

DAYBREAK SERIES



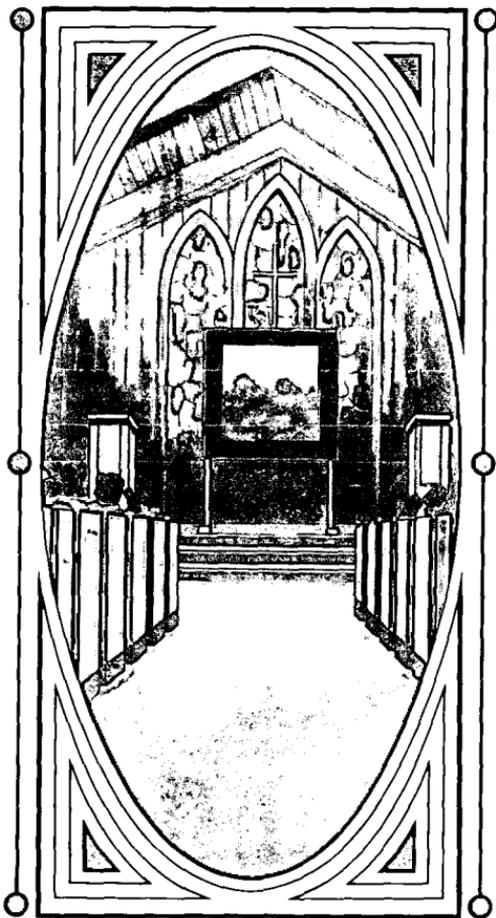
OCT.-DEC. /1979

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

OUR WONDERFUL GOD



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Dear Sabbath School Brothers and Sisters,

In the name of the Euro-Africa Division, may I thank each one of you for your generous third quarter, 1977, Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

Once again it is the privilege of our division to receive financial help from the worldwide Sabbath School family in developing projects which will advance the work of God. The Special Projects Offering for this quarter will reflect a lot of prayer, work, and sacrifice by God's people around the world. Your gifts will go for the following projects:

1. COMPLETION OF ANDAPA HOSPITAL IN MADAGASCAR

Located in the northeast part of Madagascar, this mission hospital began operating two years ago. The construction of the 40-bed hospital has already been started. However, much of the technical apparatus and medical equipment still needs to be financed. Soon a second physician will be employed to give medical assistance to the sick in the outlying areas of the island.

2. EVANGELISTIC CENTER IN N'DJAMENA, CHAD

Elder Albert Bodenmann, a Swiss missionary, pioneered our work to Chad in 1968. During the past 11 years small groups of Adventists have been meeting regularly throughout the country. One of our greatest needs in this field is for an evangelistic center in the country's capital, N'Djamena. For many years the two congregations there have had to meet in small chapels built of clay. This situation is no little hindrance in our evangelistic efforts. Now a part of your offerings will fulfill this real need.

3. DORMITORIES FOR PORTO ACADEMY, PORTO, PORTUGAL

In the last few years our work in Portugal has developed strongly. Doors have suddenly opened for our educational work there. Our school in Porto needs girls' and boys' dormitories enabling Adventist parents to send their children to our school.

We look forward to the end of this quarter with confidence and trust, knowing that through the work of the Holy Spirit and through brotherly cooperation, we will be able to promote and strengthen and complete God's work. Your offerings on this 13th Sabbath will contribute to this.

Again, thank you for your help. In the unity of God's family, I remain

Your brother in Christ,

E. Ludescher, President
Euro-Africa Division

ELOHIM
YAHWEH

THEOS
EL-SHADDAI

ADONAI
KURIOS

God has many names. Each gives a slightly different insight into His character and His nature. The Mighty One. Object of Worship. Master. Ruler. The One Who Is.

It is essential to know God. But it is even more essential to know God completely, because an incomplete knowledge can be worse than no knowledge at all.

You can know God. This quarter's Sabbath School lessons are designed to help. And to understand the Sabbath School lessons even better, read KNOWING GOD, a supplementary lesson-study book written by Edwin R. Thiele, author of the Sabbath School lessons this quarter.

Get in on the benefits of knowing God as Father, Redeemer, Protector, Provider, and Saviour. Read KNOWING GOD. Available

at your nearest Adventist Book Center. Or order by mail from the ABC Mailing Service, P.O. Box 37485, Omaha, Nebraska 61837. Send US\$3.95, plus applicable state tax, for each book ordered. Please include 50¢ for the first book and 40¢ for each additional book for postage and handling. In Canada send to ABC Mailing Service, Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7L5.

Special limited-time introductory price!

Until the end of December, you can get KNOWING GOD at the special introductory price of just US\$3.50 at all Adventist book centers and ABC Mailing Service offices. Buy one now!



Southern Publishing Association



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The Adult Sabbath School Lessons are prepared by the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the lessons is directed by a worldwide Sabbath School Lesson Committee, the members of which serve as consulting editors.

Editorial Office: 6840 Eastern Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20012

Lesson Author: Edwin R. Thiele

Editor: W. Richard Leshner

Editorial Secretary: Florence L. Wetmore

Circulation Manager: Arthur R. Mazat

Art and Design: Pacific Press

Scripture references other than from the King James Version used in this quarterly are as follows:

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Braille lessons available. See page 112.

Adult Sabbath School Lessons (standard edition). Published quarterly by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A. One year subscription in U.S.A., \$2.00; single copy, 50 cents. One year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$2.60; single copy, 65 cents. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

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Start Your Day Right



In order to have a "Good Day" start it with God.

A daily study of your Sabbath School lesson will fortify you for the challenges of the day.

OUR WONDERFUL GOD

INTRODUCTION

God is the outstanding fact of the universe. Man's greatest need is to understand Him better and to have God's image restored in him. Without such an understanding it is not possible for man to be truly happy or to be at peace with himself or his fellows. Because men failed to understand God and because they failed to recognize Him and give Him the homage that is His due, humanity has brought woe upon itself and doom upon the world.

In the Bible God has given a revelation of Himself through His witnesses—the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles. And in these last days we are particularly favored by the marvelous revelation that God has given of Himself through His chosen messenger, Ellen G. White. But the most outstanding revelation the world has had of God is through His Son, Jesus Christ, who came to this earth to live the life of God in human flesh and to give God's message to men through human lips.

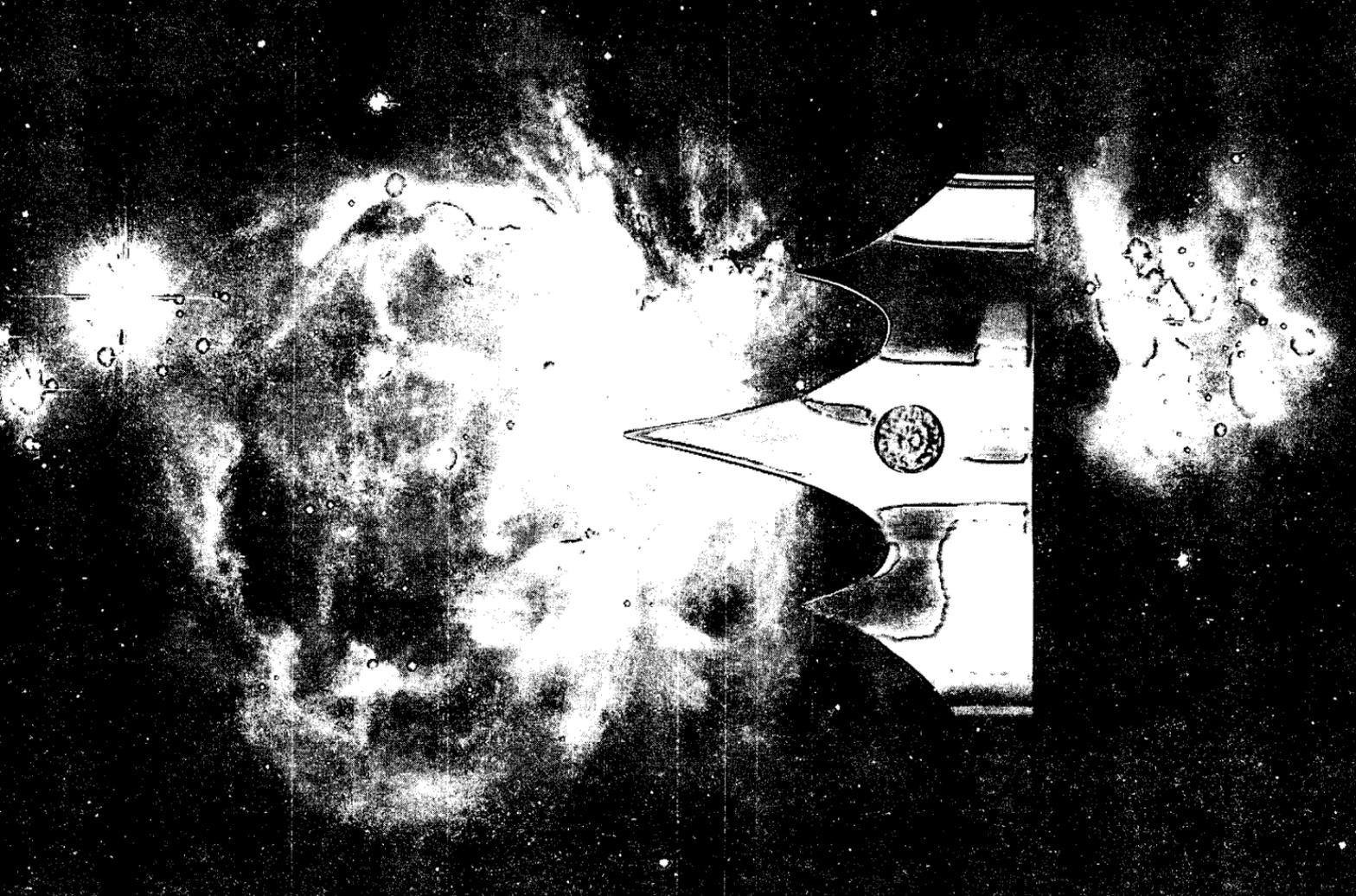
When man becomes acquainted with God, he discovers that He is indeed a wonderful God—a God of goodness as well as greatness, of love as well as wisdom; of mercy as well as justice, of compassion as well as power. He is the God of the poor and meek of earth as well as of the wealthy and the great, a God of men of all colors and races who stand before Him as equals and are equally loved by Him. This wonderful God is our God today, the God of yesterday as well as tomorrow.

The purpose of the lessons this quarter is to help us become better acquainted with our wonderful God and to serve Him better. Thus in this earth we may learn to become like Him, and fit and privileged to become His closest associates throughout eternity.

The Bible and the spirit of prophecy will be our main sources for detailed information concerning our wonderful God. The title of each lesson is a biblical name for God.

The men who wrote the books of the Bible were men who were acquainted with God and who were spokesmen for Him. They heard God, they talked to Him and walked with Him, and made Him known to those about them.

In our age God had a special messenger to whom He revealed Himself and through whom He spoke to man. As a result we may have modern conceptions of God concerning our own ways and the times in which we live, expressed in the language of today. In the writings of Ellen G. White, termed "the spirit of prophecy," we constantly come into touch with God. To what extent this is true may be seen by a glance at the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*. There, under the heading "God," are found 20 pages of references with about 70 entries per page. Under the heading "Christ" 86 pages of references occur, and under the heading "Holy Spirit," there are 30 pages. Anyone who desires to become acquainted with modern revelations concerning God and His ways dares not ignore this source. It will constantly be employed in these lessons.



The Ancient of Days

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:22).

Ellen White has rightly said that the great purpose of life is “to bring man back into harmony with God.”

—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 49.

It does not take much thought or observation to note that man is hopelessly out of touch with his Maker. God is often ignored, and man considers that if he doesn't help himself, no one will. When things go wrong, as in the case of wars and famine, God is blamed. “If God is in control, if God is love,” people will say, “how is it that He permits this or that calamity? Why does He not do something about injustice?” When people consider that God is the active cause of evil, or even the heartless tolerator of evil, they have turned God off in their thinking.

It is important to have a clear conception of God. It is important to know how He relates to evil and how

we should relate to Him. If God is different from what we think, then it is our duty to change our views. We recognize what an injustice it is to have gross misconceptions of our fellowmen. How much more necessary it is for us to know God as He really is.

How can we learn about God? We recognize that we cannot really know God unless He chooses to reveal Himself. But we are grateful that God has revealed Himself in Creation, in the Bible, and supremely in the life of Jesus Christ. Seventh-day Adventists have the writings of Ellen White, often referred to as the spirit of prophecy, a modern-day manifestation of God's revelation through a prophet. Through all these sources we can become acquainted with God, whom to know, said Jesus, is eternal life. (See John 17:3.)

By coming to know God man is lifted up out of the degradation of human life. Although he has inherited the fallen nature of Adam, the Christian looks forward to the time when he can reflect God's character more fully. By beholding he becomes changed.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Eternal God**
(Ps. 90:1, 2)
2. **The Only God**
(Isa. 44:6-8)
3. **The Universal God**
(Isa. 14:26, 27)
4. **The Living God**
(Jer. 10:10, 11)
5. **The Omnipresent God**
(Ps. 139:7-10)
6. **The Greatness of God**
(1 Chron. 16:24, 25)

Part 1 **What does the psalmist, in Psalm 90:1, 2, emphasize about**
THE ETERNAL GOD **God?**

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. 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. 90:1, 2).

In this psalm, Moses presents an impressive picture of the transitoriness of man's existence in contrast with the eternity of God. The life of man is limited. He comes and goes like the grass; he spends his years as a tale that is told, but God abides forever. Notice the striking affirmations of the timelessness of God in Psalm 90:1, 2, 4.

How does John the revelator refer to the length of Christ's reign? Rev. 11:15.

The kingdom will have no end. In this regard it differs from all earthly kingdoms. Our God will reign without ceasing.

How does Daniel envision the kingdom set up by God? Dan. 2:44.

Only one kingdom can last forever and that is God's kingdom because only God can continue ruling forever.

What does Paul say concerning God's being? 1 Tim. 6:16.

Paul places before Timothy the challenge to remain true to God, fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). He is to do this in the sight of God who is to be honored forever and ever, who alone has immortality. Timothy is not serving one who is here today and gone tomorrow. There is stability in eternity.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why is the eternity of the Godhead an important characteristic?**

The eternity of God means the eternity of His principles of righteousness and peace. When we make the eternal God our habitation, we may be sure that we can never be moved. Change and decay are characteristics of everything around us, but God never changes. When God abides with us, we can abide in Him forever.

“I AM means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike to God. He sees the most remote events of past history, and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things that are transpiring daily.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1099.

FURTHER STUDY Isa. 40:6-28; Jer. 10:10-16.

Part 2
THE ONLY GOD

How does the one true God point out His uniqueness?

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isa. 44:6-8).

The Bible makes it clear that there is only one God—the God who created man and who is the supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. That the Lord is the only true God is emphasized throughout God’s Word.

What other texts in Scripture describe the uniqueness of God? Isa. 45:5; 43:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Ps. 86:10.

From earth’s earliest ages after the Fall men have worshiped gods other than the Lord who rules the heavens and the earth. The Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans invented such gods and erected temples to them. But they were gods without power or authority, and were no more worthy of worship or respect than the wood or stone of which they were made.

What is the first commandment of the law of God? Ex. 20:3.

“Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why have men turned away from the true God to worship the false gods?

“Satan accomplished the fall of man, and since that time it has been his work to efface in man the image of God, and to stamp upon human hearts his own image. Possessing supremacy in guilt, he claims supremacy for himself, and exercises over his subjects the power of royalty. He cannot expel God from His throne, but through the system of idolatry, he plants his own throne between the heaven and the earth, between God and the human worshiper.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1105, 1106.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 270-272.

Part 3
THE UNIVERSAL GOD

Is it inevitable that God's purposes will be worked out?

"This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. 14:26, 27).

The Creator of the universe is its lawful Lord, and the maker of the world is its rightful King. God is everywhere in supreme command. (See Col. 1:16, 17.)

Does anything happen in the world that God is unaware of? Matt. 6:26-32.

"Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1141.

"The same creative energy that brought the world into existence is still exerted in upholding the universe and continuing the operations of nature. The hand of God guides the planets in their orderly march through the heavens."—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 185.

What striking contrast does Isaiah make between God and His creation? Isa. 40:15, 17.

It is comforting to know that the Supreme Ruler above is the Friend of man. Human beings everywhere are objects of His saving grace. "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

"The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 191.

What Bible characters not of the Jewish race are singled out as having acknowledged the one true God?

Rahab the innkeeper of Jericho (Joshua 2:3, 11), Naaman the Syrian commander (2 Kings 5:9, 15), Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king (Dan. 2:47), Cornelius the Roman centurion (Acts 10:1, 2), the Roman centurion at the cross (Luke 23:46, 47), Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 1:16), and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27-37).

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you explain the sovereignty of God in the light of the fact that evil is rampant in the world?

FURTHER STUDY

Isa. 52:7-10; 54:2-5; Micah 4:2-13; Zech. 4:6-14.

Part 4 Besides His eternity and uniqueness, what other characteristic does God have?
THE LIVING GOD

“The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens” (Jer. 10:10, 11).

The living God of the Hebrews is set forth in striking contrast to the man-made gods of the heathen which have no life. (See 1 Sam. 17:36; 1 Kings 18:26-29; 1 Thess. 1:9.)

The term “living God” means more than that God is alive. It also means that God gives life. That is why the psalmist says: “With my whole being I thirst for God, the living God” (Ps. 42:2, NEB). (See also Ps. 63:1.) The psalmist knows that, as the parched animal drinks water and is refreshed, so we can come to the living God and receive renewed energies.

There is also the connotation of watching and caring and acting, something a living God could do but the idols never. We may be thankful that we have a living God who can be trusted to care for our every need.

By what name did God reveal Himself to Moses? Ex. 3:14.

The four Hebrew letters composing this name have no related vowels. Some have pronounced them Jehovah or Yahweh. The devout Jew considers the name too sacred to pronounce. The name suggests that God is the ever-present, ever-active God, the One who is ready to help when the need arises:

With whom did Peter link Jesus? Matt. 16:16.

Jesus claimed that He is the Life-giver. (See John 6:47; 10:10.) He is the bread of life (John 6:51). He is the door and the shepherd (John 10:9, 14).

THINK IT THROUGH If the words of Christ are eternal life, what should I do about them?

“It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Ex. 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ he declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God ‘manifest in the flesh,’ 1 Tim. 3:16. And to us He says: ‘I AM the Good Shepherd.’ ‘I AM the living Bread.’ ‘I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

Part 5 **What attribute of God is expressed in Psalm 139:7-10?**
THE OMNIPRESENT
GOD

**“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me” (Ps. 139:7-10, RSV).**

God is everywhere. There is no place where man may flee from His presence, nowhere that His power is not at work, in the highest heavens or in the deepest parts of the earth.

By the omnipresence of God we mean that God is not limited by space as we are. We can be in only one place at a time, but He can be everywhere at the same time. It is not that He spreads Himself out everywhere—as the pantheist would suppose—but He is wholly present everywhere. This concept is beyond our comprehension, but so is everything else about God!

God has given abundant assurance in His Word that He is ever present with His children. To His followers Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). Through His prophet Isaiah God spoke words of courage, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isa. 41:10). In the final crisis God’s people will be able to say, “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge” (Ps. 46:7).

What desire did God express to Israel through Moses in Exodus 25:8?

The church building today has, in some ways, taken the place of the tabernacle of Old Testament times. There the Lord meets with His people. There we can meet with Him and hear His voice speaking to our hearts. God can be to us more than mere theory. Wherever we may be, walking and talking with Him can be a matter of personal experience. With my spiritual ear I personally can hear God speaking to me, telling me that He loves me and is with me, directing my ways, and speaking confidence and joy to my heart. When Jesus returns in glory, I can be with those who say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa. 25:9).

THINK IT THROUGH **How does the omnipresence of God help me?**

FURTHER STUDY *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 115, 116.

Part 6
THE GREATNESS
OF GOD

What was David's concept of God?

"Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods" (1 Chron. 16:24, 25).

Men of God have been deeply moved as they have pondered His greatness and goodness. The greatest stars are the products of His hands. The mightiest angels were made by Him. All the creatures of earth exist because of Him.

What are some of the ways in which we can see God's greatness?

1. God's goodness—Ps. 31:19.
2. God's works—Ps. 92:5.
3. God's thoughts—Ps. 139:17.
4. God's personal care—1 Sam. 12:24.

God intends that we should think often of Him and of His wonderful works. Doing so, we would approach Him with fitting awe, respect, and acclaim. "Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. . . . He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion"(Ps. 111:1-4).

God is great in all His attributes—in His love and power, His gentleness and mercy, His justice and goodness. Everything about Him can be expressed in superlatives. His goodness makes Him great.

The greatness of God makes men meek and reverent in His presence. "True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. . . . The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 48, 49.

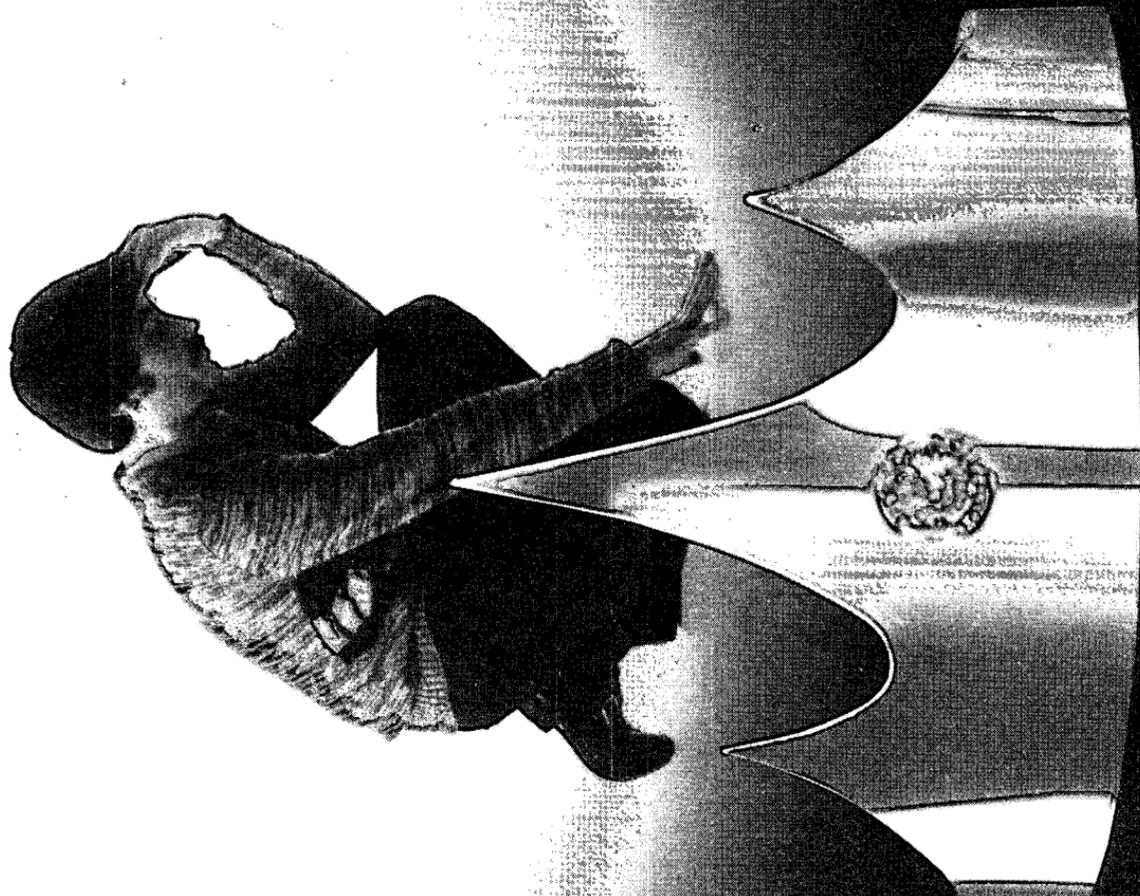
The greatness of God inspires His children to strive toward greater heights of attainment. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). As God is perfect in character, so man should be perfect in his. As God is perfect in His workmanship, so man should put forth every effort to be perfect in his. "As God is perfect in His sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere."—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 365.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a man become truly great? What would be his attributes?

FURTHER STUDY

Job 38:1-41; Ps. 19:1-6; Isa. 40:9-31.



The Lord Most High

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust" (Ps. 91:1, 2).

There are many philosophies of history. For some, history is a random occurrence of events, without meaning, without purpose. For others, history can be explained in terms of economics and personal ambition. Still others think of history as cyclical, ever repeating itself, or wavelike in the sense of the rise and fall of nations and individuals.

The Christian understands by revelation that above and through all history there is a God who began the process, sustains it, and ever works to accomplish His plans and purposes. Man is not alone to fend for himself or determine his destiny. There is a God who encourages the good and controls the evil.

"In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping

of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . .

"To understand these things—to understand that 'righteousness exalteth a nation;' that 'the throne is established by righteousness' and 'upholden by mercy' (Proverbs 14:34; 16:12; 20:28); to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who 'removeth kings, and setteth up kings' (Daniel 2:21),—this is to understand the philosophy of history."—*Education*, pp. 173-175.

The purpose of this lesson is to show how human beings may enter upon true greatness only as they come into harmony with the plans and purposes of Him who alone is truly great, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the Lord most high.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Supreme Ruler of All**
(Rev. 5:13)
2. **The Creator of All**
(Col. 1:16, 17)
3. **The Infinite God**
(Ps. 147:5; Rom. 11:33, 34)
4. **The All-powerful God**
(Eph. 1:19-21)
5. **The Judge of All the Earth**
(Gen. 18:25)
6. **The Accepted God**
(Jer. 31:34)

**Part 1
THE SUPREME
RULER
OF ALL**

What portion of God's creation acknowledges God as ruler of all?

"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).

The Bible makes it clear that God is the one Supreme Ruler of this world and all the universe. It is He who rules in the heavens, and it is He who is sovereign over the earth.

What position does David attribute to God? What possessions? 1 Chron. 29:10, 11.

These words of David are part of a prayer he offered at the time that he presented to his son Solomon the plans for a temple in Jerusalem. David had indicated what he had prepared for the temple and what he had given, and he called upon the people also to be generous with their offerings. This they were; and every one was happy at the results (verse 9). This prayer is one of the most beautiful in the Old Testament, and it represents how devout people feel when they stand in the presence of God. Words are hardly adequate to express all the supreme qualities that God possesses.

By contrast, how does David portray himself and his people? 1 Chron. 29:14-19.

Man has nothing in himself, but in God he has everything! Yet he has one obligation, to keep God's commandments and statutes (verse 19). The Supreme Ruler is the Supreme Benefactor if we are faithful to Him.

What control does Daniel say that God has over rulers in this world? Dan. 4:17.

Although the world is in rebellion against God, the time is coming when the forces of evil will be overthrown and God will take complete control. (See Rev. 11:15.)

What will Jesus do when He returns as King? Matt. 25:31-34.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God is the Supreme Ruler of the world, why does He permit so much misery and injustice?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 180; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

Part 2
THE CREATOR
OF ALL

According to Paul how complete is God's creation?

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1;16, 17).

Paul excludes nothing from God's creation. It includes heaven and earth; it may or may not be visible; it may be any order of supernatural being included under such terms as "thrones" or "principalities." Then he points out that Creation was accomplished *through* Christ and *for* Him. That is, Christ is the agent of Creation and its goal. (See John 1:3.) Furthermore Christ is the One in whom all things are held together. There could hardly be any stronger statement to indicate the comprehensiveness of Creation and its total dependence upon Him. Here is a doctrine by which to test all theories of origin, all philosophies of existence.

How does nature testify to its Creator? Ps. 19:1-6.

Only a being of infinite wisdom, power, and love could have brought the world into being. God's works testify of this. In the sunset, the snowflake, the rose, we can see His sense of beauty. In the mountains that tower above, the abyss that yawns beneath, the seas that circle the globe, and the stars in their circuits through limitless space, we can see something of God's infinite power.

On what basis should man reflect his Creator? Gen. 1:26, 27.

Man himself provides the most telling picture of the Creator. The wisdom and love of man reflect the wisdom and love of God. Man's physical form in some small way reflects something of the form of God. Man's sense of justice, mercy, and truth partakes of the matchless and holy character of God.

But also in man may be seen the evil image of the enemy who has sought to destroy in man the image of God. The greatest work of the Creator is that of restoring man to His own image. (See 1 John 3:2.)

THINK IT THROUGH

How can man express gratefulness to his Creator?

"Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. . . . His nature was in harmony with the will of God. . . . He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 44-51.

Part 3
THE INFINITE GOD

In what respects may God be declared to be infinite?

“Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite” (Ps. 147:5).

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Rom. 11:33, 34).

Since man is finite, he cannot grasp the meaning of infinity. But he can begin to feel its magnitude when he thinks of all the knowledge in the world, both past and present, and recognizes that God has comprehended it all. We bow today before the superior knowledge of authorities in fields of learning, but God is the authority of authorities. When we think of how narrow a field is included in the expertise of the expert, and how vast the area of possible exploration, then we begin to marvel at a God who has the expertise of an innumerable number of experts, and that there is no area of which He is not an expert. In speaking this way we are but using human terms. God’s knowledge is infinite, and we cannot but bow before such a God in utter humility.

How does this Infinite God relate to you and me? Jer. 31 :3.

However complex our problem may be, God can unravel it. However difficult I may be to understand, God can enter into the deepest recesses of my mind and appreciate every nuance of my thinking and feeling. There is nothing too difficult for Him. And since He loves us with an everlasting, unfathomable love, we can commit our ways to Him with absolute confidence that he will work everything out for our best interests.

“If you come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as you really are, and in humble, trusting prayer make your wants known to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to your cry, and will let light shine into your heart and all around you; for through sincere prayer your soul is brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 323.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is the Infinity of God important to man?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 431-435; *Education*, pp. 169, 170; *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 66.

Part 4
THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD **What manifestations of God's power does Paul state in Ephesians 1:19-21?**

"What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:19-21).

Note that God manifests His power to "us-ward," that is, in the direction of our interests. If our all-powerful God left us to our own devices, His power would mean nothing to us.

Contrast how man has treated Jesus with the way God raised Him from the dead. Left to his own devices, man does not know what is to his best interests. Man rejected Christ (see John 1:11), but God has made Christ the means of man's salvation.

Infinitely greater than any power of earth is the power of God. He is the Source of all power in the heavens or in the earth. The power of the mightiest sun or the almost unbelievable power in the smallest atom has its origin in Him. The power in the minds and bodies of men came from Him and is sustained by Him.

**Where can we find indisputable evidences of God's power?
Rom. 1:19, 20.**

As we ponder upon the infinite power of God, we stand before Him with awe and reverence. "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens. . . . Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:13, 14).

**How can man receive power to accomplish his daily tasks?
Isa. 40:29-31.**

What special power is available to every Christian? Acts 1:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

If infinite power is available to us, why are we so slow to appropriate it?

"Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 481.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 416, 417, 481; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 116.

Part 5
THE JUDGE OF
ALL THE EARTH

What did Abraham hint to God about His judgments?

“That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25).

Abraham was concerned about the safety of Lot, his nephew, now living in Sodom. Would God destroy a righteous man and his family along with the wicked? It seemed unthinkable. Yet what evidence was there that this would not happen? The story in Genesis 18 shows us Abraham pleading with his heavenly visitor—who was Christ—that God would not destroy a whole city for the sake of ten righteous people in it.

The heart of man calls for justice to be done to all, to the righteous as well as the wicked. As it is right for the wicked to be condemned, so it is also right for the righteous to be freed from condemnation.

While the Bible teaches that God is the Creator and the Supreme Ruler of the universe, it also teaches that He is the Supreme Judge who will exercise His saving grace in behalf of the salvation of the righteous and mete out final judgment upon the wicked and rebellious.

How will the world be judged and by whom? Acts 17:31.

On what basis will Jesus judge men and divide them into two groups? Matt. 25:32-46.

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

THINK IT THROUGH

What makes Christ supremely qualified to judge?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 479-485.

Part 6
THE ACCEPTED GOD

What condition does God say will obtain on the earth in due time?

"They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:34).

God has made it clear that His efforts for the restoration of this earth from rebellion to loyalty will succeed. The iniquity of this world will ultimately destroy it, and this old world of evil will be replaced by a new world of righteousness. Christ's sacrifice for sinners will not be in vain. This world created by God will be restored to its original purpose. Man created in the image of God will be morally re-created in that image.

In ancient times God gave Abraham the promise, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Because of his fidelity Abraham became the forerunner of many faithful witnesses who would turn multitudes to God. "Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, he steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

"Wherever he pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained. In following years, there were those among the roving Canaanites who received instruction from Abraham; and whenever one of these came to that altar, he knew who had been there before him; and when he had pitched his tent, he repaired the altar, and there worshiped the living God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 128.

By what process were the disciples at Pentecost, and their listeners, led to accept God and His full salvation? Acts 2:1-41.

Note the following steps:

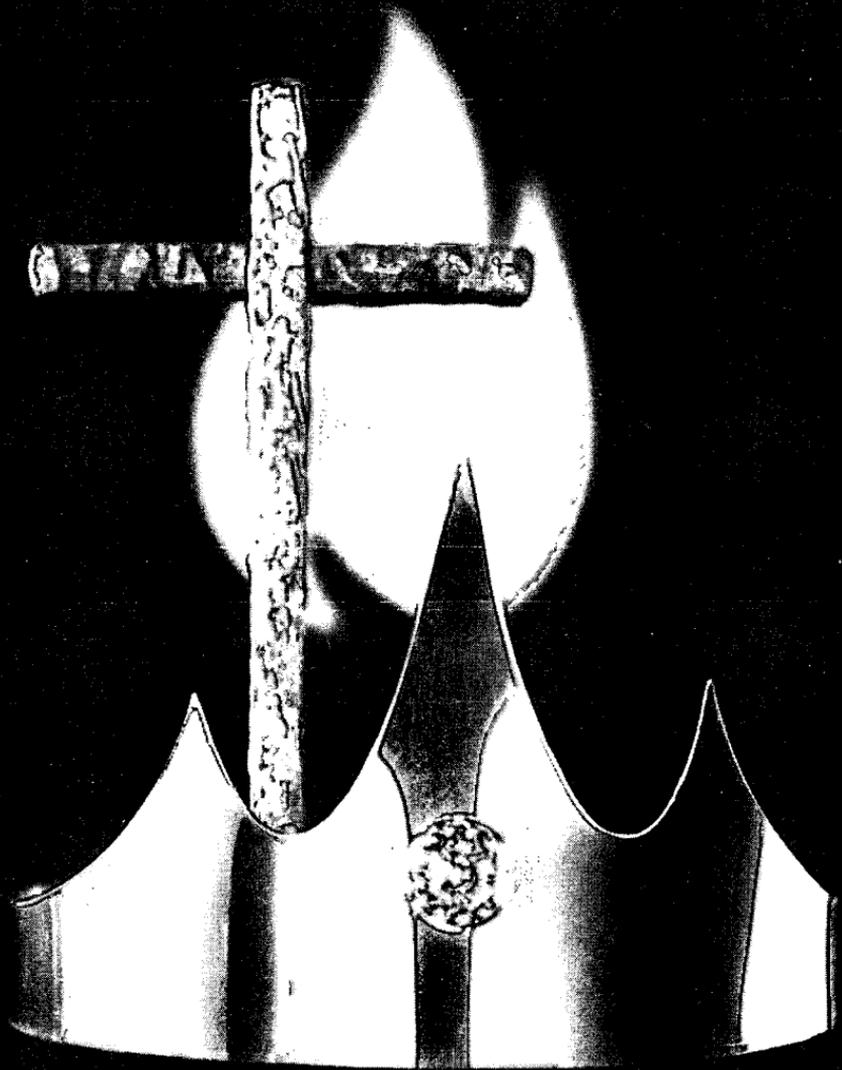
1. The disciples were united in aims and purposes.
2. They were endowed with the Holy Spirit.
3. They spoke in such a way that they communicated effectively their message.
4. People's hearts were touched.
5. People were told what to do, and they did it.

THINK IT THROUGH

What evidence do we have today of the effective ministry of the Spirit of God?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 35-46.



Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

The nature of God is a mystery, seeing He far transcends man. It is impossible for man, with his finite mind, to grasp the infinite. All that he knows about God is what God has revealed.

In this lesson we seek to learn what is revealed about the Godhead. In this way we are learning about our wonderful God. We approach the subject with reverence and with a recognition that in matters that are not revealed we have no right to speculate. But what has been revealed is for us and our children.

“Man cannot by searching find out God. . . . No mortal mind can penetrate the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works. Only that which he sees fit to reveal can we comprehend of Him. Reason must acknowledge an authority superior to

itself. Heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 285, 286.

The oneness of God was declared in the days of Moses in the words: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). Jesus quoted this and said that it was the first commandment of all. (See Mark 12:29.) The Christian faith is therefore monotheistic.

Yet Jesus told His disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19). This indicates that there are three persons in one. Jesus taught his disciples to address God as “Our Father” (Matt. 6:9). He addressed God as His Father. (See John 11:41.) At His baptism the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon Him. (See Matt. 3:16.) A voice from heaven spoke and said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (verse 17). These texts and others lead us to believe that our wonderful God is three persons in one, a mind-boggling mystery, but a truth that we accept by faith because it has been revealed in Scripture.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The True God**
(Deut. 6:4)
2. **Three Persons**
(Matt. 28:19)
3. **God the Father**
(Matt. 6:9)
4. **God the Son**
(John 1:14, 18)
5. **God the Holy Spirit**
(2 Cor. 13:14)
6. **The Mystery of the Godhead**
(1 Tim. 3:16)

Part 1
THE TRUE GOD

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4).

Down through history men have worshiped many gods. But there is only one Supreme Deity.

“In striking contrast to the nations about them, who were polytheists, the Hebrews believed in one true God. This profession of faith has been the watchword of the Hebrew race for more than 3,000 years (see Mark 12:29). The apostle Paul states the same truth as a tenet of Christianity (1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:4-6).”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 974.

How may the true God be characterized? Isa. 43:1, 11, 15.

The true God is Creator and Redeemer. He is the One who brought all things into existence in the first place. And He is the One who has provided a way of salvation for fallen man. He is able to tell the end from the beginning. God has perfect knowledge—He knows the past, the present, and the future. It may be conceived that a superior person would know a great deal about the past and the present. But when it comes to the future, only God can penetrate its mysteries and know exactly what will happen. The confirmation of prophecy in its fulfillment is the evidence of its divine source. Only one being is such a God.

In what other way than through Scripture can I know about God? Rom. 1:20.

Nature speaks to us of God. (See Ps. 19:1.) It tells us that there is a God who brought it into being, because it did not create itself. It also tells us about the greatness of God, because only the true God could have brought into being the vast universe with all its galaxy of stars. Only the true God could have designed all the aspects of nature with its infinite detail and microscopic structure. There can be nothing more salutary to man than to look beyond nature to the true God and to worship Him who made the stars and the world and everything that is in it.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God is good—and He is!—and He has created all things well—and He did!—how is it that there is so much violence in nature?

“God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator’s hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God’s law—the law of love—that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God’s love is revealed.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 9.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 99-101.

Part 2
THREE PERSONS

“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).

In this baptismal formula it is notable that the word “name” is in the singular, and then there follows the names, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Is this a hint of three in one?

The word “persons” used in the title of today’s lesson must be understood in a theological sense. If we equate human personality with God, then we would say that three persons means three individuals. But then we would have three Gods, or tritheism. Historic Christianity has given to the word “person,” when used of God, a special connotation: a personal self-distinction, which gives distinctiveness in the persons of the Godhead without destroying the concept of oneness. This idea is not easy to grasp—or to explain! It is part of the mystery of the Godhead. It is this revelation which makes the monotheism of Christianity different from that of Judaism or Islam.

What hints do we have in the Old Testament of a trinity? (Gen. 1:1-3.)

The Hebrew word for God in this passage is *Elohim*, a plural form. Yet the verb *bara*, “created,” is in the singular form. *God speaks, that is, He uses the Word, in creation. (See John 1:1.) And the Spirit of God “moved upon the face of the waters.” Here there seems to be an indication of, at least, more than one person. Note also the use of “us” and “our” in this pronouncement, “Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26).* Some have suggested that this is the “we” of royalty, but it would seem strange for Deity to address Himself, or that He would be associating other created beings in the creation of man. It seems more reasonable to accept this as a hint of persons in the Godhead planning a common strategy.

The Old Testament makes reference to the Angel of the Lord, a being who is referred to as having the attributes of God. (Compare the story of Hagar in Genesis 16:7-13 and Genesis 48:16, where Jacob refers to the Angel as having redeemed him.) The Messianic promise is of a Son whose names apply to Deity (Isa. 9:6). The Holy Spirit is also mentioned. (See Isa. 11:2; 42:1.) The concept of the Trinity is far from being developed, but the elements seem to be there.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way does the concept of the Trinity help us to see how God is love?

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pp. 614-617.

Part 3 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in
GOD THE FATHER heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9).

Jesus taught His disciples to address God as their Father. He made the relationship very personal. They could have this relationship because they were born again. But to those who believed on Jesus, to them was given power "to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

What vision did Daniel have of God the Father? Dan. 7:9, 10.

"The Ancient of Days is God the Father. . . . It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, . . . attend this great tribunal."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

Such a picture of the Father should strike one with awe. Our Father loves us with an everlasting love, but we must ever be careful not to be unduly familiar with Him. The hymn expresses it beautifully:

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and He destroy."
—Isaac Watts,
Church Hymnal, no. 1.

Who is the express image of the Father? Heb. 1:2, 3.

Sometimes we misunderstand the Father by forgetting that Jesus came to reveal His Father; we must remember that when we see Jesus in His sacrifice and love we are also seeing the Father at work. We must never separate the work of one from the work of the other. God is not demanding, and Jesus pleading. They both demand and They both plead.

"Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 738, 739.

The world is at enmity with God because it misunderstands Him. It is for us to change that conception by being God's ambassadors. (See 2 Cor. 5:17-21.)

THINK IT THROUGH **How do you and I go about telling the world that God is love?**

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 737-746.

Part 4
GOD THE SON

“The Word became flesh; he came to dwell among us, and we saw his glory, such glory as befits the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

“No one has ever seen God; but God’s only Son, he who is nearest to the Father’s heart, he has made him known” (John 1:14, 18, NEB).

John wants us to be sure that in Jesus, the Son of the living God, we recognize full Deity. He was God incarnate. (Read verses 1-4.) He was one with the Father and existed with Him from eternity.

How did the Jews show that they understood the claim of Jesus to deity? John 5:18. (See Mathew 22:43, 44.)

What was the relationship of Jesus to the Holy Spirit? John 15:26.

Jesus said that He would send the Comforter. In another passage He says that the Father will send the Comforter (John 14:26). Thus there seems to be perfect collaboration between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

What was the close working relationship between the Father and the Son? John 5:19-22.

It is interesting to note that the Father and the Son not only work together, but They assume parallel functions. The Father raises the dead; so does the Son, and He gives life to whom He will. As for judgment, the Father seems to have given this authority to the Son, so that there will be mutual honor. (See verse 23.) Everlasting life is dependent on hearing what Jesus says and believing in the Father (verse 24). Both Father and Son have life in Themselves (verse 26).

After the resurrection, what did Thomas call the risen Christ? John 20:28.

There was no doubt in Thomas’s mind about the deity of Christ—after he had examined Christ’s scars. Jesus told Thomas that he had been given the privilege of the direct touch in order to believe. Then Jesus commended as blessed those who do not have the privilege of visual contact and yet believe (verse 29).

THINK IT THROUGH

What have you read in the Scriptures so far to indicate clearly that the oneness between the Father and the Son must not negate the distinctiveness of Their persons?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 207-213.

Part 5
GOD THE
HOLY SPIRIT

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

This threefold benediction shows that in the days of the apostles the doctrine of the Trinity was fairly well understood and accepted. It was for later centuries to work out philosophical and other aspects of the teaching, but the main ideas were already present with the apostolic church.

What part did the Holy Spirit have in the birth and baptism of Jesus? Luke 1:35; 3:22.

Notice that in both of these verses reference is made to the Three Persons of the Godhead.

What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a mere influence?

The Spirit speaks (1 Tim. 4:1). The Spirit makes intercession (Rom. 8:26). The Spirit invites (Rev. 22:17). These are all activities of a person. Furthermore, Paul warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

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

What important function does the Holy Spirit serve in the church? Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:28.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do we not have a greater manifestation of the Spirit in the church than we do?

“We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people ‘to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 671, 672; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 47-56.

Part 6
THE MYSTERY
OF THE GODHEAD

“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

Paul is impressed with the fact that there are many mysterious aspects of Christian teaching. A mystery is not an impenetrable secret, but a secret that is made known only to the initiated. A man must first be willing to accept the evidence placed before him. He must be open to receive the light that comes his way.

What basic element is necessary as we approach the truths revealed in the Bible? Heb. 11:6.

There are many aspects of God’s nature that we cannot understand; nor should we expect to understand them, since God far transcends man, and man’s powers of understanding are limited by the capacity of his mind. Nevertheless it is important to believe what has been revealed.

The monotheistic religions other than Christianity tend to limit God by a human concept of oneness. Yet even in the common walk of life we recognize the difference between simple and complex forms of life. How shall amoebas understand man? and how shall man understand God? Why could not the complexity of the Godhead include the concept of three persons without destroying unity in a way that is beyond man’s ken? We must avoid any view that limits God or makes Him what He is not.

Why is it important to know God insofar as He has been revealed? John 17:3.

The Christian is what he is because he has accepted the revelation of God in the Bible, and he knows that he lives under the protection and guidance of a wonderful God who is preparing a wonderful future for him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why has the Christian church throughout the centuries insisted on belief in a three-in-one God?

“The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight.

“The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. . . .

“The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 614, 615.



Emmanuel- God With Us

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

Man needed God and God earnestly sought the return of His wayward children. That was why God came to earth. Without His coming, man was eternally doomed. By His coming, every one who accepts Him is eternally saved.

God came to earth in a vastly different form from that in which man expected Him. Not even God’s chosen people looked for the Saviour to come in poverty and humility. They looked for greatness above goodness, for majesty above meekness, for power above poverty, for stateliness above sacrifice.

But the world was not really looking for God. It had no idea what God was like. When the world saw God, it rejected Him.

Emmanuel, however, was God in the truest and fullest sense. He was God in heart and God in everyday life. He was the embodiment of all the love of God and the revelation of all His goodness.

This was Jesus, the son of Mary, the Son of God—Emmanuel.

“Satan has been revealed as man’s enemy and destroyer; Christ, as man’s friend and deliverer. His Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit. . . .

“And souls that have been degraded into instruments of Satan are still through the power of Christ transformed into messengers of righteousness.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 341.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Word of God**
(John 1:1-5)
2. **The World’s Creator**
(John 1:3, 10)
3. **Christ and the Father**
(John 3:16, 17)
4. **God Made Flesh**
(1 Tim. 3:16)
5. **The World’s Redeemer**
(Rev. 5:9)
6. **The Exaltation of the Son**
(Phil. 2:9-11)

Part 1
THE WORD
OF GOD **By what name does John introduce Jesus in the beginning of his Gospel?**

“When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it” (John 1:1-5, NEB).

John’s language is simple but very deep. One needs to study these verses in great detail in order to draw out the full meaning. For instance, do you fully understand the expression “Word”? Do you see how important the “Word” is? We really do not know Jesus unless we recognize His divinity, His part in Creation, His relation to the Father, and what He has done for man.

Jesus is the Word of God. The Word is an expression of God. Through Jesus God expressed Himself to angels and to men. In Jesus is found the expression of the inmost, the dearest, the most vital, the most enduring thoughts of God. Jesus is so completely identified with His Father that He can be considered as His word.

When Philip wanted Jesus to reveal the Father, what answer did Jesus give? John 14:9.

When we become acquainted with Jesus, we become acquainted with God. If we desire to become acquainted with the love, the goodness, the ways of God, there is no better way to do this than to become acquainted with Christ. He is God’s very word, a perfect expression of His Father.

How do we know that the Father and the Son are distinct persons? Matt. 3:17; John 20:17.

Because of the complete identification between God and Jesus, between Father and Son, there are those who look upon Them as one and the same person. But that is not true. Jesus was a perfect expression of God, but He was a separate person from the Father.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why did Philip, why would anyone, want to see the Father?

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 73-77.

Part 2
THE WORLD'S
CREATOR**According to John, who was the divine Person who created the world?****“All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”****“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1:3, 10).**

Christ's creation of the world was an event of outstanding importance to every human being, to all created beings.

“It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. . . . It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

“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. . . .

“Until this time all heaven had been in order, harmony, and perfect subjection to the government of God.”—*Early Writings*, p. 145. Now, however, the harmony of heaven was broken. Satan was cast out to take up his abode in the newly created world, purposing to carry his rebellion throughout the universe.

Man, created in the image of God, was enticed into disobedience. He lost his innocence and happiness and was doomed to suffer the penalty of death.

God, however, still loved the world that had rebelled against Him. A plan was devised whereby man could be reclaimed from sin and restored to loyalty and holiness. Jesus came to the world to save it.

What was the tragic reception given to Jesus when He came? John 1:11.

The scene is beyond understanding, almost beyond belief. Here was something that must not be, that just could not happen, but it did. The Creator of the world was rejected by the world He had come to save!

Why does the world reject Christ? John 7:7.**THINK IT THROUGH****If Jesus knew He would be rejected by men, why did He come?****FURTHER STUDY***Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44-51.

**Part 3
CHRIST AND
THE FATHER****What were the motivation and purpose of Christ's coming to our world as a man?**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

In the plan for man's salvation from sin, there was complete unity between the Father and the Son. Both loved the world. Both gave Themselves to carry through the plan for man's redemption agreed upon before the foundation of the world. God sent the Son and the Son volunteered to go. The result of this unity of purpose and effort was the death of Jesus on the cross and the offer of eternal salvation for man.

What facts did Jesus present to show the close unity that exists between Him and the Father? John 10: 15, 17, 30, 36.

In the relationship between the Father and the Son there is always the closest possible unity in all things. This is true in thought and purpose, in plan and effort.

Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). "The Father is in me, and I in him" (John 10:38). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Why does Jesus reflect so perfectly the will and character of the Father? Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3.

In the creation of the world, Father and Son worked together. "God . . . created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9). "There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:6).

"The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 269.

THINK IT THROUGH**What implications does the unity of the Father and the Son have for us if we are in Christ?**

"Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as he was."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

FURTHER STUDY

That I May Know Him, p. 38; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 36, 37, 40.

Part 4
GOD MADE
FLESH **What change did God the Son accept when he came into the world?**

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). (See also 1:1, 2; 2:8.)

It is a great mystery that the God of heaven appeared on earth in the form of human flesh. (See 1 Tim. 3:16.) The God who created the world made the dust which composes the earth. God formed man of the dust. Yet God became man when He came to earth. That mystery is the very heart of Christianity.

What prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was born? Matt. 1:21-23. (See Isa. 7:14.)

No more joyful or important tidings could have come to man. God was to come down from heaven to earth to live as a human being. The Son of God was to become the Son of man so that children of earth might again become sons of God. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). Divinity became humanity in order that sinful humanity might be accepted by God and restored in His image.

Why did Jesus come to this earth? 2 Cor. 5:21.

Jesus came to earth at a time when men had sunk to the lowest depths of vice and iniquity. He took on human flesh after it had been weakened by thousands of years of wickedness. But never once did He yield to sin; never once was He overcome by the powers of evil. He came both to die for men and to show them how to live by the aid of His divine power. As He was victorious against the powers of evil, so He wanted men to know that they also might be victorious.

“He gave His only-begotten Son to come to earth, to take the nature of man, not only for the brief years of life, but to retain his nature in the heavenly courts, an everlasting pledge of the faithfulness of God. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and love of God! ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God’ (1 John 3:1).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 258.

Christ will retain His humanity forever. He will always be God, and He will always continue to be man.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why might one think it could have been harder for Jesus to live on earth than for you and me?**

FURTHER STUDY *That I May Know Him*, pp. 25, 33, 66; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1127, 1128.

**Part 5
THE WORLD'S
REDEEMER****What song will the redeemed sing of Christ when the conflict over sin is ended?****“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).**

This is the chorus of praise and victory sung by the redeemed as they stand about the throne at Christ's final coronation. (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 671.) The saints are there because Christ has redeemed them from death. They were sinners, doomed to eternal death. But now they enjoy eternal life and glory because Jesus has paid the price for their redemption. That price was His life and blood. He died that man might live. He gave up all that they might inherit all. He came from heaven in order that heaven might be theirs eternally. He came from heaven to earth that earth itself might become heaven. He left His position on the throne with His Father that they might reign in glory. Now Jesus, crowned universal King, is accorded the universal acclaim He rightly deserves.

How has man been redeemed? 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

Christ is the “lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). He is the provision that God had made before the creation of the world (1 Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8). This is a very important concept to consider. God is not Creator first and Redeemer second. He did not become Redeemer after Adam had sinned. He planned for redemption before creating man. It is not that we want to limit God by a time factor, but it is important to recognize in God an eternal Redeemer as well as an eternal Creator.

Satan laid hold to the claim, “prince of this world.” Jesus came to earth to dispute that claim and to redeem man from the enemy's hold. As He faced the cross, He said, “ ‘Now is the hour of judgement for this world; now shall the Prince of this world be driven out. And I shall draw all men to myself, when I am lifted up from the earth.’ This he said to indicate the kind of death he was to die” (John 12:31-33, NEB).

Christ's death on the cross purchased eternal life to the righteous and insured a just judgment for the wicked. The hour of man's redemption by the blood of Christ was the world's great hour of destiny.

THINK IT THROUGH**Why is it that only Christ could pay the price of redemption?****FURTHER STUDY***Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 308-310.

Part 6
THE EXALTATION
OF THE SON

In view of what Christ has done for us, how should we respond to Him?

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Paul makes it clear that Christ had come from highest heaven to the lowest depths of earthly humiliation. But God could not leave it that way and be just. Jesus now occupies an exalted position, a position which is eminently His due, a position that everyone will recognize.

It is notable that in the world people often fight their way to preeminence. This is not true of Christ. People bow in humble submission to Christ because they find in Him a love that excites wonder, surrender, and adoration.

What will the Lamb do for the victorious saints? Rev. 7:17.

“All who have borne with Jesus the cross of sacrifice will be sharers with Him of His glory. It was the joy of Christ in His humiliation and pain that His disciples should be glorified with Him. They are the fruit of His self-sacrifice. The outworking in them of His own character and spirit is His reward, and will be his joy throughout eternity. This joy they share with Him as the fruit of their labor and sacrifice is seen in other hearts and lives. They are workers together with Christ, and the Father will honor them as He honors His Son.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

Jesus served the world, but the world rejected Him. Jesus was cast out by the world, but God received Him to glory. He, whom men hated and shunned, God loved and placed on the throne of the universe to receive universal acclaim.

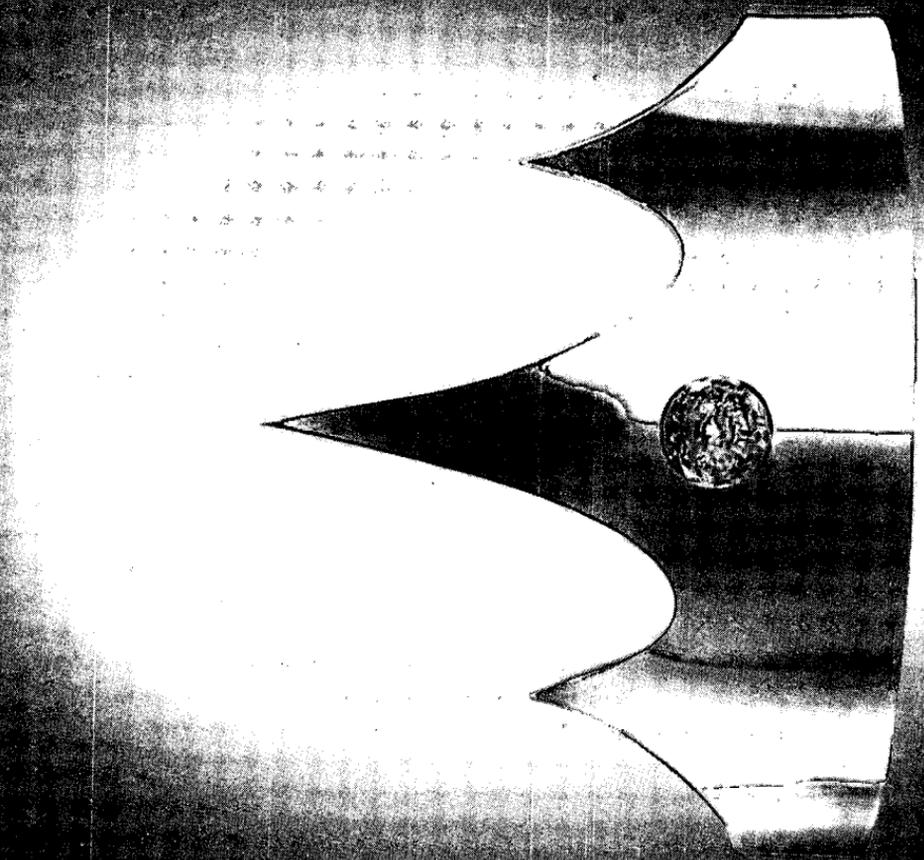
THINK IT THROUGH

How can we best serve and honor Christ in this life?

“No one was so exalted as Christ, and yet He stooped to the humblest duty. That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set the example of humility. . . . While they [the disciples] were contending for the highest place, He to whom every knee shall bow, He whom the angels of glory count it an honor to serve, bowed down to wash the feet of those who called Him Lord. He washed the feet of His betrayer.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 649.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 6, pp. 1053, 1054; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 666, 669-671.



The Holy One

“One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3).

Some Bible scholars see in this threefold ascription of holiness an intimation of the Three Persons of the Godhead. Be that as it may, a triple repetition of a characteristic must mean an emphasis.

In this lesson we shall try to discover what is meant by the holiness of God. It seems to be an attribute that distinguishes Him from all other gods. It stands for a high moral perfection that sets Him apart from all others. All Three Persons are called holy—the Father (John 17:11), the Son (Acts 4:30), and, of course, the Holy Spirit.

Because God is holy, heaven is holy; and everywhere that God is, is holy—whether it is ground, a mountain, the temple, or the New Jerusalem. God has attributes that are incommunicable, that are part of His Godhead, such as omniscience and immortality. But holiness is an attribute that He not only communicates, but desires should be communicated. Thus His people are to be a holy people.

Because God is holy, His law is holy,

and just, and good (Rom. 7:12). The law is a transcript of His character and so cannot be changed. It is the standard by which holiness and righteousness can be measured.

There is one day in the week which God has hallowed, the seventh day—the Sabbath. We are admonished to remember it and to keep it holy. This means that we do not follow our own types of work, but we seek to do God’s work. Jesus set the example of going about doing good on the Sabbath, thus showing us that it is lawful to do good on that day.

God calls us with a high and a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9). We are called to be saints, that is, God’s holy people. In fact, holiness in terms of perfection is what God is seeking to complete in us so that He can take us into His kingdom (2 Peter 3:14). This is a grace that is possible only through Christ, who said that He sanctified Himself in order that we might be holy (John 17:19).

What a wonderful God we worship, a Holy God, whom we have the privilege of worshipping “in the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2).

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **A Holy God**
(Ex. 15:11)
2. **Holy Places**
(Ex. 3:5)
3. **A Holy Law**
(Rom. 7:12)
4. **A Holy Day**
(Gen. 2:3)
5. **A Holy Calling**
(2 Tim. 1:9)
6. **Holiness Through Christ**
(John 17:19)

Part 1
A HOLY GOD

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Ex. 15:11).

This verse is part of a song of victory that was sung by Moses and the children of Israel after they had crossed the Red Sea and witnessed the destruction of the Egyptian armies. While they had been in Egypt, they had seen many gods. They had seen the gods put to shame by the plagues that had been called down because the Egyptians would not let the children of Israel go. But now they had witnessed how God can work on behalf of His people. He not only did wonders, but He was “glorious in holiness.” What does this expression mean?

The key idea seems to be separateness, and as applied to God means that He transcends His created works. He is the Supreme Deity to whom nothing can be equal. To worship any other is to worship the lesser one, and that is sinful. Holiness also has a moral quality and suggests that God is morally excellent. Finlayson says: “Since holiness embraces every distinctive attribute of Godhead, it may be defined as the outshining of all that God is. As the sun’s rays, combining all the colours of the spectrum, come together in the sun’s shining and blend into light, so in His self-manifestation all the attributes of God come together and blend into holiness.”—J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 530.

What words did Jesus use to address the Father? With what words did the disciples speak of Jesus? John 17:11; Acts 4:30.

The Holy Spirit has the adjective used with His name, and thus all Three Persons of the Godhead are called holy.

What word did Mary, the mother of Jesus, use to refer to God’s name? Luke 1:49.

How careful should we be in the use of God’s name? Ex. 20:7.

“This commandment not only prohibits false oaths and common swearing, but it forbids us to use the name of God in a light or careless manner, without regard to its awful significance. By the thoughtless mention of God in common conversation, by appeals to Him in trivial matters, and by the frequent and thoughtless repetition of His name, we dishonor Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 306, 307.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the proper occasions when we can use the name of God?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “What to Do With Doubt,” pp. 108-110.

Part 2 **“Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for**
HOLY PLACES **the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5).**

Moses was commanded to show respect in the presence of God. In those days reverence was shown by taking off one's shoes. This custom still prevails in some parts of the world. In other parts of the world men show respect by removing the hat, and ladies by covering their heads. It is not the particular mode that is important; it is the fact of reverence.

How was reverence to be shown at Mount Sinai? Ex. 19: 10-13.

God's presence can be terrifying. (See verse 18.) All nature trembles at the presence of God, how much more should sinful man enter into the presence of God with holy fear.

The sanctuary was to be a symbol of God's presence with His people (Ex. 29:42; 43). It was to be a holy place. The garments used by the priests were holy (Ex. 39:41). All the vessels were holy, and the altar was most holy (Ex. 40:9, 10). Wherever God is, and whatever is dedicated to the Lord, is holy.

In the same way the temple was holy (Ps. 65:4). The New Jerusalem is the Holy City (Rev. 21:2). All heaven is holy (Ps. 20:6).

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252.

The Bible makes it clear that there is a difference between that which is hallowed and that which is common. We ignore those differences to our eternal loss.

“To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate to heaven. . . .

“... Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. . . .

“... If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 491, 492.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is the best way to get people to reverence the house of God?**

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 491-500.

Part 3 **“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy,
A HOLY LAW** **and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12).**

Since the law points out sin, and sin brings death, it may be thought that the law is evil. But that is not true, and Paul makes that abundantly clear in his letter to the Romans.

Who is the author of the Ten Commandments? Ex. 20:1.

It is because God is holy, and just, and good that the commandments are also holy, and just, and good. They are a transcript of His character.

Why do people generally dislike the laws of God? Rom. 8:7.

Anything that goes contrary to the desires of man in his fallen nature is unpleasant to him. Man wants to be free to do what he pleases, and what he pleases to do is often not for his own good or for the good of others. What man needs to learn is that transgressing the law of God means death, and if he wants to be free to enjoy life, he must learn to live in harmony with the laws of God.

By what two phrases does James describe God's law? James 1:25; 2:8, 12.

James is clear in pointing out that the only path to real freedom is that which is bound by the law. It sounds paradoxical! But experience has shown it to be true. Only by observing the laws of harmony is good music composed; only by observing the rules of the game may a race be run and won. Without law there can only be chaos and frustration.

What was the attitude of Jesus to the law? Matt. 19:17; 5:17.

What, according to the psalmist, are some of the benefits of keeping the law? Ps. 119:165; 19:7, 8.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that God's laws have not changed down through the centuries?

“The very fact that Christ bore the penalty of man's transgression is a mighty argument to all created intelligences that the law is changeless; that God is righteous, merciful, and self-denying; and that infinite justice and mercy unite in the administration of His government.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 70.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 303-314.

Part 4
A HOLY DAY

“God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:3).

The weekly cycle has no relationship to any phenomenon of nature, like the day, the month, or the year. It has its origin in a holy God, who created the world in six days and rested the seventh. What did God’s sanctifying, or making it holy, really do to the day? It set it apart for a holy use, for a holy communion with a holy God.

What did Jesus say about the Sabbath and its Lord? Mark 2:27, 28.

Man has made the seventh day a day of evil omen, or a day of fasting, or even a day of going to market, or finding one’s own pleasure. Jesus pointed out that the day “was designed to bring men into communion with God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 286. Jesus showed that bringing release from sin or disease is in harmony with the purpose of the Sabbath. A day of mere rites and ceremonies could be wearisome, and the whole objective of bringing good to man could be set aside by such a practice.

Of what is the Sabbath a memorial? Ex. 20:10, 11; Deut. 5:15.

The fact that Deuteronomy gives another reason for the keeping of the Sabbath does not negate the fact that the Sabbath is a memorial of Creation; it points out that there may be other reasons for keeping the Sabbath, reasons that have to do with our deliverance from sin. There is a hint of this in the fact that the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification. (See Ex. 31:13.) That is, it celebrates our deliverance from the bondage of sin, our redemption, and our re-creation in regeneration. The Sabbath is not only an institution of the church, but it is also a weekly sign of a personal relationship with a holy God.

On what basis is man offered joy and happiness? Isa. 58:13, 14.

Unless man can find pleasure in communing with a holy God on earth, he will never enjoy communion with God in the earth made new where the Sabbath will continue to be kept. (See Isa. 66:23.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is the Sabbath so important to Christians who live in the last days of earth’s history?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 605-612.

Part 5
A HOLY CALLING

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9).

A holy God issues a holy call. This is not on the basis that we are “holy” or deserve to be “called.” We are far from this, but by His grace and through the merits of Jesus Christ this has been made possible. Here we see the goodness of God and His desire that we should share in His holiness.

By what term does the writer to the Hebrews address his fellow Christians? Heb. 3:1.

Some Christians are reluctant to be called holy. This may be because they have met Christians who have claimed holiness and yet have lived lives which were far from being holy. The fact is that the nearer we come to the pattern that Jesus has set for us the more humble we become. We should not run away from holiness, but we should be sure that the experience we enjoy is genuine and God-given.

By what word does the apostle Paul address the Christians to whom he writes? Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1.

The word “saint” is not a popular word for the believer in Christ today. For one thing it has been used to refer to outstanding members of the church who have been officially canonized, and thus cannot be used of everyone. That is why some modern versions of the New Testament in English avoid using the word “saint.” The word “saints” is translated “his dedicated people” (Rom. 1:7, NEB), “his own people” (Rom. 1:7, TEV), and “God’s holy people” (1 Cor. 1:2, TEV).

In what only did Paul find cause to glory? Gal. 6:14.

Paul lived a life that we may be proud to emulate. But the fact is that Paul recognized that he was nothing in himself. (See Gal. 2:20.) He could glory only in the cross because that was the symbol of the salvation that had been purchased for him, and it was the reason why he could be what he was.

“Paul realized that his sufficiency was not in himself, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit, whose gracious influence filled his heart, bringing every thought into subjection to Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 251.

THINK IT THROUGH

How is it that some people have joined the church, keep the Sabbath, and yet are far from being holy in their business relationships?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 563-567.

**Part 6
HOLINESS
THROUGH
CHRIST**

“For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19).

In praying to His Father, Jesus says that He sanctifies Himself, or consecrates Himself (NEB), or dedicates Himself (TEV) so that His disciples may be sanctified, consecrated, and dedicated as well. This is an example of total commitment. A holy God is dedicated to the cause of having a holy people. Could anything be more appealing to produce a response of dedication?

What is God’s desire for His people? Lev. 11:44, 45; 1 Peter 1:16.

This is a high standard. Created in the image of God, man is to reflect fully his Maker.

Why is this standard so important? Heb. 12:14.

God cannot let any standards down. Only the pure in heart can see God. (See Matt. 5:8.)

“Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 24, 25.

“Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.

How can the Christian attain this ideal? Phil. 4:13.

“As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333.

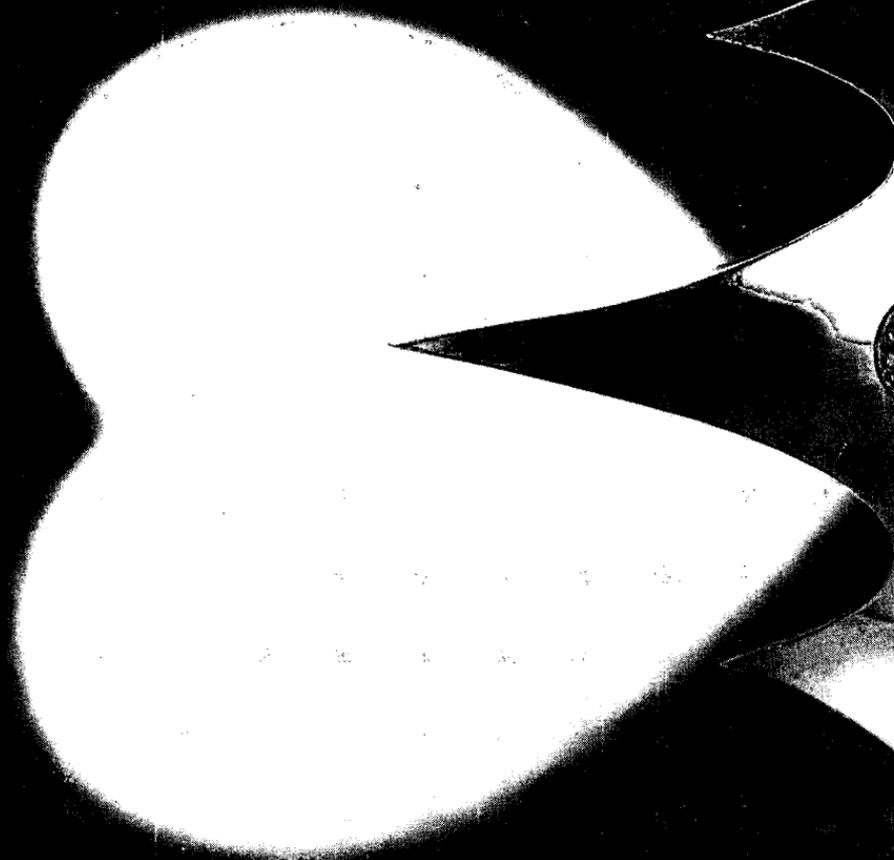
“There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian overcome the most discouraging experiences in his life?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “Talents,” pp. 330-333.



The God of Love

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8).

He who knows God loves Him. And he who loves God loves his fellowmen.

There are no limitations to love—none of space, personality, or condition.

Love is a flame that warms, a light that glows, a magnet that draws, a fragrance that refreshes, a cup that cheers, a mountain that endures, a smile that reveals.

When you see love, you know it; when you experience it, you

recognize it; when you lack it, you need it and want it.

When a man experiences the new birth of conversion, he experiences a new birth of love—toward God and toward all the world about him.

“God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. . . .

“Angels are ever engaged in working for the happiness of others. This is their joy. . . . The spirit of Christ’s self-sacrificing love is the spirit that pervades heaven and is the very essence of its bliss. . . .

“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, like sweet fragrance it cannot be hidden. Its holy influence will be felt by all with whom we come in contact. . . .

“Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father’s care.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 77, 78.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God Is Love**
(1 John 4:16)
2. **God’s Law of Love**
(Matt. 22:36-40)
3. **God’s Love Toward Sinners**
(Rom. 5:7, 8)
4. **God’s Loving-kindness**
(Ps. 103:2-4)
5. **God’s Universal Love**
(John 3:16)
6. **God’s Never-failing Love**
(Hosea 11:8)

Part 1
GOD IS LOVE

What does John say is a basic characteristic of God?

“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).

Love is the very nature of God. Everything He does is prompted by love. His love may be seen in all His works. The wondrous love of God is revealed in things of the world about us, in the infinite expanses of the heavens above. If we would see love, we must see God. And no man can see love without seeing God. He who feels the touch of God feels the touch of love.

Human vision is limited, and we do not always see love in the ways and works of God. We live in a world where other powers are at work that are not from God, and they must not be confused with God. Children do not always perceive their parents' love in deeds of the greatest wisdom and most tender concern. The more fully human eyes are opened, and the more comprehensive man's understanding becomes, the more clearly he is able to see that God indeed is love.

Were it not for a God of love, there would be no world and no men to inhabit it. Were not God a being of love, He would not be the embodiment of infinite wisdom and power. God's power exerts itself always, and only, in love. God's love is creative and not destructive. God's wisdom manifests itself in constant outpourings of love in gifts to make men happy and to keep them well.

Love is personal. It must have someone to love, someone with whom to share. Unless it can expend itself in deeds of affection toward others, it is not happy and it is not love. Love craves love and creates love. The more it manifests itself, the wider will be the circle of happiness and love.

How basic is love to a Christian? Eph. 3:17-19.

All the highest attributes in the souls of men are due to love, and due to God. Mercy, sympathy, justice, goodness, truthfulness, and unselfishness all come from love and cannot exist without it. These attributes find their fullest expression in God. He is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex. 34:6).

THINK IT THROUGH

What would life be like without love?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “God's Love for Man,” pp. 9-12.

**Part 2
GOD'S LAW
OF LOVE**

What was Jesus' summary of the Ten Commandments and the teaching of Scripture?

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 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. 22:36-40).

There can be no greater law than love. Love embraces every duty of man—to God, and to those in the world about him. If a man has supreme love for God, he will do all that God commands. If he loves his fellowmen, he will do nothing against them.

In heaven, the law of angels is the law of love. They need no other law, for their every thought and deed is always, and only, love. With fallen man, however, that is not the case. The details of right and wrong in his relationships with God and man need to be set before him in more specific detail. That is why God's law of Ten Commandments was given, with the first four pointing out his love and duties to God, and the last six, his love and duties to man.

What is the basis of our love for God? Deut. 5:6; Ex. 20:2.

The saving acts of God in our lives form the basis of our relationship to God. God had brought Israel out of Egypt with a mighty arm and so the Israelites were under obligation to recognize Him as the one true God. They were to remember His acts of Creation (Ex. 20:11) and deliverance (Deut. 5:15). They would be moved to respond in grateful love.

You and I have experienced God's hand in our lives, so the least that we can do is to thank Him and to love Him. As God bade Moses to say to Israel, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2), one of the specifications was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (verse 18). Love was as important in the days of Moses as it was at the time of Christ. It was ever the basis of God's law as it is ever the foundation of God's eternal throne.

How do we show that we love God? John 14:15; 1 John 5:2, 3.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian have love and hate in his heart? (See Ps. 97:10; Amos 5:15.)

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 76, 77; *The Great Controversy*, p. 493.

Part 3
GOD'S LOVE
TOWARD SINNERS

By what fact does Paul measure the depth of God's love?

"Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:7, 8).

God has manifested His love in untold ways—in His works of creation and preservation, in bringing into existence holy beings who are to be eternally happy, in maintaining an endless universe by boundless wisdom and love. But God's greatest demonstration of love was the love He manifested toward sinners who were in rebellion against Him.

Sinners need love, but they do not deserve it. What they deserve is death, but it is from death that God purposes to save them. Only love could have prompted that purpose. Justice demanded that guilty man should die. But God's love provided a substitute.

God loves not only good men but bad men, not only one man but all men. God loves men who did not love Him. He loves men who rejected His love and spurned His mercy, who love sin rather than righteousness, and who chose ways of death rather than ways of life. God loves men who would despise and reject His Son, who came to save them. He loves them even though they would put His Son to death on a cruel cross, demanding death for the Prince of Life but clemency for a servant of the prince of evil. And God would still love them in spite of their cry that the blood for such a foul deed be upon themselves and their children!

Because of God's great love, of what may the Christian be confident? Rom. 8:38, 39.

Paul lists a number of elements that might be strong and might be considered able to prevent God from reaching men with His love. But Paul holds them up to ridicule. Not one of them is more powerful than God, not one of them can be considered an obstacle to God's saving grace.

And it took just such love to save us. Nothing less would have sufficed. Unless God had been willing to give up His Son for sinners, they could not have been saved. Unless Jesus would have given up His throne and His life for sinners, they would have perished in their iniquity. "We, like the rest, lay under the dreadful judgement of God. But God, rich in mercy, for the great love he bore us, brought us to life with Christ" (Eph. 2:3, 4, NEB).

THINK IT THROUGH

In what sense was God loving and just in His provision for the salvation of man?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Two Worshipers," pp. 156, 157; "This Man Receiveth Sinners," pp. 186-192.

Part 4
GOD'S
LOVING-KINDNESS

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: . . . who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (Ps. 103:2-4).

The word translated “lovingkindness” has been translated in a number of different ways: “mercy,” “kindness,” and “goodness” in the KJV. The RSV translates it “steadfast love.” Two related ideas are “covenant” and “faithfulness.” (Compare S.D.A. *Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, pp. 719, 720.)

The thought of the psalmist seems to be that God has given a covenant to His people and has been faithful to it, and this relationship can be considered as honorable and glorious as the wearing of a crown.

God’s ways are ways of incomparable kindness, and His gifts are those of the most tender love. No mother ever displayed greater love for her child than does God for His children. Where God is, there His loving-kindness is revealed and His goodness and mercy are displayed.

Wherever we find loveliness and harmony, grandeur and virtue, it is because of God’s goodness and love. If only the eyes of our spiritual vision were opened, we would everywhere see evidences of God’s tender, all-pervading, never-failing love. We would see God’s love in rain as well as sunshine, in the clouds above and the grass beneath.

What is the basis of true happiness? Ps. 144:15.

The psalmist mentions several things that can make for happiness (see verses 11-14). But they are all summed up in one blessing, God is our Lord. He is the source and wellspring of all happiness.

God’s greatest desire is that all men be truly happy, and eternally remain that way. He created men in His own likeness that they might be happy—happy in Him, in themselves, and happy with all the world about them. “Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development. Created to find in God his highest joy, he can find in nothing else that which can quiet the cravings of the heart, can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul.”—*Education*, pp. 124, 125.

What special blessings come to the man whose relationship with God is right? Ps. 103:1, 3, 5.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the greatest blessing that I have received from God?

FURTHER STUDY

In Heavenly Places, pp. 114, 115.

Part 5
GOD'S UNIVERSAL
LOVE

What is the aim of God's great love?

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

This text has been described as "the gospel in a nutshell." It indicates the wide scope of God's love—the world; it tells us of the sacrifice involved—He gave His only Son; it points out the purpose of God's act—that all who believe in Him should not die, but have eternal life.

All men are loved by God, and all men experience His blessings. This is true of the wicked as well as the righteous, the poor and humble as well as the mighty and the well-to-do. Men of every clime, every race, every creed are loved by Him. Wherever prayer is offered, God is ready to hear.

What does Matthew 5:45 teach about God's love?

Man usually discriminates in his love, but that is not true of God and must not be true of those who claim to be Christian. The Christian standard of relationship to other people is that of God the Father, who distributes His gifts bountifully without regard to worthiness or response. The main criterion is that of need. The good and the bad alike need sunshine and rain, and God supplies them impartially. Does my enemy need my witness? If so, then it is my responsibility, as a Christian, to reach out a helping hand and do what God would do if He were in my place.

What did Jesus say about His Father's care? Matt. 10:29-31; 6:26-31.

Everything, animate or inanimate, constantly experiences the care of God. "The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. 145:9). "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (verses 15, 16). "The Lord is high unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (verse 18).

God sent Israel into Canaan with the admonition, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31:6).

THINK IT THROUGH

What does God gain from His interest and care for all?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 25-28.

Part 6
**GOD'S NEVER-
FAILING LOVE**

What was God's attitude to Israel when they were unworthy of His love?

**"How can I give you up, Israel?
How can I abandon you?
Could I ever destroy you as I did Admah,
or treat you as I did Zeboiim?
My heart will not let me do it!
My love for you is too strong" (Hosea 11:8, TEV).**

Admah and Zeboiim are two cities of the plains that were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Gen. 14:2; 19:25, 29.) Fire and brimstone rained down from heaven (Gen. 19:24) and the "smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (verse 28).

There comes a time when God must punish evil. But it is not a pleasant task for a God of love.

What is God's attitude to the sinner? Eze. 18:31, 32; 33:11.

God's grace is amazing! Tenderly, and with gentle persistence, He pleads with sinners. The wicked need only to respond and in repentance turn away from their sins, and God is willing to accept them. He will forget the past, however wicked it may be, because God is more concerned with the present and the future than He is with the past.

The question God asks, Why will ye die? is a very pertinent one. Would any sane person choose death? When life is offered on such easy terms, it is utter foolishness to reject it.

Why does God seem to delay His second coming? 2 Peter 3:9.

It would seem that God would rather break His word than cause any one to perish! God is not slow to do what He has promised, but He is willing to give every opportunity for the sinner to repent and thus be ready for His coming.

What kind of a person is the man who truly loves? 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

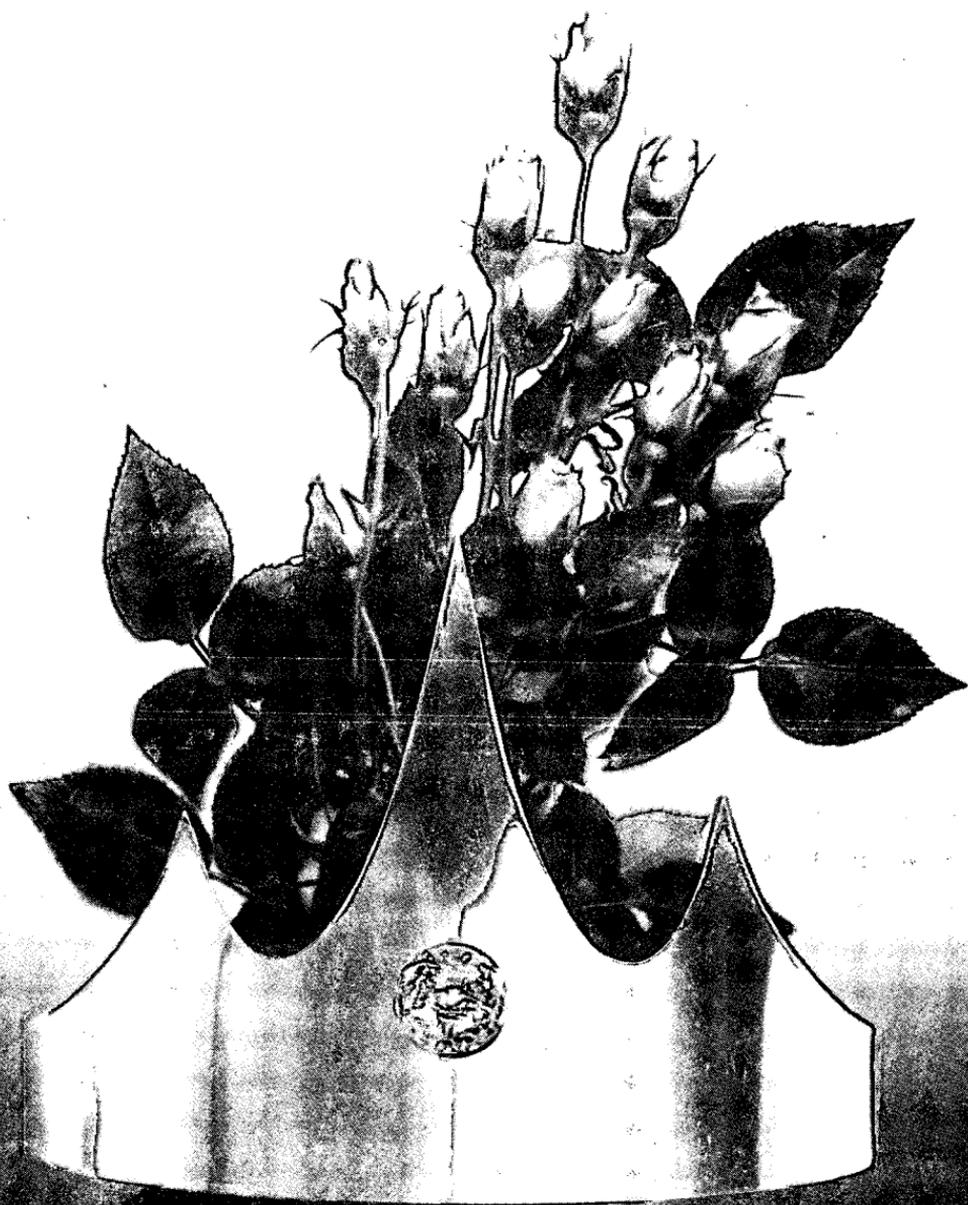
Here is the standard of perfection outlined for the Christian. Is he willing to endure trying circumstances and not lose his temper? Is he looking for ways and means to help people, generous with his time and money? Does he accept his talents and station in life without envy although he sees someone else more talented and successful?

THINK IT THROUGH

How can a person love in the way that God has loved?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 479-483.



The God of Peace

“The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isa. 32: 17, 18).

God makes no statements that are not true, and He makes no promises that He does not keep. What He says concerning the relationship between righteousness and peace is altogether true, and what He promises His people is altogether certain.

It is the very nature of righteousness to bring peace to those who are righteous, and cessation of inner strife to all who accept it. It is true now in this world, and it will be true in the new earth forever.

Since the saints look forward to a new world of righteousness in harmony with God’s Word, they can look forward with certainty to a heaven of peace in accord with His promises. In the earth made new the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard with the kid because no reason for enmity or strife will be found there.

The people of God are those who have permitted peace to replace strife here in their hearts and lives, and for this reason the land they will inherit forever will consist of sure dwellings for all, with quiet resting places.

“The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around.”

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27, 28.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Peace From Jesus**
(John 14:27)
2. **Peace and Holiness**
(Heb. 12:14)
3. **Peace and the Law of God**
(Ps. 119:165)
4. **Peace—A Fruit of the Spirit**
(Gal. 5:22, 23)
5. **Peace and the Sword**
(Matt. 10:34)
6. **The Peace of God’s Children**
(Phil. 4:6, 7)

Part 1
PEACE FROM
JESUS **What promise did Jesus make regarding peace?**

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Peace is God's gift to men. Jesus is "The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). "He is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). "He will bring peace" (Micah 5:5, TEV). Without God men can not know peace. When Jesus was born, the angels sang "On earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

What is the source of peace for the believer? Col. 1:20-22; Rom. 5:1.

Through Christ and His cross the enmity between sinners and God is broken, and reconciliation with heaven is restored.

"The effect of God's provision of righteousness by faith is to bring peace to the sinner's once troubled and alienated soul. Before the experience of justification the sinner is in a state of enmity against God, as shown by his rebellion against God's authority and his transgression of God's laws. But after he is reconciled, he has peace with God. Before, while still under a sense of the guilt of sin, he has nothing but fear and unrest in his conscience. Now, with his sins forgiven, he has peace in his heart, realizing that all his guilt has been taken away."—S.D.A. *Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 522, 523.

What famous blessing is often invoked upon a congregation and what particular blessing is desired? Num. 6:24-26.

It is the holiness and righteousness of God that make Him a God of peace. So it is the uprightness of His children that makes them people of peace.

What is the nature of the peace that comes to the Christian through Christ? What will it do? Phil. 4:6, 7.

THINK IT THROUGH

If I do not have peace of mind and heart, how should I go about securing it?

"The believer is not called upon to make his peace with God; he never has nor ever can do this. He is to accept Christ as his peace, for with Christ is God and peace."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 395.

"There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 319, 320.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 302-306.

Part 2
PEACE AND
HOLINESS

If man is to see God, how should he relate to his fellowman?

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

The injunction to “follow peace” suggests that it is not easy to live at peace; it requires a goal that is pursued with diligence, with no regard to obstacles. The Christian aims to be in the state of peace without conflicts.

It should be noted that peace means more than the absence of war or trouble. It means that justice has been satisfied, that everyone is at rest because everyone has reached that state where there is no more jealousy, greed, or hatred. There are no more disputes or grievances to settle. Peace is, therefore, a positive attribute of having attained the highest good. All of this is yet future.

But in the present we are to be at “peace with all men.” Is this a practical aim? Some people are easy to get along with; some people are impossible! Or can the Christian be at peace, even with an enemy? At least the goal is there, and the Christian can never be satisfied with his efforts until he has come to some agreement of living in peace with every person that comes into his life.

How can anyone have perfect peace? Isa. 26:3.

Peace is not only a relationship with our fellowmen; it is primarily a relationship with God. It means that we are not worried about the present or the future. We are not afraid of judgment. We have no sense of guilt. Only the man who is right with God can be at peace with himself and the world.

According to the writer of Hebrews, what other attribute must go along with peace? Heb. 12:14.

Peace is very closely connected to holiness, and holiness is closely connected with God. It is not a matter of peace at any price! The Christian must pursue his goal of peace only in ways compatible with his principles. Genuine peace is a matter of the heart and the spirit.

Peace within produces happiness. God’s people are a happy people because they are a peaceful people. Heaven will be a place of happiness because it is a place of peace. “The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Ps. 37:11).

THINK IT THROUGH

What do I do in order to live at peace with all men?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 305, 330, 331, 336.

Part 3
PEACE AND THE
LAW OF GOD

What is the connection between the law of God and peace among men?

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Ps. 119:165).

God's law is the secret of peace, within and without, in this world and in heaven, today and throughout eternity. Peace can prevail only where and as long as God's law prevails.

The principles on which the law is based are principles which would keep man at peace with God, with all the world about Him, and with himself. No man can find happiness or peace without this law. If he disregards any of its precepts or violates any of its commands, he creates trouble for himself and brings turmoil to those about him. If he loves these commandments and lives them out in his life, it will be gain for himself and others, for it is thus that happiness, justice, and peace will be maintained.

Lawmakers throughout the world would have little to do if men could learn to respect and obey God's law. Officers of the peace would not be needed. The problems that afflict our cities, the crime that is plaguing the land, the lawlessness that is threatening the very existence of civilization would be done away if men could only be brought to respect God's law.

God designed His law to preserve a close and happy fellowship between Himself and all created beings. If any of its first four precepts are violated, there is conflict between man and God. If any of the last six commandments are broken, there is conflict, not only between man and his fellows, but also between man and God.

What is the source of fightings and wars? James 4:1-4.

War erupted in heaven because Lucifer violated the very first principle of the law in his endeavor to set up his throne above the throne of God. Because man disobeyed, Eden was deprived of peace, and man was robbed of the tranquility and happiness that God had placed in his soul. Sin brought unrest.

Heaven will be the eternal abode of all happiness and peace, because all who abide there have God's law of peace written in their hearts and they live it out in their lives.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are the Ten Commandments so basic to peace?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 308; *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, "The Spirituality of the Law" (Matt. 5:17), pp. 46-48.

Part 4
PEACE—A FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT

How only can man have peace in the heart?

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Peace is not natural for sinful man. When he was first created in God's image, man had peace; but when sin entered, peace departed. Instead of enjoying the presence of God and placing complete trust in Him, man became afraid of God and tried to hide from His presence.

It is ever the baleful work of sin to drive man farther and farther from God, and more and more to erase the divine image. Instead of love he is filled with hate; instead of joy there is discontent and sorrow; instead of peace there is anxiety and hostility. In the midst of the most peaceful scenes of nature man may find irritation and irascibility within his soul. With sunshine all about him there may be darkness within.

The fearful, doubtful heart of man needs restoration. It needs to come back to peace and God. Man needs God, and God wants man. Man needs peace, but he doesn't know how to find it. Inwardly he wants to do right, but his evil heart does not allow it.

What is Paul's description of the experience of the natural man who wants to do right? Rom. 7:19, 23, 24.

Although man's natural heart is against God, against right, against peace, it need not remain so. God has provided a remedy. He has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to convict man of sin and give him strength to overcome. Instead of the works of flesh, he is to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit. In place of hatred, variance, wrath, and strife, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace.

In order to enjoy real peace, what kind of mind must a man have? Rom. 8:6.

THINK IT THROUGH

What lessons may we learn from the fruit tree regarding bearing fruit in the Christian life?

“The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. . . . The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1117.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 679, 680.

Part 5
PEACE AND
THE SWORD

How can you harmonize Christ's promises of peace with His statement in Matthew 10:34?

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

Christ's words point to the nature of His conflict against Satan. The Prince of Peace is engaged in a death struggle against the prince of darkness. Begun in heaven, that struggle continues on earth.

The crushing of Lucifer's rebellion was not merely a battle for power or authority. It was primarily a war against wrong. Righteousness can never compromise with wickedness. Truth must ever be arrayed against error, light against darkness, justice against injustice, peace against war.

What victory assured final peace? Rev. 12:7-10.

Christ's war against evil must and will be fought to the end, until the dragon is so decidedly beaten that he will never raise his wicked head again. Evil must be completely eliminated.

People need to learn the nature and ultimate outcome of this struggle. Both the righteous and the wicked need to learn what is going on and why; who the contestants are and what they stand for; and what this struggle involves for themselves and the world, for unfallen beings throughout the universe, and for the honor and stability of God's throne.

What danger does the Christian always face? 1 Peter 5:8.

Christ's word about the sword had a sure, early, and sad fulfillment. His own disciples were to experience it. John the Baptist had already fallen, and Stephen was soon to fall. Peter and John in prison (Acts 4:1-3), the apostles in the common jail (Acts 5:18), the scattering of the church before the persecuting Saul (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1, 2), the vexed church at the hands of Herod and the death of James with the sword (Acts 12:1, 2), the numerous persecutions of Paul (see 2 Cor. 11:23-26), and the banishment of John to Patmos (Rev. 1:9)—all point to the certainty that the teaching of righteousness is met by the bitter hostility of the forces of evil. Jesus died because of the wrath of the dragon. In the last days God's people will experience that wrath again (Rev. 12:17).

How may the dragon be overcome? Rev. 12:11.

THINK IT THROUGH

In a world of conflict what is the Christian's best defense?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 84-86; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 46-48.

Part 6
THE PEACE OF
GOD'S CHILDREN

How can one enjoy inward peace midst outward strife and turmoil?

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6, 7).

God possesses perfect peace because of His perfect holiness. Peace comes to the believer as a gift from Him.

While the wicked know not peace, the children of God are freed from their own hostility.

What should be the aim of every Christian?

God's people are peaceful people, and their ways are ways of righteousness. (See Isa. 32:17, 18.) "Great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13). "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Ps. 37:37). "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72:7). "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. 37:11).

How does the wise man describe the man who gets wisdom, understanding, and peace? Prov. 3:13, 17.

It should be noted that wisdom for the wise man was identified with God and righteousness. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "I lead in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 9:10; 8:20).

Peaceful people are happy people, and holy joy will mark the paths of God's children.

God calls His people to peace—peace with Him and with each other. "God hath called us to peace" (1 Cor. 7:15). "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). "Be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11). "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15).

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is peace so important to the people of God?

"Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect peace."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 419-421.

“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

This text is recognized by Bible scholars as Messianic, that is, it tells us of the Messiah to come. In Isaiah 7:14 emphasis is made on the birth of the Messiah. In Isaiah 11:1-5 we read of the kind of rule the Messiah will inaugurate. In this text we learn of the person of the Messiah, and through His titles, His characteristics.

“Wonderful” goes with “Counsellor.” The word “wonderful” is sometimes used in the Bible to mean “supernatural.” For example Judges 13:18 states: “The angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?”

“**Secret.** The Heb. *pe’l’ y* is an adjective meaning ‘wonderful.’ The noun form of the same word is translated ‘Wonderful’ in Isa. 9:6 (see also Ex. 15:11; Isa. 25:1; 29:14; etc.). The word denotes something extraordinary, ineffable, beyond human understanding.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 385.

God is a Counselor with more than human resources to guide and instruct.

A similar expression is used of God in Isaiah 28:29. Not only is the advice that our God gives right, but it is also always suited to the occasion. We should never seek counsel anywhere else.

God as Counselor is the theme of the lesson this week. Good counsel is always important, whether from man or from God, and counsel from God is always good. In this world men owe much of their happiness and success to counsel that comes from others. Misery and mistakes are all too frequently due to our failure to accept counsel that is offered, both human

and divine. Man always hurts himself when he neglects to heed counsel from Heaven.

The Word of God consists largely of counsel that the Lord has given. It is always the best counsel that can be given, designed to give man happiness, prosperity, and peace here and an eternity of bliss in the world beyond. Only to a slight extent have men come to recognize the wisdom and worth of the heavenly counsel found in the Word of God. Giving heed to injunctions will expand man’s intellect, give health to his body, and purify his soul.

“With the word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose. In its pages he may hold converse with the noblest and best of the human race, and may listen to the voice of the Eternal as He speaks with men. As he studies and meditates upon the themes into which ‘the angels desire to look’ (1 Peter 1:12), he may have their companionship. He may follow the steps of the heavenly Teacher, and listen to His words as when He taught on mountain and plain and sea. . . . He who through the word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven’s companionship.”—*Education*, p. 127.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Counsel of Wisdom**
(Isa. 40:13, 14)
2. **Counsel of Love**
(Jer. 31:3)
3. **Counsel to a Minister**
(2 Tim. 1:2; 2:7)
4. **Heaven’s Counsel for All**
(Eccl. 12:13)
5. **Counsel for Last-day People**
(Rev. 3:18)
6. **Fruitage of Heeding God’s Counsel**
(Prov. 3:1, 2)

Wonderful, Counsellor



Part 1
COUNSEL OF
WISDOM**What is unique about God's wisdom and knowledge?**

"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13, 14).

With whom could the Creator of the world, the One infinite in power, wisdom, and knowledge, have taken counsel when He brought the world into being? He alone knows and understands all. Only He can teach all others, but has no one who can instruct Him. Only He can give unerring counsel to all, but has none to direct His ways.

What contrast does Solomon make between the man who seeks counsel and the man who does not? Prov. 12:15.

God is the embodiment of wisdom as well as love. This is true of the Son as well as the Father. In the eighth chapter of Proverbs the coming Messiah is identified with wisdom. "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength" (Prov. 8:14). "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (verse 17) is said as much of the Saviour as it is of wisdom. Quoting Proverbs 8:22, God's messenger says, "The Son of God declares concerning Himself: 'The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34. Wisdom was with God before He founded the world, and Jesus was there at His side.

What kind of people receive counsel and guidance from God? Ps. 25:9.

God being the embodiment of wisdom, all His counsel is wise. And God being the embodiment of love, all His counsel is good. It is wisdom for man to listen to counsel of wisdom. He might have kept His wisdom to Himself; but had He done so, He would not have been God, for love called for the sharing of His wisdom and counsel with those in need.

"Let God teach you His way. Inquire of Him daily to know His will. He will give unerring counsel to all who seek Him with a sincere heart."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 276.

THINK IT THROUGH

What will God do after guiding man with His counsel? Ps. 73:24.

If God has counsel for me in His Word and I fail to read it or heed it, what may I expect as a result?

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 126, 127, 133, 134.

Part 2
COUNSEL OF LOVE

How does God draw us to Himself?

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

True love does not forget. It always seeks to help, never to hurt. One of the best ways in which love can manifest itself is by giving counsel. Gifts of counsel are often of greater value than any other gifts. They cannot be measured in terms of material value, although at times they are of the highest material value.

Heavenly counsel provides us with the greatest values we can obtain in life.

Counsel from people is not always prompted by love and is not always wise. People may give counsel to others which they would not want for themselves. Counsel from people may be for the purpose of benefiting the giver rather than the receiver.

God's counsel is always prompted by love, and is always helpful and wise. Accepted, God's counsel may seem to hurt at the time, but its fruitage is always good.

What does God do to those whom He loves? Rev. 3:19.

Jesus at times administered counsel in terms of stern rebuke, but when He did, it was prompted by love. "He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 12.

As persons and situations differ, so counsel varies. What is good counsel for one may prove to be poor counsel for others. When men follow counsel intended for others in entirely different circumstances, the results they reap may be ill instead of good. But God must not be blamed for man's lack of judgment or discernment.

What counsel did Jesus give to a rich young ruler? Matt. 19:21.

Counsel from Heaven is always for man's best interests. "God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. . . . Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 46.

Why did Jerusalem reap desolation? Matt. 23:37, 38.

THINK IT THROUGH

If you had the choice of receiving money or good counsel, which would you choose, and why?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 512, 513.

**Part 3
COUNSEL TO
A MINISTER**

To whom did Paul direct special counsel?

"To Timothy, my dearly beloved son."

"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 1:2; 2:7).

Although Paul's words were directed to Timothy, they are of value to all who aspire to being God's helping hand or minister.

Timothy was a young minister with his future before him. In his future work he might be merely mediocre; he might be a failure; or he might be an outstanding success. Paul loved Timothy as his own son and gave him the best counsel he could so that he might make a success in his work for God.

How should a young pastor conduct himself in relation to other people and the doctrines of the church? 1 Tim. 4:12, 15, 16.

"Paul urged Timothy to meditate upon those things that are pure and excellent, that his profiting might appear unto all. The same counsel is greatly needed by men of the present age. I urge upon our workers the necessity of purity in every thought, every act. We have an individual accountability to God, an individual work which no one else can do for us. It is to strive to make the world better. While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a higher purpose."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 125.

What counsel does Paul give about money? 1 Tim. 6:10.

"The Bible condemns no man for being rich, if he has acquired his riches honestly. Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. It is God who gives men power to get wealth; and in the hands of him who acts as God's steward, using his means unselfishly, wealth is a blessing, both to its possessor and to the world."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 212.

What truth did Paul note to encourage Timothy to be fearless? 2 Tim. 1:7, 8.

When one is on the side of right, on the side of God, there is no reason to fear. Note how Jesus was unafraid in the storm and before the two demoniacs. (See Matt. 8:23-34.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Read 2 Timothy 2:1, 3, 15, 19; 3:14, 15; 4:2, 5, and indicate the ways in which this counsel is relevant to us today.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 499-508.

Part 4
HEAVEN'S COUNSEL
FOR ALL

Why is it important to fear God?

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

What similar thought was expressed by Jesus in Matthew 6:33?

No better counsel can be given than to make first things first. True religion requires an ordering of priorities. Eternity is at stake. If a man loses heaven, he loses everything. If a man does not find God in this world and fails to love in accord with His ways, he not only loses the finest and best that this life can offer, but eternal life as well.

Why is it not necessary for a Christian to worry about his daily needs? Matt. 6:25-30.

"God's law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p.97.

The present world of sin is doomed to pay the wages of sin, and that is destruction. Evil men are simply destroying themselves and the world in which they live.

When men forget God and His commandments, they forget the only force that can hold the world together, the only means by which happiness, well-being, and peace can be preserved, and life itself maintained.

Man needs to learn that there is a God in heaven, and that he owes allegiance to Him—an allegiance which he can neglect only at the expense of his present well-being and eternal happiness. To his Creator man's supreme homage is due. That fact man must never forget. Forgetting it, he forgets himself, he forgets others, he forgets the world in which he lives—and must pay the price of his neglect. But neglecting righteousness and God, man forfeits goodness and love, and only with these is it possible for him to live forever.

What is Micah's summary of God's requirements for man? Micah 6:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is man's first duty not to himself but to God?

FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 5:1-48; 6:1-34.

Part 5
COUNSEL FOR
LAST-DAY PEOPLE**What special counsel is given the Laodicean church?**

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

The Christian does not need to be rich in this world's goods, but he does have to have spiritual riches. The symbolism of gold and raiment and eyesalve may be interpreted as follows: gold—faith that works by love; white raiment—Christ's righteousness; eyesalve—the ability, through the Spirit of God, to distinguish between truth and error.

Why is it necessary for the Christian to be on his guard at all times? Matt. 25:13.

God has given many details concerning the kind of people the saints should be in order to be in readiness for His coming. Some characteristics are as follows:

Vigilant (1 Peter 5:8). Jesus gave similar advice to Peter! (See Matt. 26:41.)

Sober (1 Thess. 5:6). The daytime is a time to work, not to sleep. (See John 9:4.)

Holy (2 Peter 3:11, 14). Jesus urged readiness too. (See Luke 12:35-38.)

Pure (1 John 3:3). Only the pure in heart can see God. (See Matt. 5:8.)

Diligent (2 Peter 1:10, 11). Although we are called and chosen, we must never cease to be careful lest we fall.

Obedient (Rev. 22:14). An alternate reading gives "wash their robes." We need to have the robe of Christ's righteousness to enter the kingdom.

Truthful (Rev. 21:27). "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Confident (Heb. 10:35). There may be periods of waiting and uncertainty, but our faith must remain firm.

Patient (Heb. 10:36, 37). Christ's coming is as certain as day following night. Wait for it!

Overcoming (Rev. 2:7). The Christian is a faithful warrior for Christ. Victory is assured.

Steadfast (Rev. 3:11).

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it more difficult, or less so, to be holy in the last days than in earlier times?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 11, 13, 16, 17.

**Part 6
FRUITAGE OF
HEEDING GOD'S
COUNSEL**

What is a result of keeping God's commandments with all one's heart?

"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee" (Prov. 3:1, 2).

We seldom feel that the time has come to give up life. We want to see the fruitage of our work or to see our children (and grandchildren!) growing up.

Blessings are not accidents. They do not come from following our own inclinations, but from following the counsel of God.

The Lord desires only good for His children. Sometimes this good is accomplished by misfortune, illness, or pain. But often when we forget God and turn aside from His directions and counsel, we then lack the faith necessary to accept these as being for our good.

God's Word is a volume of heavenly counsel given to guide us and keep us, to bring victories out of defeats, to replace sorrow with joy, and to change unrest into peace.

When God gives counsel, He often points out what the result of obedience or disobedience will be.

How did God advise Israel of both blessings and curses? Deut. 28:1, 15.

The world is full of opposites. There is a right and a wrong way, a narrow and a broad path. We choose the way we go, and we enjoy or suffer the consequences.

How may one be assured of knowing the right way? 2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

The one who follows the right road and honors God with all that he has received can be assured of plenty. (See Prov. 3:9, 10.) In fact, he will receive guidance so as to continue in the right way. (See Prov. 3:6.)

What was God's response to Judah when they did not walk in the right road? What did they miss? Isa. 48:18.

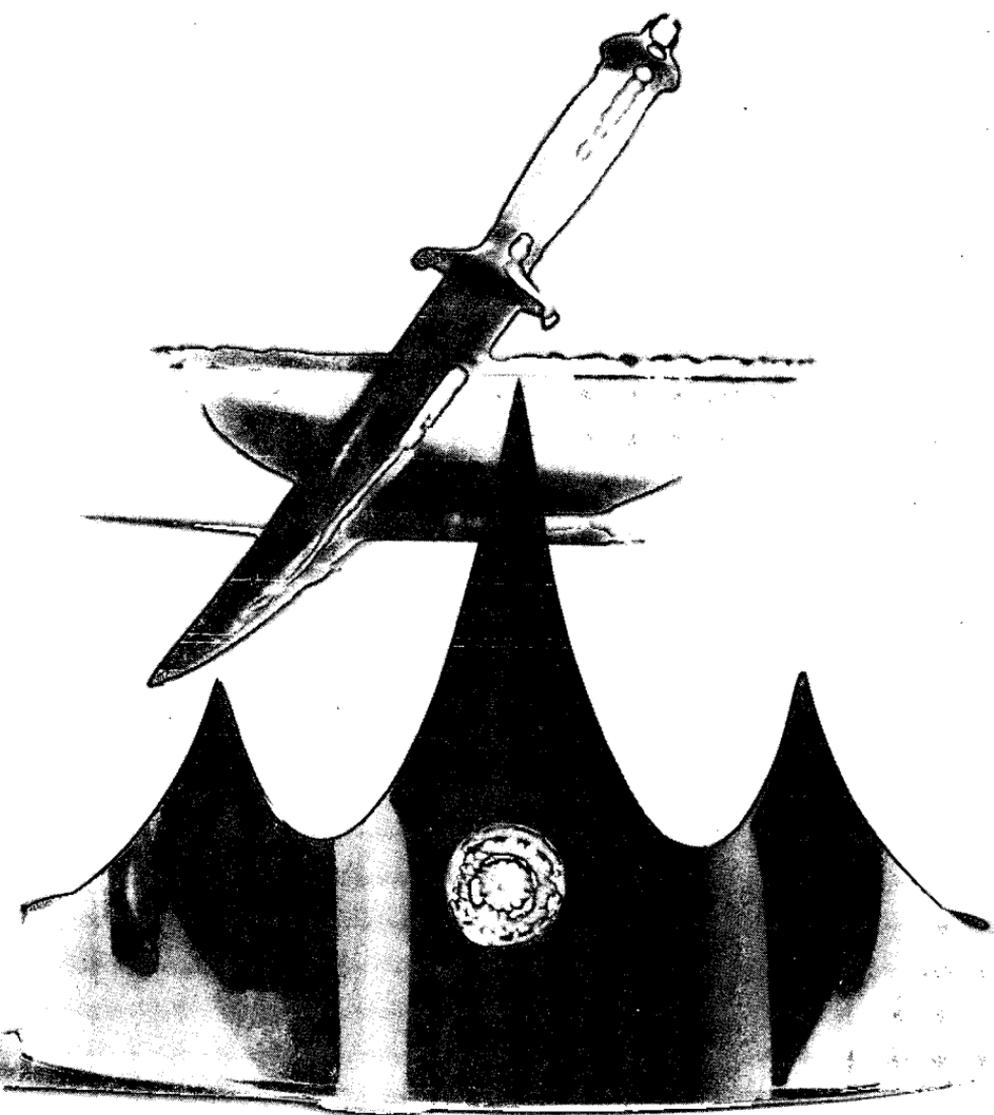
In Isaiah 30:1-7 God's rebellious children who had taken counsel, not with God but with Egypt, were informed of the woes that would come upon them. Having turned to the Pharaoh rather than to God for help, they would discover that the result would only be shame, confusion, and reproach.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is good counsel so often rejected and bad counsel accepted?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 648-652.



The Lamb of God

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Jesus came to earth as a sinless lamb to take on Himself the guilt of a sinful world. He came, knowing that He would die, but knowing also that man would live. On the cross He was willing to die without hope (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 753) for Himself in order that hope of life eternal might be the lot of a world that knew no hope.

Jesus came to receive shame, humiliation, affliction, and grief which never should have been the lot of the spotless Lamb of God.

Today heaven is mine because Jesus was willing to give up heaven. I am a son of God because Jesus became the Son of man.

“Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless

babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss. . . .

“. . . God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. ‘Herein is love.’ Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God’s Thoughts Toward Sinners (John 1:29)**
2. **God’s Mercy Toward Sinners (Ex. 34:6, 7)**
3. **Heaven’s Sacrifice for Sinners (John 3:16)**
4. **Man’s Sins on the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:5, 6)**
5. **The God Who Justifies (Rom. 5:1)**
6. **The God Who Sanctifies (1 Thess. 5:23)**

Part 1
GOD'S THOUGHTS
TOWARD SINNERS

What does God want to do with the world?

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Throughout the Bible God is pictured as One who hates sin but loves the sinner. He despises the wicked deeds men do but retains His love for those who do them. It is His purpose to destroy sin but to save the sinner. Everything He can do, He will do to save sinners from the fate which is their due.

What illustrations does the psalmist use in Psalm 103: 8-14 to express God's great love for humankind?

What kind of thoughts does God have for His people? Jer. 29:11.

Man is totally unworthy of such love. When he sins, he is in rebellion against God. Surely an individual guilty of the gross misdeeds prompted by the evil heart of man deserves punishment rather than pity. But God in His love offers forgiveness and salvation that man does *not deserve*.

If God were not a God of compassion, there would be no hope for sinners. The entire human race would face certain and utter destruction, doomed to suffer the penalty justice requires for sin. But there is hope, because the love and compassion of God has found a means of satisfying His justice.

God looks on sinful man not as he is but as he should be, might be, and will be, when redeemed from sin and rescued from its deadly grip.

"We must not think of God only as a judge ready to pronounce sentence against us. He hates sin; but from love to sinners He gave Himself, in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 633.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can God's infinite love be reconciled with His justice?

"Do not think that *perhaps* God will pardon your transgressions and permit you to come into His presence. God has made the first advance. While you were in rebellion against Him, He went forth to see you. . . .

" . . . Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. . . . We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 188, 189.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "God's Love for Man," pp. 13-15.

Part 2
GOD'S MERCY
TOWARD SINNERS

How did God reveal Himself to Moses?

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. 34:6, 7).

God is a God of both mercy and justice. Justice demands that the transgressor pay the penalty of his transgression. Death is that penalty. So if justice alone were to prevail, all would die, for all have sinned. There would be no other alternative.

God, however, is merciful, and His mercy makes it possible for the condemned sinner to live. Justice could not be sacrificed, for the requirements of justice must be met. God, in Jesus, paid the penalty for all who repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their Substitute. All others are guilty and pay the penalty themselves.

God's mercy is great, but His justice is real. If man refuses to accept the provisions made for his salvation, God will demand full justice, for He will not "clear the guilty."

We owe it to ourselves and to God to keep ever in mind His wonderful goodness and mercy that makes possible the salvation of all repentant sinners. The biblical writers keep such pictures of Him constantly before us.

Why is it safe to turn to the Lord in time of difficulty, and also after we have sinned? Deut. 4:29-31; 2 Chron. 30:9.

What truth points out the mercy of God? Rom. 5:8.

What good advice is recorded by Isaiah in regard to our relationship to God? Isa. 55:6-9.

"More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God's judgments are in the world. . . . He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach. . . .

". . . The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 97.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do some people still reject the mercy of God? What will be their fate?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Repentance," p. 31; "Faith and Acceptance," p. 53.

Part 3
HEAVEN'S SACRIFICE
FOR SINNERS

What is the measure of God's love?

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Man was not redeemed from sin without a high price being paid for his redemption. It cost the Father His Son, and it cost the Son His life, His crown, His all. Jesus was the Lamb that was slain.

Both Father and Son knew what the price would be and weighed the cost. Jesus, at "the counsel of peace" with His Father, volunteered to give up His own life for the life of the sinner. "It was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

What Old Testament patriarch knew what it was like to offer his son as a sacrifice? Gen. 22:1, 2. What was Jesus' comment on this experience? John 8:56.

Some have been called upon to make the sacrifice of a son to die for their country. It is not an easy experience. Some parents would rather die and have their children live. But the supreme sacrifice becomes the measure of supreme love and devotion. Are we willing to respond to God in the same way as He has responded to us?

For the Son "this was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 22, 23.

Before Jesus came to earth, He knew what suffering, humiliation, and shame it would bring. He knew that He would be despised and rejected of men; insulted, spat upon, treated as the vilest of criminals, and die upon the cross. But He was willing to pay the price.

The sacrifice made by Christ is likened to that of an innocent lamb placed upon an altar. Until Christ came in person to offer Himself upon the cross, the system of sacrifices kept ever before the repentant sinners the high price their salvation would cost.

THINK IT THROUGH

Which was a harder experience to bear, the Father giving the Son, or the Son offering Himself for the salvation of men?

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 321-323.

Part 4
MAN'S SINS ON
THE LAMB OF GOD

What great truth is taught in Isaiah 53:5, 6?

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5, 6).

When Christ died on the cross, He died not as a holy God but as a sinful man. He died not because He Himself had sinned, but because He had taken upon Himself the sins of others which did not belong to Him.

When Christ died, He died as the worst of criminals, making full atonement for all the sins of all the world.

There was no other way for man's redemption than for Him who knew no sin to suffer its punishment.

**What are the results of Christ's sacrifice on the cross?
1 Peter 2:24.**

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

What piercing cry points up the agony of Christ on the cross? Matt. 27:46.

God could never forsake His beloved, sinless Son; but He who was holy could not accept that which was evil. The sins of the ages resting on Christ brought separation between Him and His Father as He died for sin.

"The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why was Christ fully qualified to be the Sin Bearer for man?

FURTHER STUDY

The Story of Redemption, pp. 225-227.

Part 5
THE GOD WHO
JUSTIFIES

What must man have in order to be justified?

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Sinners are not at peace with God, but at enmity. Sin fights against God, rebels against conformity to His law and His will. Death is the penalty for sin. Christ came into the world, however, to rescue man from the penalty of death and to restore him to peace with God. Love He offers for enmity, pardon for condemnation, reconciliation for alienation.

All this is what is meant by justification. A person is accepted, not because of what he has done for God, but because of what God has done for him. Justification is accomplished in a moment—the first moment that man accepts the salvation Christ offers him. It changes man's standing before the judgment bar of heaven. His sins are pardoned, and he is accepted as a member of the family of heaven, in peaceful and happy relationship with God. All this is achieved by faith in Christ and an acceptance of His ways.

“God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17). Justification is the opposite of condemnation, and Christ's purpose was to justify, not to condemn.

What is a false road to justification? Gal. 2:16.

We are “justified freely,” we are told, “through the redemption that is in Christ” (Rom. 3:24). “Whom he called, them he also justified (Rom. 8:30). Sinners are justified by Christ immediately when they accept Him—there is no waiting until sainthood has been achieved.

“We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

Contrast the disobedience of one man, Adam, with the obedience of one man, Christ. Rom. 5:18, 19.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do we mean by “faith” in the expression “justified by faith”?

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 389-393.

Part 6
THE GOD WHO
SANCTIFIES

What does Paul pray will be the experience of every believer?

“The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).

The effect of the sin is to destroy the image of God in man. The effect of the gospel is to restore man to God's image. The purpose of Christ in coming to the world was to reveal God's character to men, to die for their sins, and to make it possible by His grace that this character might be reproduced in them. If man is to live eternally in a holy heaven with a holy God, he must be holy. (See Heb. 12:14.) The transformation from sinfulness to holiness is called sanctification.

What does Jesus suggest as the way by which a person can be sanctified? John 17:17.

“It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 467.

The holy law of God will be written in the hearts of the saved. This process is sanctification.

What will be the prayer of the man who desires to be sanctified? Ps. 51:10.

Man must learn to do right, not only because he is told to do so, but because he wants to do so. To do works of righteousness and holiness must become desirable for him. He will obey because it will be in harmony with his renewed nature to obey. The thoughts of God are to become his thoughts, and the ways of God, his ways. This is the work of sanctification.

What did Jesus say He did for our sakes in order that we may be sanctified? John 17:19.

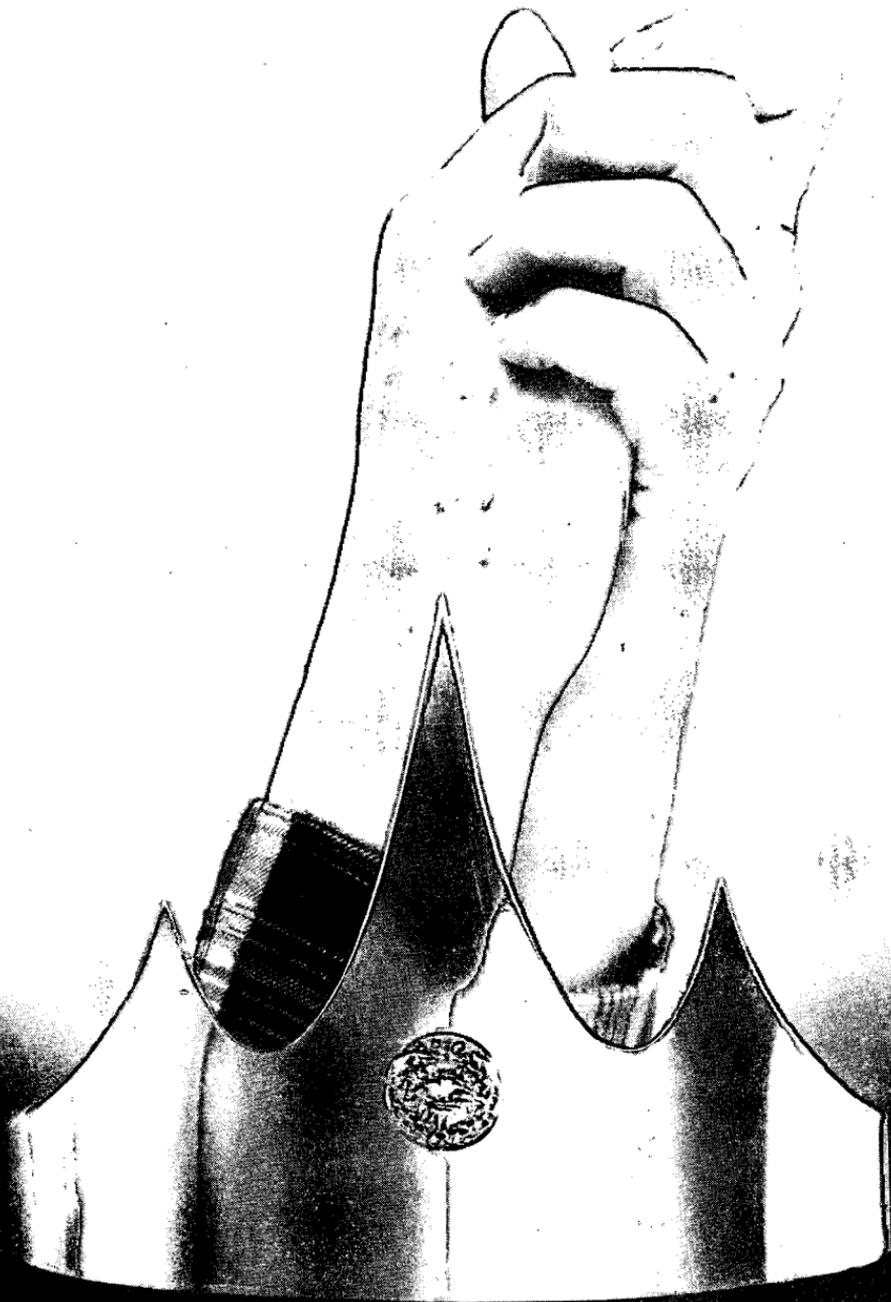
This work is not accomplished in a moment. It is the work of a lifetime. Nowhere in this life will it be possible for man to say that he is perfectly holy, completely like God. He is saved in heaven not by his own holiness or his own works of righteousness but by the grace of God and the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him.

THINK IT THROUGH

If the Christian is justified by faith, how is he sanctified? (See Acts 26:18.)

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 467-474.



My Father and My God

“Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation” (Ps. 89:26).

God was very real to David. The Lord was his loving Father and his Rock of defense, his hope and his salvation. He was his Shepherd who led him beside still waters and restored his soul (Ps. 23:1-3).

God was the light of David's pathway and the strength of his life (Ps. 27:1). He was his fortress and high tower in whom he could place his trust (Ps. 18:2).

To David the heavens declared God's glory, and the firmament showed His handiwork (Ps. 19:1).

David knew from personal experience that the Lord guided the meek and taught them His ways (Ps. 25:9). He had learned that God gave strength to His people and blessed them with peace (Ps. 29:11). He had the assurance that the Lord encamped about those that feared Him and delivered them (Ps. 34:7).

To David that man was a fool who said, “There is no God” (Ps. 53:1).

Because the loving-kindness of God was better than life to David, he praised God with joyful lips; and because the Lord had been his help, David rejoiced in the shadow of the heavenly wings (Ps. 63:3-7).

The purpose of the lesson this week is to see how the God of heaven is the personal God of His children on earth. From the time of Adam to the present there have always been men who knew God as their Saviour from sin, Deliverer from evil, and their Guide and Companion in daily life. There is nothing more important in life than to become acquainted with God as a personal friend.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God and His Saints**
(Mal. 3:16, 17)
2. **God and His People**
(Deut. 7:6-8)
3. **God and the Individual**
(Ps. 91:2)
4. **The Nearness of God**
(Ps. 145:18)
5. **The Goodness of God**
(Ps. 34:8-10)
6. **Invincible Love**
(Rom. 8:38, 39)

Part 1
GOD AND
HIS SAINTS **How does God relate to those who fear Him?**

“They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:16, 17).

There are people on earth who fear God, who speak to each other concerning Him, and who worship Him together. The Bible calls them saints. God recognizes them as His own, and they recognize Him. He loves them and they love Him. They are called His children. They have fellowship with each other and with God. Very close and tender is this relationship.

The picture of God that Malachi presents is of One who keeps careful records. None will be forgotten, because their names are written in a book. (See also Ex. 32:32, 33.) Only the unrighteous will have their names blotted out of the book of life (Ps. 69:28). Those whose names are written in the book will be delivered from all evil (Dan. 12:1).

How should the saints relate to one another? Heb. 10:24, 25.

If any people on earth deserve to associate themselves closely together in bonds of happy and meaningful fellowship, it is the saints of God. They did this in Old Testament times, and also after the Saviour came to earth. They enjoy this fellowship and profit from it. God watches over them in this fellowship and blesses them in it.

The saints are not to fix their eyes on themselves and their own affairs; they are to look at the needs of those around them and to encourage everyone to be more loving and more active in good deeds. Saints are not to be concerned only with personal salvation, but also with the salvation of others. This means faithful attendance at meetings where they can encourage one another and give public testimony to their unity and common faith. This becomes more important in Christian life as the second advent approaches.

What should be the attitude of those that love the Lord? Ps. 97:10-12.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do some people absent themselves from Sabbath School and the church service? What are some of the benefits of faithful attendance at services?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “The Privilege of Prayer,” pp. 100-102.

Part 2
GOD AND
HIS PEOPLE

Why and for what purpose did God choose Israel?

"Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deut. 7:6-8).

God wants a people who are different from other people, different in the sense that they will have nothing to do with false gods and false worship. They will not do anything to compromise their relation to God by making alliances or intermarrying with the heathen (verses 2, 3). They remember this covenant relationship with God and walk humbly before Him.

Lest God's people become proud of their special position and the blessings they enjoy, God reminds them that they are chosen, not for any qualities of their own, but merely because of God's love (verse 8). Whatever we enjoy of earth's bounties, it is only because of God's goodness and love.

What qualities of Abraham qualified him to be the father of the faithful? Gen. 12:1-4, 7, 8; 13:4, 14-18; 14:20; 15:6; 18:17-19.

Abraham believed God, and this was counted to him for righteousness. But it was God who took the initiative in calling him and making great promises to him. He obeyed the Lord. Wherever he went, He set up altars to worship God. He paid tithe. Abraham was not perfect. He failed to give a proper witness in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20). But God was with him because he did not stagger at God's promises.

What the world knows of God today, it knows very largely because of Hebrews who knew God and did not want the world to forget Him. Among them were such individuals as Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others. Their witness for God, made known by Christian endeavor and missions, has carried a knowledge of Him throughout the world.

What assurance do we have that God will help us as His people? Isa. 41:8-10; 43:5-7, 10.

THINK IT THROUGH

From the experience of Israel, how can you show that God's choice of a people does not necessarily mean that the people will remain His own?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 458, 459; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 570.

**Part 3
GOD AND
THE INDIVIDUAL**

What was the psalmist's personal relationship to God?

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust" (Ps. 91:2).

The fact that God is a wonderful God to others profits me little unless I know that He is also a God to me. The God of the Bible and the preacher, the God of David or Moses or John, means little to me unless I also know Him.

What good does it do me when I hear of answers to others' prayers and know not that God also answers mine? What good does it do me when others testify that God is near and dear if I cannot offer such a testimony myself?

The saints of the Bible and the saints of today know God for themselves. David could say, "The Lord is *my* shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh *me* to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth *me* beside still waters. He restoreth *my* soul" (Ps. 23: 1-3). (Emphasis supplied.)

What words in the following passages of Scripture indicate a personal relationship with God? Ps. 23:1-3; Job 19:25-27; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:8.

David had been a shepherd caring for sheep and the lambs. As he thought of himself and his relation to God, he could not think of a better illustration than that of God as the Great Shepherd. Can you think of a modern occupation in an urban society which would parallel that of a shepherd? Would he be a banker, a lawyer, a guardian, a trustee? How do these occupations fail to fulfill the qualities of a shepherd?

Where did Isaiah have a personal encounter with God, and what were the results? Isa. 6:1-13.

All the wonderful things God has done for others He desires and has promised to do for me. What I must do is to allow the eyes of my spiritual vision to be opened and to respond to God when He addresses me.

What words in the following texts indicate that a personal relationship with God is open to all? Rev. 3:20-22; John 1:9; Rom. 1:16.

What is the secret of experiencing the reality of God's presence? Jer. 29:13.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the things that hinder my enjoying a personal experience with God?

If we do not know God, it is because we do not believe or receive Him, or because we drive Him away by our sins.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Asking to Give," pp. 141-143.

Part 4
THE NEARNESS
OF GOD

What kind of people find that God is near to them?

"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Ps. 145:18).

The expression "to call upon" the Lord means to worship Him, to recognize His strength and man's dependence. Man is always in need of help. To whom shall he turn in his need? He may be tempted to turn to his fellowman or even to one who holds a high station in life. But the psalmist warns against this. (See Ps. 118:8, 9.) There is only One to whom a man can turn and find his needs amply supplied.

The challenge to the worshiper is that his worship shall be "in truth"—in sincerity and singleness of heart. The Christian must never divide his loyalty or fail in trust and confidence. Sometimes the Christian is tempted to put his trust in a bank balance, or in friends, in his skill, or astuteness. It seems easier to have confidence in what can be seen and felt, rather than in God who is invisible and apparently intangible. But a faith that is the "evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1) must actuate him in all his relations with God, and then he can be sure God will never let him down.

How did Moses encourage the children of Israel that God would keep on leading them? Deut. 31:6.

The Lord used similar language to strengthen Joshua (Joshua 1:5, 6).

Under what circumstance did Jesus say that He and the Father would make Their abode with men? John 14:23.

Does God mean what He says? Will He be true to His word? But why does He so often repeat His promises? Do times ever come when we personally need it?

"Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 85.

Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him [God] to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 100.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between feeling the nearness of God and having faith in His nearness?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 388-391.

Part 5
THE GOODNESS
OF GOD

What reveals the goodness of God?

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" (Ps. 34:8-10).

The goodness of God is revealed in that He provides man with everything he really needs. "Taste and see," says the psalmist. He invites us to *experience* God's abundant provision. Nothing is more convincing than experience—being in that situation where only God can be the source of our supplies. We are always afraid of being without our daily needs. But when circumstances take away every visible means of support, and we find that God has supplied every need, then we are tasting how good God is. Happy is that man whose trust in God has not been in vain.

The imagery of the lion going hungry is very striking. Can the king of beasts with all his strength go hungry? Yes, he can, says the psalmist. But those who trust in God will never find themselves without necessities. Their lot is better than that of the most naturally privileged.

**In view of the goodness of God, how should man respond?
Ps. 107:8, 9; 105:1, 2.**

How many are the blessings of God! But how sparse are man's expressions of praise! How measureless is the love and goodness of God, but how feeble the gratitude in the heart of man! If God is good, why not recognize it and thank Him for it? If we enjoy blessings from Heaven, why not lift up our voices in grateful praise?

As we look at the world about us, how much can we see there of the goodness of God—in nature and in the heart of men? All goodness everywhere has its origin with God. Men are good only because God is good. Every deed of kindness, every act of mercy, every thought of compassion is only a reflection of the goodness and love of God.

Where can we see evidences of God's goodness? Ps. 145:9-12.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian see the goodness of God even in calamitous circumstances?

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 224, 225.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Privilege of Prayer," pp. 102-104.

Part 6
INVINCIBLE LOVE

What does Romans 8:38 and 39 teach about God's love?

"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39).

Paul goes from one extreme to the other, from death to life, from height to depth, and he finds that there is absolutely nothing that can oppose the love of God and make it ineffective in reaching man. God's love, like Himself, is an invincible, impenetrable power that can surround us so that no evil can reach us, no superhuman effort can ever snatch us out of its grasp. In God's love we are absolutely safe.

God's invincible love can never fail. Neither sin nor Satan can stop it. When Satan caused men to sin, he hoped God's hatred for sin would turn into hatred for man and result in his complete destruction. But instead of destroying man, God gave His Son to save Him.

What comparison does Paul make between man's love and God's love? Rom. 5:6-8.

In innumerable ways God has continued to demonstrate His love for the human race. Every child of earth has been a recipient of that love. In every age God has given new assurances and demonstrations of His love.

With what human illustration does God indicate that He cannot forget His people? Isa. 49:15.

The context of verse 15 indicates that God's people have sometimes felt forgotten and even forsaken. They have passed through periods when it looked as though they were at the mercy of adverse circumstances. They have prayed for deliverance, but God has not effected any changes. Is there any hope for them?

But God says that He has not forgotten His people. It is more likely for a mother to forget her infant child than for God to be unmindful of His people.

God's ways are not our ways, just as His thoughts are not our thoughts. (See Isa. 55:8, 9.) God is ever constant. In His good time and in His good way He will work for His people. We must be patient, ever trusting, ever believing, knowing that God is working out His purposes for our good.

THINK IT THROUGH

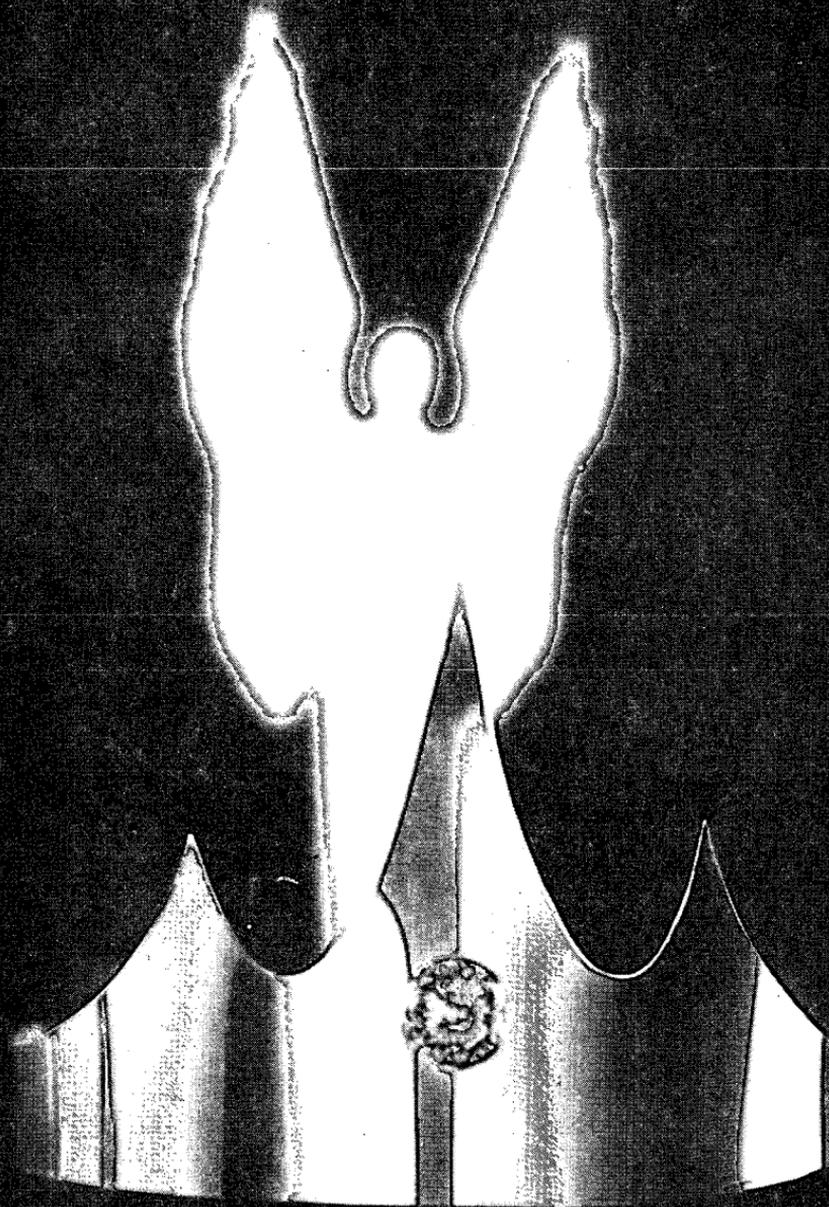
What do the assurances given to ancient Israel of God's everlasting love mean to us today?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "God's Love for Man," pp. 13-15.

LESSON 11 December 9-15

The Lord of Hosts



The word "hosts" in the title "Lord of hosts" has been interpreted in different ways by scholars. Who are the "hosts"? The scriptural usage points to the angels as representing the hosts over which God is Lord. Angels surround His throne and do His bidding. They form His retinue, His army. Occasionally men have seen them and recognized in them a power available for their protection. (See Gen. 32:1, 2; 2 Kings 6:17.)

David uses the title "Lord of hosts" when he approaches Goliath (1 Sam. 17:45). He uses it again in the climax to his poem of praise in Psalm 24 (verse 10). Jeremiah uses the name 88 times as indicating that God is the Saviour and Protector of His people.

We find in the Bible, besides the word "angels," other names for celestial beings:

1. *Cherubim* guarded the way to the tree of life after Adam and Eve had been cast out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). Ezekiel saw visions of cherubim closely associated with God (Eze. 10:21, 22).

2. *Seraphim*: Isaiah said he saw these attending God who was seated on the throne, high and exalted (Isa. 6:1, 2).

John the revelator saw other living creatures about the throne of God (Rev. 4:6-8).

The glimpses we have of these angelic beings indicate that they are beings of a superior order. They serve God and worship Him. They are at His command and are instrumental in accomplishing His plans and purposes. In this lesson we see how

God uses angels in His activity for man.

To understand God better we need to understand something concerning His angelic emissaries. In heaven there are thousands of them, ten thousand times ten thousand, ever doing God homage and ready to go on their missions throughout the universe. Myriads of them are at His service here in this world. Every child of God has his own guardian angel who is assigned to guide, protect, and assist him at all times and in all conditions. This angel always has access to God Himself on His heavenly throne. This week we shall endeavor to become better acquainted with God by a brief survey of the work of His angelic ministers.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7).

Little do even the children of God know what they owe to the care and interposition of angels. They do not see them. They do not understand their selfless, unceasing ministry. They do not comprehend how vastly different life would be if angels were not present.

Because of the protecting care of heavenly angels, we do not fall victims to the evil one. Satan is constantly seeking to destroy, but God's angels are sent to help and guide and bless.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Angels About God's Throne**
(Rev. 5:11)
- 2. Attendants of Christ**
(Matt. 16:27)
- 3. Angelic Ministry to Men**
(Heb. 1:14)
- 4. Bearers of Good Tidings**
(Luke 2:8-11)
- 5. Messages of Doom**
(Gen. 19:1, 12, 13)
- 6. Controlling Agencies**
(Rev. 7:1)

Part 1
ANGELS ABOUT
GOD'S THRONE

What creatures and how many does John see around the throne of God?

"As I looked I heard the voices of countless angels. These were all round the throne and the living creatures and the elders. Myriads upon myriads there were, thousands upon thousands" (Rev. 5:11, NEB).

Heaven is the headquarters of the universe. There God is seated on His throne. God is infinitely great, and the universe is infinitely large. Its work must be one of almost unbelievable complexity. It is through angels that God conducts His work. There are untold numbers of them, "myriads upon myriads" and "thousands upon thousands."

God's work for the world is of great importance, to Him and to every one of us, whether sinner or saint. Every detail is closely watched. Not a sparrow in this little earth of ours falls to the ground without His notice. No king rules, no saint falls, without God's being aware of it.

Angels keep all the extremely complex and mutually interwoven affairs of earth under Heaven's control. In Ezekiel 1:15-21 and 10:9-16 the seemingly chaotic array of worldly affairs is likened to four wheels kept under the control of four living creatures, cherubim, who in turn are under the direction of God seated upon His throne. (See Eze. 1:26, 28; 10:1, 5, 18-20.)

Whom did Jacob see working for God on behalf of men? Gen. 28:12.

David spoke of God's "throne in the heavens" and of His kingdom which "ruleth over all," with His "angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word," the "ministers of his, that do his pleasure" (Ps. 103:19-21). Micaiah saw "the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left" (1 Kings 22:19).

Daniel beheld the Ancient of Days seated on His throne which appeared "like the fiery flame" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

Who does Peter mention as being interested in man's salvation? 1 Peter 1:10-12.

These things which mortal eyes cannot see are just as real and infinitely more important than the visible things of earth. The Bible draws the curtain aside and helps us to glimpse the close connection between heaven and earth.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why would angels be interested in man's salvation?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 34-37.

Part 2
ATTENDANTS
OF CHRIST

What celestial beings will accompany Christ in His second advent?

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

The angels of heaven are the attendants of Christ and are under His command. When Satan rebelled and was cast to earth, a majority of the angels remained loyal to Christ. (See Rev. 12:4, 7, 8.)

Since the first rebellion, all the loyal angelic host has been closely connected with Christ in continued warfare against the dragon. In the conduct of the work of Heaven many activities involve the entire universe, but none are of greater importance than those having to do with the winning back to God this world which Satan seeks to hold. The angels are closely connected with Christ in the conduct of this work, ever anxious to be sent on embassies of mercy to win sinners back to God.

"Our Saviour . . . is surrounded with heavenly intelligences, cherubim, and seraphim, ten thousand times ten thousand of angels.

"All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. All these armies are in the service of the Prince of heaven, exalting the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. They are working for Christ under His commission, to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 967, 968.

On what two special occasions did angels minister to Christ? Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43.

What will be one of the tasks of the angels at the end of the world? Matt. 13:41, 42.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does God not use angels only in the accomplishment of His purposes?

"We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 297.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 94, 95.

Part 3
ANGELIC MINISTRY
TO MEN

What is the function of angels in relation to man?

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).

Angels have their homes in heaven, but they are often on earth. They are at the command of Jesus to serve man. They bring the blessings of heaven to the needy of earth. They connect man in his weakness with God in His strength.

What did Jesus say was one of God’s provisions for “little ones”? Matt. 18:10.

“Little ones” may not only be children. They could very well be those who are weak in the faith. God is very much concerned about the safety of everyone, especially those who are not able to care for themselves. (See Ps. 91:11, 12.)

“Angels of glory that do always behold the face of the Father in heaven, joy in ministering to His little ones. Angels are ever present when they are most needed, with those who have the hardest battles with self to fight, and whose surroundings are the most discouraging. Weak and trembling souls who have many objectionable traits of character are their special charge.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 105.

How did an angel release Peter from prison? Acts 12:7-10.

How did the same angel bring death to Herod? Verse 23.

“The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty. Herod died in great agony of mind and body under the retributive judgment of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 152.

How only can we be aware of the work of angels on our behalf? 2 Kings 6:17.

“Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men. These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it wrong to worship angels? Rev. 19:10.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 304, 305.

Part 4
BEARERS OF
GOOD TIDINGS

What good news did an angel bring to shepherds in a field by night?

"There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8-11).

The most important news that has ever come to the world was the announcement that the birth of the Saviour of the world had taken place. The tidings were entrusted to an angel and were announced to the humble shepherds of Bethlehem.

What other instances are recorded of angels communicating important messages for God?

Both Joseph (Matt. 1:21) and Paul (Acts 27:22-24) received divine instruction by means of an angel messenger.

"Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near. Angels from the courts above will attend the steps of those who come and go at God's commands."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 48.

The apostle Paul represents what every missionary can be by God's grace, a means of bringing hope and courage to those who do not know God. Paul, on the ship that was scheduled to take them to Italy, suffered physically like anyone else. But he had one privilege that few could share.

How grateful men should be for our wonderful God who sends His angelic messengers with news for the children of earth from His seemingly unreachable heaven!

What is one reason why men are admonished to entertain strangers? Heb. 13:2.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is a message from an angel as authoritative as if it came directly from God Himself?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 44-49.

Part 5
MESSAGES OF DOOM

What agents did God use for the destruction of Sodom?

"There came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them."

"The men said unto Lot, . . . We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it" (Gen. 19:1, 12, 13).

Not all the missions of angels bring happiness and blessing. At times angels are sent by God with messages of judgment or doom. Thus it was with Sodom. Because of its iniquity, God saw fit to withdraw His protection and mercy, and the city met its doom. Angels carried out His purpose. At the same time angels were working to save Lot and his family. Their patience and insistence is an example of how God is anxious to save us from the destruction of this world.

**How did an angel destroy the efficacy of a great army?
2 Chron. 32:20, 21.**

"The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian. The honor of Jehovah was vindicated in the eyes of the surrounding nations. In Jerusalem the hearts of the people were filled with holy joy. Their earnest entreaties for deliverance had been mingled with confession of sin and with many tears. In their great need they had trusted wholly in the power of God to save, and He had not failed them."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 361, 362.

**What part did an angel have in punishing Jerusalem?
1 Chron. 21:14, 15.**

Of the three options, David chose to fall into the hands of God. He knew that God was just, but also merciful (verse 13).

What terrible judgments fall on the earth when seven angels pour out seven vials containing God's wrath? Rev. 16.

It must never be thought that wicked men or a wicked world are beyond the judgment of God. When iniquity is carried to a point beyond which Heaven can no longer permit, angels of judgment are sent to withdraw God's protecting mercies and to permit evil to reap the bitter harvest it has sown.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can one reconcile destructive acts with the goodness of God?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 157-160; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 35, 36, 614.

Part 6
CONTROLLING
AGENCIES

What work did John the revelator see angels doing?

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

This view is of vital import to the world today. It is a simple statement of a very important fact. Angels unseen by men are commissioned by God to hold in check throughout the earth powers which could prematurely explode into outbreaks which would engulf the entire world in final destruction. Satan incites men everywhere to outbursts of wrath and violence. But angels from God hold them in check. Had it not been for the restraining activities of the angels, earth's troubles would long since have erupted into conflicts that would have ended only in Armageddon.

"Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 408.

How was Daniel saved from death in the den of lions? Dan. 6:22.

"God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 543, 544.

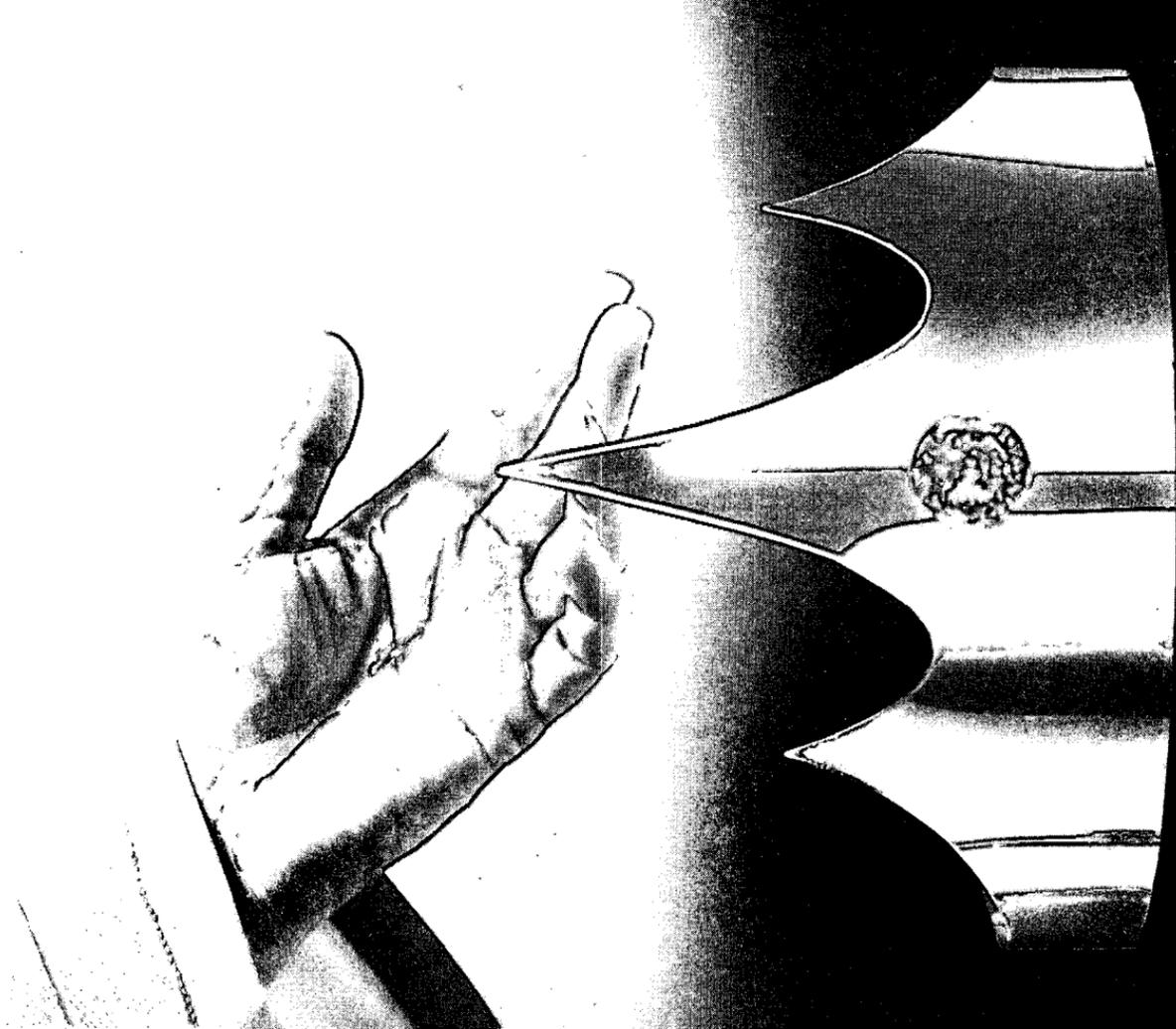
"From the story of Daniel's deliverance we may learn that in seasons of trial and gloom God's children should be just what they were when their prospects were bright with hope and their surroundings all that they could desire. Daniel in the lion's den was the same Daniel who stood before the king as chief among the ministers of state and as a prophet of the Most High. A man whose heart is stayed upon God will be the same in the hour of his greatest trial as he is in prosperity, when the light and favor of God and of man beam upon him. Faith reaches to the unseen, and grasps eternal realities."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 545.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways have you recognized the intervention of angels in your life? (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 517.)

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 96, 97; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 456, 457.



The God of Help

“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Heb. 13:6).

The writer to the Hebrews is quoting from Psalm 118:6 where the text says, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” The central thought is still the same; the wonderful God we worship is on our side of the struggle. He is there to help us in any way we need. As a consequence, we have no reason to fear any harm that may come from man or any other source.

If in past ages God’s people needed to know Him as their Helper and Protector, there is much greater need

that they know Him as their Helper today. Now in earth’s last days there are greater trials, temptations, and dangers than ever before. We are living in the days concerning which Christ warned that efforts would be made, if possible, to “deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:24). These are the times concerning which God warned that the devil would come down in “great wrath,” knowing “that he hath but a short time,” and that the dragon would be “wroth with the woman” and would “make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:12, 17). In this lesson we shall endeavor to become better acquainted with God as our divine Helper and Protector.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God’s Great Power to Help**
(Eph. 3:20)
2. **God’s Willingness to Help**
(Isa. 41:10)
3. **God, the Protector of His People**
(Ps. 27:1-5)
4. **Manifestations in Emergencies**
(Isa. 59:18, 19)
5. **God Guides His People**
(Ps. 48:14)
6. **Worthy of Trust**
(Nahum 1:7)

Part 1
GOD'S GREAT
POWER TO HELP

What was Paul's view of God's power to help?

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

When we want someone to do something for us, we go to someone who is able to do it. If we want a watch repaired, a motor fixed, a house built, we go to someone with competence. When we need help, the part of wisdom is always to go to someone who is able to help.

We are conditioned to think that, in these days of scientific progress, there is no limit to what science can do. We talk of the miracles of medicine and technology. We think that all we need to do is to invest more money and time and the answers will be found. But the fact is that man is limited by time and conditioned by his environment. With all his efforts and skill he faces death and the end of the world. If he is wise, he will look beyond the immediate and recognize a God who is there to help, and there is no limit to what He can do.

Do we fear the power of wicked men or nations? "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance" (Isa. 40:15).

What was Paul's attitude to his weakness? Why? 2 Cor. 12:9.

Do you doubt your ability to meet the requirements God has set for those who are to live with Him in glory? Commit yourself "unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory" (Jude 24).

What gift did Isaiah assure Israel they could receive from God? Isa. 40:28-31.

To "wait upon the Lord" is not simply to do nothing. It is to look to God for guidance and strength. In Him and not in ourselves is the secret of success in our struggles with ourselves, with our environment, and with the task that God has given us to do.

Does the church feel that Christ's command to give the gospel to all nations is too great a task? Let it recall His promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:20, 18).

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that God can use us better in our weaknesses?

FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pp. 51-53; 105-108.

Part 2
GOD'S WILLINGNESS
TO HELP

Why does God say we need not be afraid in any circumstance?

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10).

Every child of God may have implicit confidence in God's willingness to help and in His ability and purpose to strengthen and uphold. His one thought toward His children is always to help them. As a mother loves her child and would make any sacrifice in its behalf, so with God.

How certain was the psalmist that God would provide for him? Ps. 27:10.

Home ties are usually very strong. They give us a sense of security. It is frightening to be thrown out into the world. But God is always mindful of our needs. (See Mark 10:29, 30.)

God loves His children with a love that is guided by His wisdom and His desire to help. Our desires and prayers are not always commensurate with His goodness, wisdom, and love.

"God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should not ask Him to concede to our will, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 231.

What assurance may we have concerning the watchcare of God? Ps. 121:4-7.

"In His loving care and interest in us, often He who understands us better than we understand ourselves refuses to permit us selfishly to seek the gratification of our own ambition. He does not permit us to pass by the homely but sacred duties that lie next to us. Often these duties afford the very training essential to prepare us for a higher work. Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed. . . .

"In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 473, 474.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God is always for us, why do events so often appear to be against us?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 230, 231.

**Part 3
GOD, THE
PROTECTOR
OF HIS PEOPLE**

Why, according to the psalmist, is it not necessary for a Christian to be afraid? Ps. 27:1-5.

The Christian sometimes passes through days of darkness and uncertainty. But the Lord is his light, showing him clearly the way he ought to go.

Does he sometimes feel that the whole world is against him? Perhaps! But he has no reason to fear the outcome. With God our Helper on our side, victory is certain.

Children of God have enemies, but they need not fear them. Every man who endeavors to do right has the forces of evil arrayed against him, but he need not live in terror. What he needs is faith in God and the courage that comes with it. With these he may have peace in his heart and victory in his life.

What may be the confidence of every child of God? Ps. 91:2.

Ellen White, commenting on Psalm 91, wrote: "The righteous understand God's government, and will triumph with holy gladness in the everlasting protection and salvation that Christ through His merits has secured for them. Let all remember this, and forget not that the wicked, who do not receive Christ as their personal Saviour, understand not His providence."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1150.

"While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm His obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1141.

If we are God's children, then our enemies are His enemies, our battles His battles, and our weaknesses and shortcomings are girded with His strength.

"He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 121.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God is strong, why do His children often appear so weak?

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 173-176.

Part 4
MANIFESTATIONS
IN EMERGENCIES

“According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies. . . . So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Isa. 59:18, 19).

We live in a world where those who endeavor to serve God must expect manifestations of the power of the enemy and revealings of the power of God. An alert enemy is ever at work, ready at any moment to pounce upon and devour his prey. Left to themselves alone, the children of God would be no match for the relentless foe. But the battle is not theirs alone; it is God's. The honor of God is at stake as well as the fate of His children. In every crisis the Lord is with His people, ready to defend and deliver. That was the situation with Israel at the Red Sea; with the Jews in Persia in the days of Esther, Mordecai, and Haman; and Elijah in the days of Ahab and Jezebel.

How effective is the wrath of man against the power of God? Ps. 76:10.

At these times of greatest emergency God displays Himself in His matchless majesty. Never are the wonders of our wonderful God more magnificently revealed than when the saints are weak and God shows Himself to be infinitely strong, when the enemy is exerting himself to the utmost to destroy and God reveals Himself to save. At such times the children of God know of certainty that the Lord omnipotent is their God. The wicked also are forced to admit that the Lord Jehovah is God, and that it is to Him that all honor and praise is due.

“God has always wrought for His people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and disaffected, the haters of God, His truth, and His people can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if He orders it thus. 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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 452, 453.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does the Lord permit situations to reach a point of crisis where victory for the enemy appears to be inevitable?

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 283-290.

Part 5
GOD GUIDES
HIS PEOPLE

What does the psalmist say that God will do for us?

"This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. 48:14).

Man, with the limitations of his knowledge and foresight, is constantly in need of divine guidance. In His Word God has repeatedly promised to guide His children, and we find there many examples of those who have been guided by Him, such as Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, John, and Paul.

How personal is God's guidance? Ps. 32:8.

Guidance with the eye is a close and intimate guidance. It is more than giving instructions and leaving a person to carry them out. It means watching the person continually to make sure that every move is correct. It is the guidance that a father would give a son, freely, willingly, and with a deep concern for the son's best interest.

"There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us. . . . God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God.

"Another way in which God's voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512.

What was David's prayer for guidance? Ps. 31:3; 27:11; 43:3.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can we make sure that the impressions of our hearts are right impressions?

"Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 248, 249; *Gospel Workers*, p. 285.

Part 6
WORTHY OF TRUST

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him” (Nahum 1:7).

Can a man of little faith have a strong trust in God?

God's people have faith in God and place their trust in Him. They live happily, sleep peacefully, and work successfully because of their trust in God.

Trusting God, God's children put His ways above their own ways, His wisdom above theirs, His judgment above their own. They accept His strength to replace their weakness, His perfection for their own shortcomings. All the resources of Heaven are theirs who place their trust in God.

Man's judgment and knowledge are imperfect. But the man who obeys God because he trusts Him accepts the wisdom and ways of Him who has never made a mistake.

No one need ever be disappointed in placing implicit trust in God. God always knows what is best and what will work out for man's own good and the greater good of His cause on earth. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee” (Ps. 84:11, 12).

What in man's experience contributes to lack of trust in God? (See 2 Cor. 1:9; Heb. 3:12.)

Disbelief and sufficiency have ever stood as barriers to a trusting relationship with God. However, there is no limit to what a man may accomplish who goes forward with full confidence in God and complete reliance on His strength. Thus it was with Paul. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). Paul was well aware of his own weaknesses, but he was also acquainted with God's infinite strength that was placed at his disposal.

What did trust in God mean to the psalmist? Ps. 118:5-9.

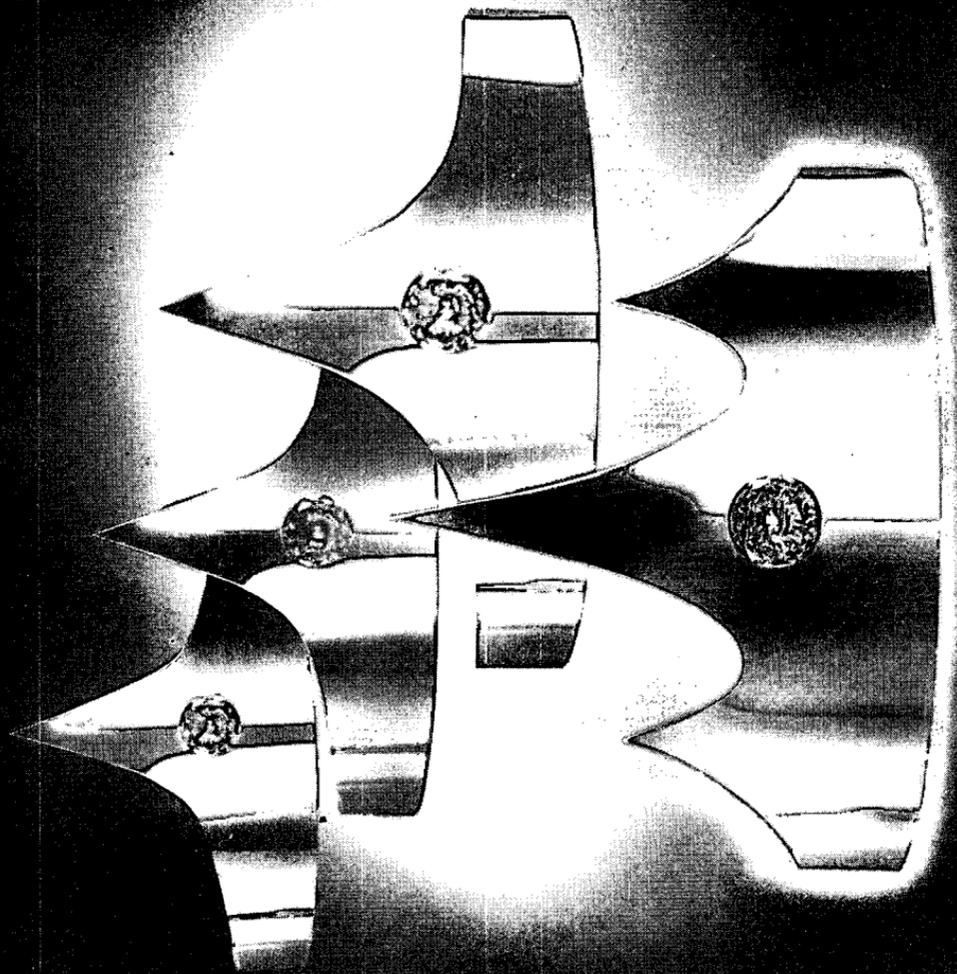
THINK IT THROUGH

Is trust in God important for the things of earth as well as for the things of heaven? If I lack trust in God, how may I secure it? If my faith is weak, is it possible that it may grow? Is there any relationship between trust in God and obedience to His commands?

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 253-256.



King of Kings

“The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation” (Jer. 10:10).

Our wonderful God is pictured in Scripture as a king. In these days of the earth’s history there are not many kings. Presidents, generals, prime ministers, and even chairmen are in control of the destinies of nations. It may be well, therefore, to review the responsibilities of a king in order that we may see clearly one of the functions of our God.

Kings, in the days when the Bible was written, ruled without a system of checks and balances. They were sovereign in their land. Their word was

law. In the same manner, God has sole authority. His commands are to be obeyed. He gives direction to every movement and policy.

But kings on earth have never really represented the King of kings and Lord of lords. Some have been king for a day. Our God is King forever and ever.

Some kings have been arbitrary in their judgments, even wicked in their intentions. David was far from perfect in his ways. (See the way he treated Uriah for the sake of Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11.) By contrast our God is a righteous king.

Some kings have carried the title, but they have contributed very little, if anything, to the greatness of their nation. They have been puppet kings, mere figureheads. But this is far from true of our God, who can be called the King of glory.

Some kings have had to fight for their kingdom, to defeat an enemy. And some have failed. Our God is a King who is engaged in a battle for the truth, and His victory is assured. In this lesson we look at our God as King of kings. “Crown Him with many crowns”!

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Lord Is King**
(Isa. 33:22)
2. **King Eternal**
(1 Tim. 1:17)
3. **King of Glory**
(Ps. 24:7, 8)
4. **Final Victory**
(Dan. 2:44)
5. **A Reign in Righteousness**
(Isa. 32:1)
6. **Jesus, Our Worthy King**
(Rev. 5:12, 13)

Part 1
THE LORD IS KING

“The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us” (Isa. 33:22).

This text not only proclaims that God is King, but also declares that He is Judge, Lawgiver, and Saviour.

This multifaceted aspect of the responsibilities of a king is not true of many, if any, kings today. Most rulers have checks placed on their powers. This seems to be necessary because of the limitations of any man. But the Lord who is our King is able and functions in these as well as other ways.

How did Abraham expect that the Judge of all the earth should act? Gen. 18:25.

Note that it would be an injustice for the righteous to suffer with the wicked. Note also that the wicked can be given extra grace because of the presence of a few righteous people. Have you thought that, when you are fully surrendered to God and obedient to Him, your neighbors profit from your presence among them?

God is not interested in condemning the world and destroying it (John 3:17). But when people refuse to accept God's mercy, then punishment is inevitable.

What is the relation between judging and the law? James 4:11, 12.

A king could also be a savior to his people. He could protect them from their enemies. Not all kings were always capable of this. But our God is a King who will never fail to save those who come to Him.

What did the children of Israel forget? Ps. 106:21.

Many of us have good “forgetters,” but we should never forget the way that God has led us in the past and His promises for the future. (Read Psalm 103:1-6, where we are reminded of the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the relationship of law to Saviour as far as man is concerned?

“When man fell by transgression the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given, and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin offering were established. But had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and no need of a Saviour.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 363.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 331-342.

Part 2 **“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only
KING ETERNAL** **wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen”**
(1 Tim. 1:17).

In this doxology Paul mentions some important characteristics of God—He is forever sovereign, untouched by change or decay, beyond the reach of human eyes, and the only one whose wisdom is impeccable.

**Contrasted with the wages of death, what is the gift of God?
Rom. 6:23.**

Life is a very precious commodity, and God desires that we shall have it abundantly (John 10:10). He is the only source of life (John 11:25). The knowledge of God leads to life eternal (John 17:3). It is very fitting, therefore, that our God should be represented as an eternal King.

The concept of eternal kingship rules out the possibility of unwelcome change or an order passing away. It speaks of stability and continuity, that which creates trust.

**What does the psalmist say about God’s kingdom in Psalm
145:13?**

God’s kingly authority governs all time and space. In other words He is the sole ruler of the universe, and as such demands our compliance and worship.

What does God say about Himself in Malachi 3:6?

“Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!”—Henry F. Lyte, *Church Hymnal*, no. 50. (See James 1:17.) Because God remains eternally the same, we have the assured hope that He will fulfill His promises.

By contrast we can see how fickle man has been. Laban deceived Jacob and changed his wages ten times (Gen. 31:7). We cannot put our trust even in princes. We can never be certain of anything in this life, particularly riches (1 Tim. 6:17)! We can only be certain that God is ruling heaven, that all things are in His control, and that we are under His care if we put our trust in Him.

THINK IT THROUGH **How can we express our loyalty to our Eternal King?**

“Lead on, O King Eternal, we follow, not with fears,
For gladness breaks like morning where’er Thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o’er us; we journey in its light;
The crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.
—Ernest W. Shurtleff, *Church Hymnal*, no. 362.

FURTHER STUDY *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, “The Lord’s Prayer”
(Matt. 6:13), pp. 120-122.

Part 3
KING OF GLORY

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle” (Ps. 24:7, 8).

“King of glory” and “glorious King” are one and the same in meaning. Our wonderful God is a King all glorious.

What request did Moses make regarding God’s glory? Ex. 33:18.

God’s glory is seen in His gracious character. Some people think that glory is an outward manifestation of light, a display of riches and power. But God’s glory has to do with His inner being. What He is makes Him glorious. God made all His goodness to pass before Moses.

Jesus pointed out the difference between an inherent glory and one that is “put on” when He contrasted the lily of the field with Solomon and all his finery. If we want to reflect the glory of God, we need to allow God to remake us, and then we can radiate the glory of God in our lives.

What does Jeremiah warn against in Jeremiah 9:23, 24?

A true knowledge of God will show that man cannot boast of anything. All that he has comes from God. Many do not understand this, and they take pride in their accomplishments. But what a man can do in his own strength is as nothing compared with what he can do in the strength of the Lord.

God’s glory is seen not only in His goodness and mercy. It is seen also in the conflict with evil. When sin first entered heaven, God was all good in pleading with Lucifer and his angels. But the time came when there could be no room for rebellion in heaven. A war broke out in which Michael and His angels fought against the dragon and his angels. (See Rev. 12:7-9.) Then there was the struggle on the cross, when it seemed as though Satan had gained the victory. But with the resurrection God was vindicated. Truth will always triumph over evil. The King of glory is “mighty in battle.” Because He is strong, we may be strong too.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does Paul mean when he admonishes, “Do all to the glory of God”? (1 Cor. 10:31).

“A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 309-322.

Part 4
FINAL VICTORY

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

In this world kingdoms have risen and fallen. Shall this go on forever and ever? God's answer is No. The time is coming when God can brook no more delay. Everyone will have decided which side of the conflict he is taking, and God will destroy the wicked and vindicate the righteous.

Who does Daniel, in another vision, state are the final victors? Dan. 7:27.

“Here is a reassuring glimpse of the final outcome of all the turmoil and persecution through which the saints have passed. Blessed thought! Christ is soon to return for His saints and usher them into their everlasting kingdom and reward.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 834.

According to Peter, how will God finally act? 2 Peter 2:4-9.

Lot, with all his faults, was vexed with what he saw around him. But the solution to the problem was not in his power. Sometimes we get jealous for reform, and want to turn the world upside down. But we are not always wise enough to understand what the problem really is. In our relations with other people we are not in a position to judge or execute judgment. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).

How soon will God set up His kingdom? Rev. 22:20.

Jesus told His disciples to watch for the signs of His coming (Matt. 24:42). We know we are living in the last days because the prophecies have almost all been fulfilled. It is not for us to know the *time* of His coming (Acts 1:7), but we are to be ready since His coming will be unexpected (Matt. 24:44).

“More than eighteen centuries have passed since the apostles rested from their labors, but the history of their toils and sacrifices for Christ's sake is still among the most precious treasures of the church. This history, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, was recorded in order that by it the followers of Christ in every age might be impelled to a greater zeal and earnestness in the cause of the Saviour.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 593.

THINK IT THROUGH

How do we know that Christ's coming is certain? Why do you think there has been a delay?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 593-602.

Part 5
A REIGN IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment” (Isa. 32:1).

Man has always looked forward to a reign in which righteousness prevails. Rulers have made broad promises. Citizens have overthrown kingdoms in which injustice has been rampant. But the ideal has never been reached.

How are the people to react when the Lord reigns? Ps. 97:1; Ps. 99:1.

Rejoicing and trembling are apparently conflicting emotions. But trembling suggests a spirit of reverence rather than of fear. Recognition of a holy God, a God as great as our wonderful God, demands a posture of humility and waiting. No one wants to move except to do what is right. At the same time the heart is bubbling up with joy because the great day has come, the day of seeing right prevail, of mutual love and caring. This is a day we have anticipated, and now it is here.

What is one element that will cause rejoicing? Ps. 9:14.

Being saved is a goal that some of us hardly feel possible for us. Paul felt that he was the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). But God's grace is abundant (verse 14). Joshua the high priest was a “brand plucked out of the fire” (Zech. 3:2). But God had made every provision for him. Thus it will be with us, and we shall rejoice that God has saved us in spite of ourselves.

What was God's promise to Israel regarding iniquity at the time of the Lord's reign? Isa. 33:22, 24.

It can be our privilege to live during the Lord's eternal reign only because of God's forgiveness. God is eager for us to live in His kingdom. Jesus has extended a gracious invitation (John 14:1-3). John the revelator had a glimpse of the earth made new and recorded the invitation of the Spirit (Rev. 22:17). Paul says that the suffering we may have in this world is no hindrance to us when we consider future glory (Rom. 8:18, 19). Our minds must be set not on the things around us but on the things above.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the things that I look forward to when God sets up His kingdom?

“With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 675-678.

Part 6
JESUS, OUR
WORTHY KING**Who did John the revelator see honoring Christ?**

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 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. 5:12, 13).

The scene is the final coronation of Christ after the thousand years. He had occupied the throne with God before the fall of man, but He had given it up when He came to earth as man to give up His life for man's salvation.

Now Jesus is to reign again as Lord over all the universe. And all the universe is there to witness His coronation. All the un-fallen beings are there from other worlds and all the angels of heaven. The fallen angels are also there, outside the walls of the New Jerusalem, with Satan their leader. All mankind is likewise there, the righteous within, the wicked without the city.

As Christ is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords—as He is given a name “above every name”—all, both good and evil, bow in homage before Him.

Why is Christ worthy of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon Him? Rev. 5:9, 10.

“As Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), a shout of triumph rang through every world and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror. His death had answered the question whether the Father and the Son had sufficient love for man to exercise self-denial and a spirit of sacrifice. . . . With one voice the loyal universe united in extolling the divine administration.”
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 69, 70.

THINK IT THROUGH

Seeing we are to be kings and reign on earth (See Rev. 5:10), how should we behave now when we are given authority over other men?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 832-835.

Lessons for 1st Quarter / 1980

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1980 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Redemption in Romans."

First Lesson

CHRISTIANITY REACHES ROME. Memory Text, Rom. 1:1-7.

1. *City of Origin (Rom. 16:1, 2)*
2. *Date of Writing (Rom. 15:25, 26)*
3. *Announcement of Intended Visit (Rom. 15:23, 24)*
4. *Paul Reaches Rome (Acts 28:16)*
5. *The Salutation (Rom. 1:7)*
6. *World Reputation (Rom. 1:8)*

Second Lesson

JEW VERSUS GENTILE. Memory Text, John 1:17.

1. *Old Testament Salvation (Lev. 18:5)*
2. *Old and New Testament Religion Compared (John 1:17)*
3. *Classifications of Jewish Law (Lev. 27:34)*
4. *The Judaizers (Acts 15:1)*
5. *Council Decision (Acts 15:19, 20, 28)*
6. *The Galatian Heresy (Gal. 1:6, 7)*

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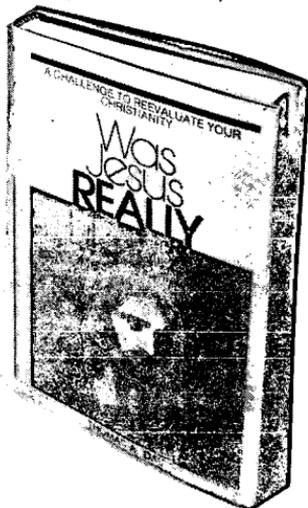
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Angola	6,770,300	182	43,558	55,789
Austrian	7,520,400	44	2,708	3,609
Bulgarian	8,722,000	62	2,991	2,891
Czechoslovakian	14,862,000	134	7,549	10,210
Franco-Belgian	63,140,000	132	8,521	7,372
German Democratic	16,786,000	307	10,823	12,755
Hungarian	10,332,100	140	4,987	4,501
Indian Ocean	10,060,000	156	10,754	16,781
Mozambique	8,519,000	96	19,270	35,912
Romanian	21,245,000	523	51,597	52,857
South German	30,200,000	215	13,314	14,125
Southern European	112,427,000	156	13,829	12,849
Swiss	6,333,000	59	4,060	3,501
West Central African	19,300,000	82	19,993	31,736
West German	31,405,100	185	12,487	14,409
Yugoslavian	23,860,000	273	10,542	11,010
Israel Mission	3,571,000	4	62	49
North African Mission	40,869,000	3	36	31
Northwest African Mission	15,976,000	10	583	678
DIVISION TOTALS	451,907,900	2,763	237,664	291,065

(Figures as of September, 1978)

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