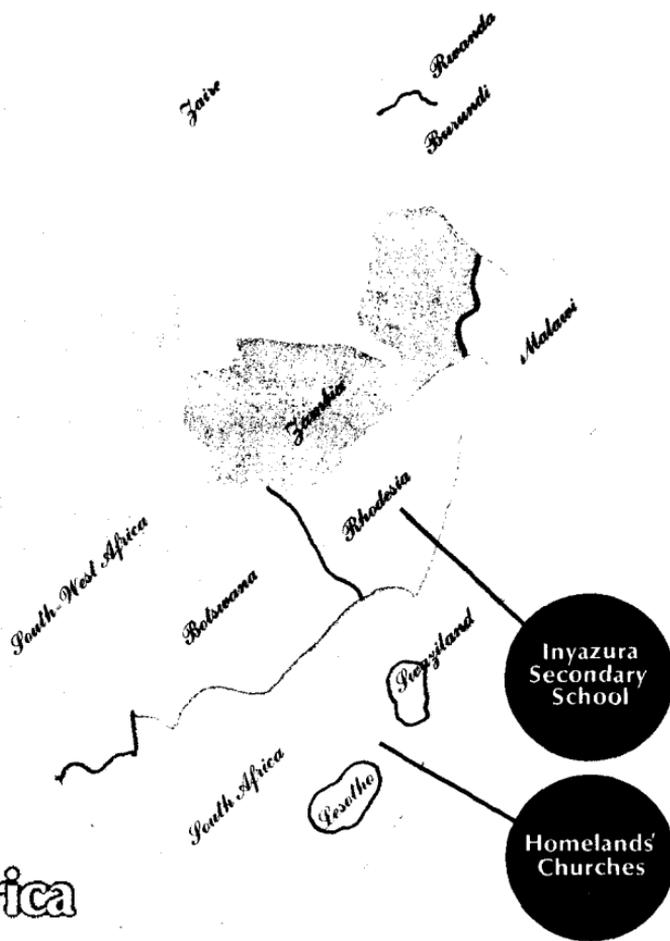
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Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	S.S. Members
Central African Union	5,775,000	542	104,598	220,189
South African Union	7,036,031	149	14,260	14,357
South-East Africa Union	4,916,000	183	33,236	63,836
Southern Union	18,000,000	172	12,868	43,584
Zaire Union	20,705,834	202	31,233	70,001
Zambesi Union	6,852,000	230	38,888	64,552
Zambia Union	4,000,000	170	23,754	74,261
Division Totals	67,284,865	1,648	258,837	550,780

(Figures as of 3rd quarter, 1974)

- Central African Union
- South African Union
- South-East Africa Union
- Southern Union
- Zaire Union
- Zambesi Union
- Zambia Union