

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

January–March 1983



Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice



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WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!

(Numbers 23:23)



In September 1980, Sabbath School members around the world gave a liberal \$345,000 toward the building of a college for Papua New Guinea. Construction soon began, and considerable progress has been made.

The beautiful 1100-acre property purchased near Port Moresby has been developed to feature a series of lakes that provide scenic beauty and water for irrigation. An access road has been constructed.

Four houses to accommodate farm and construction workers were built, and the first group of three homes for faculty are progressing. The sites for married-student cottages and staff homes have been prepared. The two dormitory blocks, each to house forty students, and the library block are nearing completion.

The construction of food services facilities and some of the instructional areas will begin soon.

All key positions and almost all senior academic staff posts have been filled with deferred appointments. By early 1984 the first stage of the building and development should be complete and, under the blessing of God, classes will commence.

The Australasian Division sincerely thanks Sabbath School members around the world for the generous support they have given to this and other projects. In 1978 a similar offering assisted in providing a library and administration building for the expanding Sonoma College on the Island of New Britain in Papua New Guinea. Students undertook much of the construction of that building, thus saving on labor costs. These new facilities mean much to the students and staff alike.

Another project that received assistance in 1978 was the purchase of a new twin-engine Piper Aztec aircraft through the Adventist Aviation Center at Andrews University. This plane transports mission personnel on trips that require long-distance flying over water.

Once again, thank you from the Australasian Division. Please continue to support the work of God around the world with your prayers and offerings. This Thirteenth Sabbath the new boarding school in Tahiti will benefit from the Special Projects portion (25 percent) of the offering.

PHOTOS BY J. K. IRVINE

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Introduction

Christ's All-atoning Sacrifice

The study of the life and work of Jesus Christ is an exhaustless theme that will tax our minds for as long as we live. It is also a theme that will hold our attention throughout eternity. It is vital in our study this quarter that we try to do justice to all aspects involved in as balanced a way as possible. This leads us to consider the way we think and our method of study in the light of several differing methods.

The Greek way: The Greek thinker turned in on himself. That means that although the Greek looked at the real world around him he failed to take it seriously. He gave to his own opinions of what he observed more weight than to what he actually saw in nature. The Greek looked within his mind rather than within nature itself. In the way he looked at things there was really no place for *revealed* truth.

Reformation breakthrough: Luther and Calvin gave wide and rapid spread to a way of thinking that not only included the Bible, but made the Bible the test of all human thought. It also made the Bible its own interpreter. This was a vital change from past practice. For hundreds of years the dominant medieval church had given greater weight to tradition than to the revelation from nature or the Bible. Theologians of the Middle Ages placed *their* ideas of truth alongside the Bible and in short order exalted reason above revelation. The Reformers allowed the Bible to reveal its own inner evidence and reasoning.

Study of Jesus Christ. Human study of Jesus Christ, His life and work, has made use of both methods of study. Thus we can trace the Greek stress on reason and the Reformers' stress on revealed truth in the literature dealing with this doctrine. In the Sabbath School study this quarter we desire to come in the spirit of learners before the greatest mystery that ever will be thought upon by the universe. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:4). As finite and frail mortals with many limitations we must keep a balance between (1) seeking to know that which is revealed for us to know, (2) waiting to understand that which is hidden for the present, and (3) realizing that the fullness of the mystery will never be completely understood even throughout eternity. Our limitations should keep us from the spirit of debate and argument which tends to divide.

Jesus Christ is not a subject that we can get our hands on and control through our thinking. Rather, our Creator and Redeemer is the Subject who must, through the Spirit, control our thinking if we would have spiritual understanding (1 Cor. 2:10-14). May the Holy Spirit draw us to behold Him as He really is so that by beholding Him we may become changed (2 Cor. 3:18).

Eternal Sacrifice

MEMORY TEXT: "Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:18-20).

Although Jesus died but once (Heb. 7:27; 9:6) nearly 2000 years ago, He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Calvary constituted the climax and full experience of the suffering that He endured from before the world's foundation. Throughout history humans have been crucifying Christ afresh. (See Heb. 6:6.) His pain has been that of a slain lamb since sin began. (See *Education*, p. 263.)

When sin broke our relationship with God, we were cut off from the only Source of life. Immediately Christ became the Saviour. His future sacrifice covered the repentant sinner from the moment of his first sin. Thus there was a "book of life from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 17:8), and those who choose to follow Him were in turn "chosen . . . in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

The word "before" is important. Just as the man Jesus, in prayer to the Father, could say "thou lovedst me *before* the foundation of the world" (John 17:24), so Christ loved us *before* the foundation of the world. For we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained *before* the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20, emphasis supplied).

In providing reconciliation for humankind Christ knew what it would cost Him—a separation from His Father that would bring death. He knew that Lucifer would seek to take His life throughout His earthly ministry and finally succeed at Calvary. He knew that Lucifer would try to lead Him into presuming upon His Father's power or His own. He knew, too, the part men and women would play. But Christ's eternal foreknowledge of the continual and final effects of the sins of others upon Him was outweighed by His eternal love. He went ahead with the creation of angels and men in spite of the fearful cost to Himself.

Part 1—Eternal Christ

"Unto us a child is born . . . : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

How does Micah describe the eternity of Christ? Micah 5:2.

His going forth is from everlasting
Micah declared, "Whose goings forth ["origin," RSV; "roots," NEB] have been from of old, from everlasting."

How does the wise man express the truth of Christ's eternity? Prov. 8:22.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning
Identifying Christ as wisdom, he wrote: "The Lord possessed [not "created," as in RSV] me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. 8:22-30).

"Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 247.

"In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

How did Christ refer to His preexistence in John 17:5?

Glorify me with the glory I had with thee before the world was

How does John speak of Christ's eternity? John 1:1, 2.

In the beginning was the act

"In the beginning" does not refer to the creation of humans or to some earlier beginning. In the Greek the word "beginning" stands without the definite article and hence does not speak of a specific point of time. In the context of verses 1 to 3, the word "beginning" refers to "the most remote time conceivable." (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 896.)

THINK IT THROUGH: What meaning did the Jews find in the words of Jesus when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58)? As I face life's problems today, what do His words mean to me?

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33, 34; *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 247, 248.

Part 2—Eternal Service

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

This text indicates the Hebrews' emphasis on the oneness of God, or monotheism. Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not directly laid out in the Old Testament (but is more so in the New), do we know why God is more than one?

“God is love” (1 John 4:16). From our limited understanding of God we might conclude that it was essential that the members of the Godhead had each other to love before other beings were created. (This provides an answer to a key question philosophers raise about an eternal God.)

Can we gain an insight into this eternal love between and among the members of the Trinity? John 17:24-26; 16:13.

Holy Spirit brings us in unity with God
It probably is fair to assume that the relationship within the Godhead as revealed in the Bible was the way it had been from eternity. In other words, God does what He does because He is who He is. The acts of God in human history give insight into the kind of God that He has been from eternity.

Notice what Christ came to this world to accomplish.

When Jesus came to this world, He came to reveal what sinful beings could grasp about the Father (John 14:9-14). He came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10:9). Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes not to speak of Himself but to direct attention to Christ. (See John 16:13, 14.)

Although God as the Father is God, what position or relationship to God did Christ experience from eternity? Heb. 1:2; 10:9.

Character purpose
One with God
Christ worked in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. “If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1126.

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 34-36.

Part 3—Satan's Rebellion

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

“A special light beamed in his [Lucifer's] countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 13.

In what way did the rebellion of Satan cause great suffering and heartache to Christ? Eze. 28:1-26; Heb. 5:7-9.

Satan represented God as unforgiving
“God bore long with Lucifer” in trying to get him to see the danger of his rebellion. Satan even admitted that “the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17). But pride held him back from returning to loyalty. “In yearning pity” Christ struggled to win back His rebel angel. And this “long-suffering of God” Lucifer claimed as “evidence of his own superiority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 39.

Possibly Lucifer was the first being Christ created. If so, here was His first creation—like a firstborn—uncontrollable, unreasonable, defiant, full of himself. But, more than that, before the fallen angels had gone too far, Satan represented God as unforgiving. (See *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 16, 17.) What heartache to Christ! He, the One who had worked so hard and for so long to bring His Lucifer back, was charged by him as being without compassion. Who can understand how Christ suffered?

How does the Bible describe all rebellion? Isa. 14:12-15; 2 Thess. 2:3-7.

Just as Lucifer exalted himself above his Creator—wanting to take Christ's place—so “the mystery of iniquity” in human history has exalted itself to take Christ's place.

What did Christ do in contrast to Lucifer and “the mystery of iniquity”? Phil. 2:5-8.

become obedient
he humbled himself unto death
FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 35-43; *The Story of Redemption*, p. 26.

Part 4—Man's Rebellion

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat" (Gen. 3:6).

"Seeing is believing" was the method employed by Satan. He used it to call into question the words of Christ: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

Satan assured Eve that God was keeping something back from her. (See Gen. 3:5.) The proof—he (the serpent) had eaten the fruit and now could speak. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 54.) And while she stood as one entranced, he took some of the fruit and placed it in her hands and nothing happened—she still lived. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.) Only good (power of speech) and nothing bad (no death) was before her—seeing induced believing; she took the plunge and ate.

What was Christ's immediate response to human rebellion? Rev. 13:8. (Compare Matt. 25:34.)

a saviour he became a substitute
"As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man's substitute."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1084.

"The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, 'Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance.'"—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1085.

The curse of God came upon mankind at the tree (Gen. 3:16-19)—suffering in childbirth for the woman and heavy labor in crop growing for the man. But the greatest curse was separation from God, symbolized by being driven from Eden (verse 24). But with the promise of salvation (verse 15) the eye of faith might have seen another tree—one standing over against the first, taking its place, on which the curse of God would come upon that other Man, that second Adam. There He would become sin for man, become identified with the curse, be separated from God. There at the tree called Calvary "Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63-67.

Part 5—Eternal Love

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

God's unconditional love for ancient Israel is everlasting—not just limited to an age—but reaching backward and forward into eternity. Whether Israel is saved or not, whether they are useful in mission or not, His love for them remains forever. Likewise for any prodigal saved, His love has always been and will always be.

Just as surely as there was never a time when God was not, just so it has always been God's pleasure to love mankind.

Christ was "set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 250. "From eternity Christ has been man's Redeemer."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 220. "From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed."—*Evangelism*, p. 615.

What does this eternal love of Christ involve? Isa. 46:9, 10; 48:5-8.

Christ has always known what man's rebellion would cost Him. He knew that in becoming man He would live a lonely, misunderstood life, despised and rejected by the very ones He would come to save. (See Isaiah 53.) He knew that His life would be poured out like water, that He would be nailed to the cross and suffer the agony of apparently being forsaken even by His Father. (See Psalm 22.) His soul shuddered at the prospect of suffering; but His deeper love for man drove Him on freely, willingly to pledge Himself for the rebel race, no matter what the cost would be to Himself. What wondrous love! This is an eternal sacrifice. There probably never was a time in Christ's eternal life when He was free from the realization of this future mission for mankind.

What remaining marks of His incarnation will Jesus bear forever as symbols of His eternal love for us? Zech. 12:10.

the wounds of calvary
He will forever remain confined within a human body (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669) and will for all time carry the wounds of Calvary (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 674).

THINK IT THROUGH: What thoughts of the future could Christ, the Creator, have had when creating Adam?

FURTHER STUDY: Isaiah 53; Psalm 22.



Part 6—Focus of the Week

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isa. 49:15, 16).

Christ’s sacrifice is as eternal as He is. As eternity has no beginning, so there is a sense in which His sacrifice has no beginning. Knowing His future condescension for man, was it not as though he actually experienced it from eternity, since future time is present tense to an omniscient God? And the reality of that future-in-the-present is more real to Christ than it could ever be to a mere human, for surely God enters experience at an infinitely deeper level than we do. His suffering is different from ours, not only because He suffered for all of us, but because He as God has the capacity to suffer to a greater degree than any other.

Christ never knew, therefore, of a time when He was not compassionately committed to becoming man, nor was there any time when He did not choose to suffer willingly in His knowledge of the reality of this plan.

But eternity has more than one dimension. We may speak of Christ’s sacrifice as eternal in the future dimension as it has been in its past dimension. We may wonder whether Christ might continue to suffer as He thinks of those who were lost. Might He miss them forever?

When we come to study the all-atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the eternal past and future, we have arrived at the proper setting from which the meaning of the life and works of our Saviour can be somewhat understood. It is in this context, for example, that we can see some of our limitations in trying to copy Him. True, the redeemed will yearn to be like Him in loving and unselfish living. True, that in beholding Him we are changed into His likeness through the Holy Spirit. But who of us can love as He does—with an eternal love? Not one. Our love will, at best, ever be but temporal, having had a beginning—whereas God’s love knows neither beginning nor end. Christ, God’s gift to us, is the central focus of this quarter’s lessons.

Receiving just a glimpse of Christ’s love for us, we stand baffled before a mystery too overwhelming to comprehend, too wonderful not to be true, too sacred for us ever to equal. Like children with their little sand buckets on the seashore, we may hold in them two or three drops of the ocean of love, but there is an infinity beyond. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; but oh how good, how vast, and how deep is His compassion! We can only bow in adoration and worship because of His infinite love toward us and His acceptance of us.

APPLICATION: What can I do during the week to come, to show my appreciation for Christ’s eternal love and sacrifice?

Sacrifice Foreshadowed

MEMORY TEXT: “All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the leopardlike beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

Jesus Christ must be seen as the ultimate revelation of all Scripture including the Old Testament. In fact, the Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament (and the New in the light of the Old), the earthly sanctuary in the light of the heavenly, and the sacrificial services in the light of Christ.

To come to grips with the deepest thoughts about God in the Old Testament, we must approach them from the vantage point of Christ’s mission in the New. He is the Lamb slain from the world’s foundation. He is redemptively at work in the Old Testament, and He is the same Son of God who later became the Son of man.

The Flood, with its destruction of the first world, brought infinite loss to the One who made human beings. And this love of God’s Son is seen in His working to redeem all He could. He chose Abraham (Gen. 17:1, 2; 18:18) through whom He planned to develop a nation—another ark of refuge, but, like the one in Noah’s day, few would enter and be saved.

The God of the Old Testament is not a God of vengeance and war in contrast with the Christ of the New Testament. The Old Testament can only be safely read in the light of the cross. All through the Old Testament, Christ suffered as He experienced rejection by His chosen people. “From the pillar of cloud and fire Christ taught them that their murmurings were directed, not against Moses, but against their divine Leader.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 24, 1895.

Having saved a mere handful of mankind through the ark and a scattered few through the calling out of Israel, He Himself came to earth as man’s only ark, as the only Israelite who could save. All Old Testament history moves toward the coming of this only Saviour.

Part 1—In Eden

"The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they . . . made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7).

Seeing was believing for Eve. She saw the fruit was "good for food," "pleasant to the eyes," and "to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6). And in eating the fruit, her eyes were opened—but only to evil. Adam and Eve now knew they were naked. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 231.)

But God in mercy opened their eyes toward Him. Angels visited them, explaining Christ's offer to take their death upon Himself so they could live. It was a struggle for the Father to give up His Son—a struggle infinitely greater than Abraham's offering of Isaac. (See Genesis 22.) Just as later Jesus would plead in Gethsemane three times to have the cup taken from Him if there were any other way to save humanity (see Matt. 26:39-44), just so Christ now pleaded three times with the Father to allow Him to die in our place. Adam and Eve could not bear the thought that Jesus, the beautiful Creator, their Friend, should die in their stead. So "they pleaded to die themselves."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 47. (See also pages 45, 48, 50.)

How were Adam and Eve's eyes opened to see Christ as their Substitute? Gen. 3:21.

Looking
"As he [Adam] looked upon the bleeding victim, writhing in the agonies of death, he was to look forward by faith to the Son of God. . . . As Adam was slaying the innocent victim, it seemed to him that he was shedding the blood of the Son of God by his own hand."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 50.

Adam and Eve's eyes were further opened to see "future important events" including Christ's incarnate life of humiliation. "To Adam were revealed future important events, from his expulsion from Eden to the Flood, and onward to the first advent of Christ upon the earth; His love for Adam and his posterity would lead the Son of God to condescend to take human nature, and thus elevate, through His own humiliation, all who would believe on Him."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 48.

THINK IT THROUGH: How do you think Adam and Eve responded to Christ after the above revelation?

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 66-70.

Part 2—At the Flood

"The Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark" (Gen. 7:1).

Noah, who like Enoch walked with God, received this first recorded invitation in the Bible. Christ said, "Come . . . into the ark." This is the core of the gospel. The gospel is an invitation to come to Christ—man's ark of safety. This fact Adam and Eve did not realize immediately upon sinning. They ran away from Christ and tried to hide behind some bushes. (See Gen. 3:8.) Such is the history of the race. People still are on the run today, hiding in every conceivable enterprise, good as well as bad—anything to get away from Christ, to protect and indulge themselves. Some people attempt to escape through drugs, alcohol, and sex. Some Christians seek security in their own good works and thus hide from Christ.

In what ways could we say that the Flood foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice? Gen. 7:7.

Only eight people out of a world were willing to be saved. Two facts emerge from this: (1) Christ's sufferings in watching nearly all of His children perish is indescribable. He felt it to a greater degree than earthly parents—in direct proportion to His divine perfection; (2) the ark Christ prepared was used by only eight people. The plan of salvation likewise has been made available even though so small a remnant will accept it.

The storm was so intense that even Satan feared for his life. There was no way that the ark could have withstood the ravages of the waves and wind without divine protection. Only because Christ personally watched over the vessel, keeping it upright, did it come through. No engineering skills, however inspired by God and however faithful to His plan, could have brought the ark through the world's worst tempest. Similarly, though we have a part to play in following Christ's directions for living, we only live because He came down here and endured the terrors of a spiritual storm unparalleled in history.

THINK IT THROUGH: What invitation brings security if we respond? (See Matt. 11:28; compare with 28:19,20.)

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 99-104.

Part 3—In the Passover

“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

Much encouragement is to be found in this rare and unusual title that Paul applies to Christ.

How did the Passover foreshadow Christ's sacrifice? Ex. 12:3-13.

Every believing family came under the protection of God if they slew the Passover lamb. This less-than-a-year-old lamb represented Jesus, cut down while still young. The paschal lamb was slain the latter part of the afternoon, just as the “Lamb of God” died at that time. (See Matt. 27:45-50; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 550.) In the same way that the Hebrews left Egypt freed from their taskmasters, we are set free from sin by the death of Christ.

What did the sprinkling of the blood upon doorposts and lintel represent? Ex. 12:23.

“It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ's blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277. The Passover sprinkling of blood foreshadowed both the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary and its application to human hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Why did God call for the Passover to take place on the eve of the Exodus? Ex. 12:17, 26, 27, 39-42.

The Passover made possible the Exodus. Because of the trauma brought about by the deaths of the firstborn of Egypt, stubborn Pharaoh finally let the Hebrews go. As Passover is to Exodus, so Calvary is to resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus our Passover assures us of victory over the grave. (See 1 Cor. 15:17-22; Col. 3:1.) We have been freed from sin's slavery because of the Passover sacrifice of our Substitute, the Lamb of God.

THINK IT THROUGH: What innocent Family suffered the death of the Son?

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 273-280.

Part 4—In the Exodus

“Thy way was through the sea, thy path through the great waters” (Ps. 77:19, RSV).

“The clouds poured out water;
the skies gave forth thunder;
thy arrows flashed on every side.
The crash of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
thy lightnings lighted up the world;
the earth trembled and shook” (Ps. 77:17, 18, RSV).

How would you compare the song sung by Moses and recorded in Exodus 15 with the song that the redeemed will sing which is recorded in Revelation 15:2-4?

Moses told the Hebrews: “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. . . . The Lord shall fight for you” (Ex. 14:13, 14). The future song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3) will be sung after deliverance from modern Babylon, from which God's people will again be delivered without a fight. With the death decree on them and not being able to buy or sell, modern Israel will face another “Red Sea.” The whole world will be on the side of the enemy, and God's people will be surrounded with no human way of escape. “At that time thy people shall be delivered” (Dan. 12:1).

How may the “Red Sea” deliverance be seen as a theme in Daniel? Dan. 3:28, 29; 6:21, 22, 27; 7:26, 27.

These deliverances foreshadow Christ's sacrifice in two ways: (1) There is nothing we contribute to our salvation. We merely stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. No human can push back Red Sea walls, quench a fiery furnace, or close lions' mouths. Neither can we die for our own salvation. Deliverance comes in each case only from Christ. (2) The Christ who brought deliverance at the Red Sea and from the lions is the same One who stood with the worthies in the fiery furnace. (See Dan. 3:25.) He delivered His people as God. But He could do this only because in that future day He would face His own “Red Sea” as a human. Jesus the man clung to His Father, feeling more alone than Israel at the sea or the worthies in the furnace. He crossed the “waters” of Calvary to bring us through to the other side in resurrection.

FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 284-290.

Part 5—In David's Sin

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"
(Ps. 51:10).

In the original language of Psalm 51:10, the word "create" is *bara'*, the same one used for God's creation of the world. (See Gen. 1:1.) Only the Creator can remove the results of sin and restore the sinner. Our sin made necessary a creative act that only the Creator could offer. Christ who made us (Heb. 1:2) came to be a man in order to remake us. The Creator assumed the body of a created being in order to re-create fallen humanity. This is why David said to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). The huge cost of sin can be measured only in terms of what it cost God.

Was David a sinner because of his great sin against Uriah and Bathsheba, or was there more involved? Ps. 51:5.

He had a sinful nature before he broke God's Law

Without diminishing the gross nature of David's sins we note that we all are born with inherited leanings to sin. Sin has to do with our very being as well as with our acts. Thus David had a sinful nature before he broke God's law. Therefore, sin involves more than breaking a law. (See 1 John 3:4.) It results in a broken relationship with Christ. The sinner therefore must be born again. (See John 3:3.) (Note David's cry for relationship in Psalm 51:11, 12.)

Could the later results of David's sin have been a foreshadowing of the results of sin to God? How? 2 Sam. 15:30. (See also 2 Samuel 13 through 19.)

Absalom pretended to be loyal to David, but daily proved more treacherous. Ultimately he declared war on his father with intent to murder him and seize the throne. David, hunted by this son, climbed the Mount of Olives in agony and shame, weeping bitterly and walking barefoot. Shimei uttered slanderous and false accusations, hurling them at the sorrowing king. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 736, 737.) But David didn't fight back.

The people of Israel, God's chosen son, would prove just as treacherous as Absalom. In this respect, David may be seen as a type of Jesus—that sorrowing King, who would tramp the sides of that same Mount of Olives with anguish and tears. He would enter Gethsemane on Olivet where the sorrow of David would be but a faint echo of Christ's suffering to come.

FURTHER STUDY: Psalm 51, 53, and 55.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

The greatest revelation of the love of Christ, and therefore of God, took place in Gethsemane and at the cross. Calvary constitutes the full unfolding of that which had been enfolded within the heart of God from eternity—His utter love for us. Calvary was the complete unveiling of this eternal mystery, the giving of an eternal gift, the final breaking of the heart that had always bled for rebels against God.

The Son of God, who never had a beginning, risked infinite loss. That would be what God is like. He has been like that from eternity. From His eternal nonbeginning He would risk all for humanity. This is the view of God that underlies the Old Testament and provides its context. The whole Bible must be interpreted from this standpoint.

The God of the Old Testament has been greatly misunderstood. He is thought of as a God of vengeance and rigid justice, a being who is on constant watch, ready to pounce and destroy at the least opportunity. But there is no God in heaven different in character from the Jesus of the cross. There is no experience issuing from Heaven's throne out of character with that tragic death on Golgotha. The full character of God's rule was revealed at Calvary.

If this is true, we would expect to find evidence in the Old Testament for this loving, caring God at work in human affairs, and we do. The lesson this week focused on some examples in the Old Testament that reveal the true character of God. We find here the beginning of the unfolding of His eternal compassion for His creatures. Such love, with all the sacrifice it involves, is further unfolded in history in such events as the Flood, the Passover, the Exodus, and in David's experience—to name but a few.

The cross is the central truth of the Bible, and its shadow is cast back over these ancient pages. They foreshadow the sufferings of Christ to come, in part because they give insight into the sufferings already experienced by that coming Christ.

How does this understanding of the God of the Old Testament being the same loving, caring God as the God revealed in the New Testament add to your personal appreciation of Him?

What can you do during the next few days to express your greater appreciation of His love?

The Incarnation

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

The incarnation is the greatest wonder of the world. No event has ever equaled it. Perhaps no event ever will. There is nothing like it; it can never be done again, neither can it be taken back. It is distinct in kind from every other possible event. It will forever be the one supremely unique act of the Creator in the midst of His creatures.

Like the love of God, the incarnation has eternal dimensions that reach back into eternity and forward into eternity. These two aspects must be held together to open up the breadth and depth of the reality involved. It involves (1) an eternal plan and (2) an eternal mystery.

Eternal plan: "From eternal ages the covenant of grace (unmerited favor) existed in the mind of God. It is called the everlasting covenant, for the plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man, but it was that which was 'kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested and by the Scriptures of prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God is made known unto all the nations.'"—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 13, 1893.

Eternal mystery: "It will take all eternity to comprehend the science of redemption, to understand something of what it means that the Son of the infinite God gave his life for the life of the world."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 16, 1909.

In coming to study the incarnation we stand with outstretched arms as if trying to embrace the universe. How can humans comprehend the divine? Finite beings cannot grasp the infinite. This is not only true in the present but for eternity. For "the love of Christ passes knowledge. The mystery of redemption will continue to be the mystery, the unexhausted science and everlasting song of eternity. Well may humanity exclaim, Who can know God?"—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 1, 1894.

The principle given in Deuteronomy 29:29 is wise counsel for this subject. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us."

Part 1—The Second Adam

"If by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

Romans 5 makes comparison of Jesus as the second Adam with the first Adam. (See verses 16-18.) The first brought sin into the world and the second brought salvation.

What, more than our salvation, was involved in Christ's mission to the world? Eph. 1:10; 3:10, 11.

"The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. . . .

" . . . Satan had sought to prove that God was unjust, that His law was faulty."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69. Satan charged God as unjust, for His law "could not be obeyed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 29. It was necessary for God "to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 42. Hence, "Christ came to unmask the deceiver. The Majesty of heaven undertook the cause of man, and with the same facilities that man may obtain, withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 252.

What kind of nature would Christ need to assume to make this demonstration? John 6:38-42; Matt. 1:18; Acts 4:27, 30; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34.

Satan's charge against God's law was that it was unjust and could not be obeyed. As far as the human family is concerned, Satan argued that Adam could not keep the law. Christ came in the same nature as Adam to expose this falsehood and demonstrate that the first Adam need not have sinned.

What contrasts can be seen in the way God related to creation in Eden and in Bethlehem? Gen. 1; John 1.

In Eden, Christ made the world a perfect environment for mankind. Creation issued from His word. (See Gen. 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 24.) But in Bethlehem, the Word Himself became flesh. (See John 1:1, 14.) In Eden, Christ remained personally outside of His creation. In Bethlehem He became a part of that creation by His incarnation—"a body hast thou prepared me," He said (Heb. 10:5).

Part 2—The Word Made Flesh

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The eternal Word became flesh. His mission to save humans brought Him to this world as the God-man. Several interpretations of this “flesh” have been made: (1) Christ took our fallen sinful nature as we have it when we are born; (2) Christ’s nature reflected the same nature when He was born that we have when we are “born again” (His divinity united with our humanity); (3) in becoming the second Adam, Christ’s humanity was the same as Adam’s before the Fall in the sense that He had no inborn propensities or urgings toward sin.

Can the Bible be used to support the “after-the-Fall” position on Christ’s nature? Isa. 53:12; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14-17.

Those who understand these passages as indicating that Jesus took our sinful human nature see Him pictured as “numbered with the transgressors” in Isaiah and living “in sinful human nature like ours” (Phillips) in Romans. Hebrews 2:17 adds, “It was imperative that he should be made like his brothers in every respect” (Phillips).

They also find support in such Ellen White statements as these: “It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself the form and nature of fallen man.”—*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 39.

“Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

Can the Bible be used to support the “pre-Fall” position on Christ’s nature? Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:4.

Those who understand these passages as indicating that Jesus took the moral nature of Adam before the Fall believe that *likeness* in the passage in Romans should not be taken for *sameness*. According to this view He who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) during that time that He actually became our Sacrifice (Isa. 53:12).

Those holding this view find support in such Ellen White statements as these: “Not possessing the passions of our human, fallen nature, but compassed with like infirmities, tempted in all points even as we are.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 509.

“Be careful, exceedingly careful, as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1128.

Part 3—Our Substitute

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

Jesus Christ was the God-man. Whatever our view of His human nature, the divine context must not be ignored. Although “veiled,” Christ’s divinity was combined with His human nature. It is only in this setting that we can resolve the seeming tensions outlined in the previous section. In other words, what He took of human fallen nature did not in the least affect His divine, unbroken relationship with the Father. We must admit that there are mysteries in the incarnation that human minds cannot solve. One thing that helps clarify the question of Christ’s nature is the thought that it was His mission that determined how like us He would or would not be. He came to save us from sin and its effects and to set us an example of how to live.

How might a more complete defining of sin clarify the human nature of Christ for us? (See 1 John 3:4.)

Sin is not merely a breaking of the law. It involves a broken relationship that leads to breaking the law. At its root, sin is separation from God. But in taking our nature Christ did not break His relationship with God. The incarnation expresses the utter selflessness of Christ in coming to do His Father’s will. (See Heb. 10:7; compare Ps. 40:7, 8.) The incarnation involved the clearest denial of self and the greatest willingness to follow God that was ever seen. Even in the incarnation, we see a person in total relationship with God.

In what ways did Christ take man’s after-the-Fall nature? Luke 4:2; Matt. 8:24.

Many believe that Christ took the physical results of the Fall, but not anything giving an inward leaning toward sin. He took our infirmities—hunger, tiredness, sin-reduced capacities—but not our sin-broken relationship with God. Having chosen the Father’s will (see Heb. 10:7), He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit. Thus He could be the second Adam and our substitute, to restore that which had been lost—oneness with God. This oneness with God in our behalf makes Him our Substitute in His birth and guides our understanding of His human nature in the incarnation. This oneness remained unbroken. Thus Jesus could say to His Father just before Calvary, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).

Part 4—Seeking the Lost

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

How does Luke portray the seeking of the lost as the mission of God? Luke 15:1-32.

The three parables found in Luke 15 present a glimpse of the saving mission of God. (1) The lost sheep is found by the Shepherd, (2) the lost coin is found by the housewife, and (3) the lost son is received back home by the Father.

In what way do these parables throw light on the mission of Christ and help us relate to His incarnation?

There are some interesting differences between these three illustrations of salvation. Nothing is more helpless than a lost sheep. It has some sense of being lost but cannot find its own way to the fold. The lost coin, of course, has no consciousness of anything, including its own loss. The lost son not only knows that he is lost, but brazenly put himself in that situation. Through adversity he comes to know his lost condition. But he knows the way back, even though he does not yet sense the greatness of his father's love. Can you see how each of these represents the condition of lost mankind?

What title does God the Father use when speaking to Jesus Christ? Matt. 3:17 (compare Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22); Matt. 17:5 (compare Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35).

Jesus is called by many different names in the Gospels. Thus, He is the Son of David (Matt. 1:1; Mark 10:47; Luke 18:38), the carpenter's son (Matt. 13:55), Joseph's son (Luke 4:22; John 1:45), son of Mary (Mark 6:3), Son of the Blessed (Mark 14:61), Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32), and Son of God (Luke 8:28). Every time the Father spoke to or about Him, He spoke in terms of “my beloved Son.” Even demons cried out, “Thou art Christ the Son of God” (Luke 4:41). By contrast Jesus used the phrase “Son of man” to describe Himself. The term “Son of man” is used more than 80 times in the New Testament.

Part 5—“Sin for Us”

“He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21).

When did Christ become sin for us? Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.

Another way to ask this question would be as follows: When was Christ's relationship with His Father broken up due to His mission? There only was one time when Christ cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). This was at the end of His life.

What light is shed on this experience of Christ? John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 10:38; 12:27-29; 14:9-11; 17:1; Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.

“As they approached the garden, the disciples had marked the change that came over their Master. Never before had they seen Him so utterly sad and silent. . . . Every step that He now took was with labored effort. He groaned aloud, as if suffering under the pressure of a terrible burden. Twice His companions supported Him, or He would have fallen to the earth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 685, 686.

“He felt that by sin He was being separated from His Father. The gulf was so broad, so black, so deep, that His spirit shuddered before it. . . .

“Christ was now standing in a *different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before*. . . . As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 686. (Emphasis supplied.)

This new experience is described as the breaking up of “His unity with the Father.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 686. Now, in our place, He entered for the first time into sinful man's sense of separation from God. Christ faced hell, the second death, eternal separation from God and shrunk from it, fearing its dread possibilities. Yet in the end He yielded His own will to the Father and died the death that rightfully was ours. Thus 2 Corinthians 5:21 emphasizes that it is the One who knew no sin—no separation from God in all eternity—who, by our sins, was being thrust into this frightening, startlingly new experience. Before this awful night we find no trace of a broken relationship between Christ and the Father.

THINK IT THROUGH: Even though Christ's relationship to the Father seemed broken, how do we know from the cross that by faith the relationship remained unbroken?



Part 6—Focus of the Week

“Being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8, RSV).

The incarnation constitutes the point of time at which the eternal God Himself broke into the flow of human time and experience. Just as a high diver already has come a long way before he enters the water, so Christ had come a long way before He became a man. Bethlehem was the point of entrance from the eternal heights. But there could be no incarnation without the movement from eternity of God’s Son—in love—toward those who would fall. Christ’s eternal existence was marked by His willingness to move toward Bethlehem.

In trying to come to grips with the incarnation—trying to grapple with the depths involved—we should consider the following: (1) No dive can be evaluated merely from the point of entry; (2) the movement from the heights to the point of entry is a vital part of the complete dive; and (3) equally important is the movement through the water to its depths. Although all illustrations and comparisons fall far short of describing or explaining the mystery of the incarnation, Christ did come from the heights in the incarnation and did go beyond that initial entrance at His birth to greater depths—even to death for us on the cross. (See Phil. 2:5-11.)

In the incarnation He came to live for us, but in the crucifixion He came to die for us. Heaven—Bethlehem—Golgotha constitute the span of His successive steps in His “humbling” for us. Bethlehem can no more be understood in isolation from heaven and Golgotha than can the point of impact by itself describe a dive. Preoccupation with the incarnation alone is not practical. For a balanced view of the incarnation, we must see it in its setting—including the history that took place before it and the results that flowed from it.

In extending this “diving” comparison, note the following: Christ came down from the heights—not for His own sake but for ours, not to do His own will but the will of His Father. His movement manward—His descent—marks His response of love to God and humans. Thus it was a revelation of the heart of the law. (See Mark 12:30, 31.) His very descent in itself revealed the heart of true law keeping—the complete “humbling” or stepping down of self—and exposed the emptiness of sin with its selfishness.

In the deepest part of His dive manward, God’s Son entered the real depths at Golgotha rather than at Bethlehem. Down in the murk and dark of the deepest depths He faced eternal death and perished in our place. He died because He became sin for us. Thus His incarnation involved a movement from eternity down the heights and a plunging into the ultimate depths.

APPLICATION: What must I let God do in me in order to follow better Christ’s example of humility?

Dependent Man

MEMORY TEXT: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1).

Israel was represented as a vine. (See Isa. 5:1-7.) Those were the days when that nation depended upon God. In the Exodus deliverance Israel was shown that only God could save. It was God’s purpose that Israel never forget its utter need of a Deliverer. That Deliverer was Christ.

“Christ was the leader of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, He led and guided them. He preserved them from the perils of the wilderness, He brought them into the land of promise, and in the sight of all the nations that acknowledge not God He established Israel as His own chosen possession, the Lord’s vineyard.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 287.

Combining Old and New Testament figures we can conclude that out of this vineyard sprang one vine that bore rich fruit. That vine was Jesus. The entire history of Israel moves toward this one Israelite who gathers up the whole within Himself. He will succeed where they have failed. He will become the Saviour for sinners, the Substitute for all who come to Him.

Last week we focused on the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Our understanding of Christ’s human nature must fit into the context of one Member of the Godhead moving out to fulfill the will of the Godhead in an unbroken relationship. This week we focus on the fact that this God came to earth to fulfill His mission as a man.

It was with this in mind that Jesus said, “I am the . . . vine” (John 15:1). He came as a dependent human. Who has seen a vine stand upright in the middle of a courtyard by itself? That is impossible. A vine by its very nature is dependent. It must cling to external support in order to stand at all. Without support it flops over on the ground. Jesus came as God to the world, but He lived as humans must—as a vine dependent upon His Father, the Husbandman.

Part 1—Distinct Natures

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The first chapter of Hebrews portrays the divine nature of Christ, whereas the second chapter presents His human nature. The two were mysteriously combined; the divine and the human became one in Christ. They are distinct but inseparable. Thus, in the first chapter of Hebrews, we are introduced to Christ as the Creator of the worlds (verse 2). It is this Creator who also became creature (verse 14).

The Councils of Nicea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 461) attempted a description of the divine and human in Jesus Christ. The natures were considered unchangeable, indivisible, and inseparable. These negative expressions spoke of a diversity in unity. Jesus Christ was one person, but with distinct natures.

Does the Bible make a distinction between the two natures of Christ? Luke 4:41; John 3:14.

The Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as “Son of God” (Luke 4:41; John 9:35) and “Son of man” (John 3:14; Matt. 9:6), emphasizing the two natures. Jesus usually used the designation “Son of man,” but the Father made it clear at His baptism and transfiguration that He was also the Son of God. (See John 3:17; Matt. 17:5.)

“The two expressions human and divine were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899.

If there were not a distinction between the divine and the human, could Christ have died for man? 1 Tim. 6:14-16.

“When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1113.

How are the two natures referred to in reference to the resurrection? John 10:17, 18.

Christ had the power not only to lay down His life but also to resurrect it. His humanity died, but His divinity brought it back to life. At His Father’s call He “came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1113.

Part 2—Self-emptying

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6, 7).

The words “made . . . of no reputation” are derived from the Greek root *kenōō* (noun form *kenosis*), meaning “to empty.”

A true understanding of *kenosis* leads us to apply the self-emptying to Christ’s setting aside His right to use His divinity. He still was divine but never once used His divine powers to ease His way as man. Although still God, He lived on earth as if He were just a man. He depended upon divine power from outside Himself rather than upon His own.

Did Christ’s self-emptying have eternal consequences? John 3:16.

In becoming man Christ entered within human history to dwell within the confines of one human body. From the infinity of eternity He came down to this earth to clothe His divinity with humanity—and will ever bear our human form. That the omnipresent God could become as nothing in the moment of conception and but a babe nine months later constitutes the greatest self-emptying ever—the mystery of godliness. (See 1 Tim. 3:16.)

Did the self-emptying include other divine attributes? Luke 2:52.

The omniscient God laid aside His all-knowing and became for the first time a learner. (See Heb. 5:8.) “Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70. Only when omnipotence was laid aside could He suffer and die. (See Heb. 5:7.)

Could Christ have become our Substitute or Example without this self-emptying? Phil. 2:5-8.

Jesus Christ could be our Substitute and Example because He was fully God and fully human. He had to be God for His mission to have any meaning for us. But He had to be human in order to fulfill His mission for us. He was God so that what He did would have merit. But what He did, He did as humans must—both in substitution and example. To be God and yet live as a human being necessitated self-emptying.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 70-74.

Part 3—Need of Father and Holy Spirit

“The Son can do nothing of himself.”

“I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:19, 30).

On whom did Jesus depend for knowing what to speak? John 8:28.

How dependent upon the Holy Spirit was Jesus? Matt. 1:18-21; Mark 1:9-12; Luke 4:1; Heb. 9:14, 15; Rom. 8:11.

1. He was born of the Spirit.
2. He was baptized by the Spirit.
3. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness of temptation.
4. He offered Himself up to die through the Spirit.
5. He was resurrected by the Spirit.

His dependence upon the Father and the Holy Spirit was the result of the *kenosis*, self-emptying—or nonuse of His own divine powers. While remaining divine He resolutely refused to use His own divine powers, choosing rather to depend upon the Father and the Holy Spirit.

How important was prayer to Christ? Luke 6:12; 9:18.

“Christ lived a life of prayer. Daily beset by temptation, constantly opposed by the leaders of the people, He knew that He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, from Him obtaining energy, perseverance, steadfastness.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 29, 1903.

“Christ’s days were passed in ministering to the crowds that pressed upon Him, and in unvailing the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis, and this incessant labor often left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and brothers, and even His disciples, had feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face. It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 29, 1902.

For all eternity Christ had been equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In His divine nature He remained equal with Them. But as a human being He depended on Them in a way He had never experienced previously. In Christ God was a real man.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674, 675.

Part 4—Miracles

“If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you” (Matt. 12:28).

When the Pharisees accused Christ of casting out demons through the power of Beelzebub, He did not respond in defense of His power. Rather, He pointed to the Holy Spirit as the source. In fact, He continued, “Who-soever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him” (Matt. 12:32). (Read also verses 24-32.)

How did Isaiah relate to Christ’s assertion that His miracles were performed through the power of the Holy Spirit? Isa. 61:1-4.

What else does Isaiah say about the Holy Spirit’s power through Christ? Isa. 11:2-4. (Compare Isa. 42:1.)

To whom did Peter attribute Christ’s power to perform miracles? Acts 10:34-38.

Isaiah in the Old and Peter in the New Testament point to the same source of Christ’s miracles as Jesus did—both knew Him to be God, but both also recognized that He was the God-man. Although He was God in history, He lived as a human, dependent upon the Father and the Holy Spirit and Their will for Him.

When 5000 hungry people needed to be fed, what did Christ do for them that He would not do for Himself? Matt. 14:15-21. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 368.)

Even though Jesus was as hungry as the people, He could not be drawn to use divine power for His own comfort or need. “The providence of God had placed Jesus where He was, and He depended on His heavenly Father for the means to relieve the necessity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 368.

“It was by faith and prayer that He wrought His miracles.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 536.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why did Christ not use His own divine powers to perform miracles?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 119, 120, 143.

Part 5—Obedient

“That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do” (John 14:31).

When Christ lived within the Trinity before the incarnation, He shared in the creation of and dominion over the universe. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 20, 22.) In taking our human nature and laying aside the use of His divine powers, Christ entered a new experience. Willing obedience to His Father marked His coming into the world (see Heb. 10:9) and this trait characterized His entire life on earth.

In what sense could it be that Jesus would have to learn obedience? Heb. 5:8.

“Though as God prior to the incarnation Christ was omniscient, yet He did not know *by experience* the problems confronting men as they seek to render obedience to God. By becoming man and by facing the temptations of life as a man, Christ gained this knowledge.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 430.

From eternity each member of the Trinity lived for the other two. In perfect love there is no such thing as commands and obedience. But there is selfless service. In this context Christ gladly, as an equal, agreed to become our Saviour. His desire was ever to fulfill the Father’s longing to save us. In becoming human He learned by experience what it is like for God’s creatures to obey.

How did Jesus maintain an obedient relationship with His Father throughout His human life? John 5:19, 30.

“The Son of God was surrendered to the Father’s will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 208.

THINK IT THROUGH: Was Jesus ever on probation or trial? “For a period of time Christ was on probation. He took humanity on Himself, to stand the test and trial which the first Adam failed to endure.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899.

FURTHER STUDY: John 17:1-26.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

“It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).

God and humanity at one time had been together in unbroken fellowship as Creator and creature, as Sustainer and dependent. Sin broke this relationship. Christ was the Creator from whom sin separated humans. Sin took place outside of Christ within the creatures that he had made. Christ came down to Bethlehem to take humanity upon Himself and bring humanity back into fellowship and covenant relationship with God.

Sin came when humans became independent. Salvation came when the man Jesus became dependent. Jesus went to the farthest point possible to pick up fallen humanity—to bring us home on His shoulders. Our journey home was accomplished by His total dependence upon His Father just as our outward journey away from God results from our independence. Without Christ, sinful humans can only move out into the far country, away from home, independent—but lost. The man Jesus brings humanity home from the far country, retracing and undoing all the wild steps taken away from God—matching dependence for independence, until we are brought back to dependence and salvation.

Drawing upon the “diving” analogy introduced in the last lesson, there are some vital comparisons that must be made. A diver does not change internally, only externally, when he enters the water. Nothing happens within him of great consequence even though he does get wet outside. But in Christ’s human descent He experienced both internal and external change. Internally He became a different person—He became fully human as well as remaining fully divine. These two natures blended within the one person made Him the only being of His kind in the universe. But that was not all—He laid aside the use of His divine powers during His human life while still remaining divine. Thus He not only entered a new *sphere*—becoming human—but He entered a new *state*—laying aside the use of divine powers.

God became a baby. Omnipotence became helpless. The One who had never had a beginning was born. The One in whom was “life original, unborrowed and underived,” became Mary’s child. To this extent His dependence was revealed. Throughout life on earth Jesus chose to remain dependent upon God His Father in order to accomplish our salvation. *Man* needed salvation. Through a *Man* he was saved—through God, as dependent man.

APPLICATION: What does this lesson teach me about my relationship to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit? What can I do to follow Jesus’ example of dependence?

Tempted As We Are

MEMORY TEXT: “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human when He came to earth. He came to the world as God, but He lived in the world as we do. We must keep both of these facts in proper balance to appreciate His experiences while here.

One of the problems in our study of Christ on earth has been the failure to maintain this proper balance. For example, some have understood the divine and human natures as mixed within Jesus Christ, so that He was neither divine nor human, but some third kind of person in which the divinity was made human and the humanity made divine.

Others have looked upon the baby Jesus in Bethlehem as being at the same time the King seated upon God’s throne in heaven. They mistakenly conceived of divinity, or a part of it, as being poured out into a receptacle of space (one human body) in the incarnation, but at the same time inhabiting all space.

More recently others have taught that if Jesus really did not take human nature then human nature has not been redeemed. But they understand that in becoming human God stepped down, lifted humanity up, and placed it within His divinity. In this view the man Jesus was surrounded by divinity—so they conclude that this made sin an impossibility for Jesus.

If the humanity of Jesus was (1) made divine or (2) lived at the same time within history as well as outside of history or (3) was encased within an impenetrable wall of divinity; then in each case He was not fully human and therefore could not have been tempted as we are.

Last week we noted the obedience of Jesus as a dependent man. This concept is crucial. For “the work of Christ was to take from Satan his control of man, and he could do this only in a straightforward way. He came as a man, to be tempted as a man, rendering the obedience of a man. Christ rendered obedience to God, and overcame as humanity must overcome. We are led to make wrong conclusions because of erroneous views of the nature of our Lord.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 10, 1893.

Part 1—Thrust of Temptation

“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God” (Isa. 59:2).

The focus of temptation is not upon the act of evil but upon the cause of evil. Temptation is designed to get us to break from our dependent relationship upon God.

How completely like our own were the temptations of Jesus? Heb. 4:15.

Jesus did not face the modern drug scene, Hollywood movies, television, fast cars, and cigars. Some wonder if His more rural life 2000 years ago did not give Him an advantage over us. The above list, and others like it, constitute but the window display in Satan’s shop called temptation. Just as bait is used to hook a fish to remove it from the water, so temptation is Satan’s attempt to take us from life-preserving fellowship with God.

Jesus entered the world to do His Father’s will, being in complete union with Him. How did this fact make His response to temptation different from ours? John 14:30.

We are born sinners, needing a new birth—Christ’s birth was like our new birth—the result of choosing to do God’s will. (See Heb. 10:7; John 3:18-21.) Christ did not enter sin’s estrangement from God at birth. Rather, in the very act of the incarnation He fulfilled His Father’s will. No estrangement from God was within Him, but it has been and is, by nature, in us. (See *Steps to Christ*, p. 43.)

What are some of the things that Jesus did not have in Him that we have? Luke 1:35; Rom. 7:18; John 8:46.

Even though “Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with his own sinless nature” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 17, 1900), taking “fallen suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, Dec. 20, 1900), yet He had no propensities to sin within Him (Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1128).

THINK IT THROUGH: How were Christ’s temptations greater than ours?

Part 2—No Greater Temptation

“[He] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

In what way does the great controversy setting give insight into the comparison between Christ’s temptations and ours?

“From the moment that Christ entered the world, the whole confederacy of Satanic agencies was set at work to deceive and overthrow him as Adam had been deceived and overthrown. Could he win the victory over Christ, the world that God had created would become his empire.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Oct. 29, 1895. There was more to be gained in tempting Christ than in tempting anyone else.

From Christ’s perspective, why did His temptations far surpass ours? (See Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 4:15; 5:7,8.)

Jesus is the only human being to have lived without a chance of salvation if He had sinned.

Has any other human achieved the perfection of the man Jesus? Rom. 3:23.

All humans are born in sin and commit sin themselves. (See Eph. 2:1; Isa. 1:5, 6; 2 Tim. 2:26.) This finds them two steps removed from the man Jesus as far as the past and present are concerned. No future victory must overlook the past and present. Because Jesus was unique, He did not need a Saviour—all other human beings need one. Because He is unique, He can be that Saviour for us.

In what way were the temptations of the man Jesus supremely greater than ours? Matt. 4:3; John 8:42-46.

Because the thrust of temptation is to get us to rely upon ourselves and thus cease to depend upon God, who would have the greatest temptation to do this: Jesus (who was God and therefore had eternal divine power of His own to rely upon)? or you and I (who, cut off from God, have only our fleeting, feeble human strength to lean on)?

In the matter of temptation, instead of seeing the unique sinlessness of the man Jesus as an advantage over other humans, one should see His divinity as a much greater disadvantage.

Part 3—As a Boy

“Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him” (Matt. 2:13.)

“Satan exulted when Christ became a human being, and he compassed His path with every conceivable temptation. Human weakness and tears were His portion; but He sought unto God, praying with His whole soul, with strong crying and tears; and He was heard in that He feared. The subtlety of the enemy could not ensnare Him while He made God His trust, and was obedient to His words.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899.

How fierce were the temptations of the child Jesus? Acts 4:26-28.

Satan flung his force against the child Jesus. He not only used Herod to try to kill Him, but he also pushed all manner of temptations to overwhelm Him. “He left no means untried to ensnare Jesus. No child of humanity will ever be called to live a holy life amid so fierce a conflict with temptation as was our Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 71.

Nazareth was proverbial for its wickedness. (See John 1:46.) “It was necessary for Him [Jesus] to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 71.

Why did the little boy Jesus not sin, whereas every other child sins? (See Luke 1:35 and Acts 4:27.)

The Scriptures provide little direct information that answers this question. The first 12 years of Jesus’ life are passed over in a phrase or two. Christ was born “that holy thing.” The special counsels to this church offer some precious insights. The Christ child was not “just like other children. He was God in human flesh.” He was indwelt by the Holy Spirit from birth. Divinity would flash through humanity, under provocation. (See Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1114-1118.)

How did Jesus overcome temptation? John 5:19, 30; Ps. 40:8; 119:11.

Part 4—In the Wilderness

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. 4:1).

Christ’s wilderness temptations came within the setting of union with God rather than separation from God, as with Eve.

Why did Jesus have to be a man when He met the three great temptations in the wilderness? (See Matt. 4:1-11.)

Humanity failed in Eden, not divinity. Only through humanity could the race be given a second chance—so Christ became human.

How do the two Adams compare in the Eden and in the wilderness temptations? Genesis 3; Matthew 4.

Adam possessed the full strength of a newly created being before the Fall, whereas Jesus “accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by 4000 years of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49. Adam could only be tempted at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, whereas Jesus was tempted throughout life at any time, any place. Adam had everything he needed: (a) food in abundance, (b) dominion of all creation, and (c) was sinless. In contrast, Jesus was in dire need: (a) having not eaten for nearly six weeks, (b) being a peasant’s son without a home, and (c) beginning to carry the weight of a world’s sin upon Him. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 111, 112.) Adam was surrounded by all the beauties of a lovely garden in its unspoiled pre-Fall perfection, whereas Jesus was alone in a desolate wilderness and at the point of death.

What made Satan’s temptation so strong to Jesus? Luke 4:1-13.

Jesus was near death. “It was in the time of greatest weakness that Christ was assailed by the fiercest temptations.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 14, 1908. Satan came as an angel of light, suggesting to Christ that He looked like Lucifer, the fallen angel, forsaken by God. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 118, 119.) He taunted Jesus regarding “His claim to be the Son of God: ‘Thou the Son of God—born in a stable, hurried off to Egypt for fear of being destroyed by Herod, working as a carpenter in an obscure town of Galilee! If at Thy baptism a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” why art Thou now helpless and starving in this wilderness?’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 11, 1900.

Part 5—Gethsemane

“He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). (Compare verses 42, 44.)

After nearly six weeks Jesus was at the point of death in the wilderness of temptation. But it took only a few hours of anguish in Gethsemane before He fell dying to the ground. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 693.) The sins of all humanity heaped upon Him were crushing out His life. (Compare Matt. 26:38.) In this setting, Jesus “fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 690.

“Terrible was the temptation to let the human race bear the consequences of its own guilt, while He stood innocent before God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 688.

What was the thrust of Satan’s temptation in Gethsemane? (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 687.)

Satan strove to break up the plan of salvation. So he flung discouraging facts into the face of Jesus. Your chosen nation has rejected and will kill You. One of Your Twelve will betray You, one deny You, and all of them forsake You. What is the use of all Your suffering? Why don’t You let them go; forget them and return to Your Father?

What made the temptation so terrible to bear? Mark 14:33-36.

For the first time in eternity, Christ’s unity with His Father was actually broken up, as He became the Sin Bearer. The utter horror of separation—the second death—made Jesus shudder to the very depths. The overwhelming yearning to let man go in his sins and for Christ to return to His Father was more terrible than we shall ever realize.

What is the meaning of the decision expressed in the words “Thy will be done” (Matt. 6:10)?

Christ’s becoming a man and living as humans do was to fulfill His Father’s will. Now He could not see beyond the tomb, yet He chose to experience eternal separation from God so that man could be with God.

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Part 6—Focus of the Week

The focus of temptation is within. Satan works on internal weakness to trip us up. He already has a footing in the human race through Adam's fall from which he works with significant leverage to break our connection with God. By contrast, Jesus was without this taint of or leaning toward sin. He could truly claim that Satan found nothing in Him. (See John 14:30.)

No recorded words of Jesus ever suggest His crying out for deliverance from an inward propensity to sin. Yet, beyond any other mortal, He was dogged by the tempter. Satan locked himself into a battle to the death with Christ. Never did he let up in his relentless fury heaped on the suffering Saviour. The stakes were high. One small yielding by Jesus would destroy the plan of salvation and ensure Satan's future. Only one of them could win in the great controversy. Satan would perish if he did not succeed. No wonder he threw everything into the struggle! This is not true in his tempting of any other human.

It was as difficult for Christ to stay down at our human level as it is for us to come up to His. Just as a diver does not wish to stay submerged for long under the water after diving in, so Christ stayed within the depths of human limitations with effort. At any moment He could have risen above all such restrictions—using divine power to transport Himself above and beyond Satan's harassment.

Any claim that Jesus had an unfair advantage over us as a baby or as a child or at any time must take this fact into consideration. God's Son plunged into darkness to bring light—not to become darkened. Any seeming advantage He had in this plunge due to who He was, was not an advantage for His sake, but for ours. He came not for Himself but solely for us. "If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

Even though He was the Light of the world, He came as a fellow human. As God, He walked life's pathway as a man. Satan tried to smother that Light forever. Jesus could only remain the Light of the world by seeking light from beyond Himself to banish the darkness.

Satan's thrust in tempting us is to get us to cease depending on God by depending on ourselves. Because Jesus was also God, He could have called upon His own divine power. This made His temptations greater than those of any other human. Who else in the human realm could call upon divinity within himself? Of all human beings only Jesus lived His entire life beyond the possibility of repentance.

APPLICATION: What does Christ's example in meeting temptation teach me about how I can and should meet it? How can I take full advantage of what He makes possible?

Emmanuel

MEMORY TEXT: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

The Old Testament contains many prediction of the coming Messiah. Isaiah is known as the "gospel prophet" because of his emphasis on the coming Suffering Servant.

Isaiah prophesied at a time of great crisis for God's chosen nation. Spiritually Israel was at a low ebb. Micah, Amos, and Hosea—all contemporaries of Isaiah—help to give insight into the injustice and hypocrisy that pervaded their society.

Jesus found the nation in an even worse state. He came at its darkest hour. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 36.) What the people needed at both times was to know the presence of God in their midst. He was present during Isaiah's day, but the people were not interested. When He came in the person of Jesus, not only were they unmoved by the fact, but they set about to destroy Him.

Matthew took up the text of Isaiah 7:14 saying, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

"God with us"—what does this mean? Does it mean that Jesus had powers that other men do not have? Did He perform wonders that no faith healer has accomplished? Did He penetrate the thoughts of men as no one else has? Did He reveal the future as prophets had never done? Did He escape from His enemies, unlike other men?

"God with us" means that there was once Someone on earth who could say "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and they were. There is no question that this was unique—no other human could truthfully say such a thing. Divinity often flashed forth from this unusual Man. A light at times radiated from His face, and twice God spoke from heaven identifying Jesus as His Son.

Should we not come to grips with this question this week—was it only sometimes that Jesus laid aside the use of His divine powers, or did He always do so?

We are suggesting the position that Jesus (1) never used divine powers to save Himself from life's trials, (2) helped others through the Father's divine power, and (3) sometimes allowed His own divinity to flash through His humanity, but only when it was united with His Father's.

Part 1—Revealed Divinity

How was divinity revealed at the resurrection of Lazarus? John 11:41-44.
(See also *The Desire of Ages*, p. 536.)

Jesus made it clear that this greatest of all His miracles—raising a man after four days of decomposition—was done through His relation to His Father and not through His own divinity. When He prayed that “they may believe that thou has sent me” (John 11:42), His face lighted up. Whether this divinity was His own or that of His Father, it flashed forth within the setting of a Man dependent upon His divine Father—not for His own sake, but for the sake of those needing to believe in Him.

On what occasion was a special dignity and glory manifested by Jesus? Mark 11:15-18.

The same men fled from the temple three years before—but this time they were more terrified. “Divinity flashed through humanity, investing Christ with a dignity and glory He had never manifested before. . . . Christ spoke with a power that swayed the people like a mighty tempest.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 591.

What did Jesus say to Philip in the upper room concerning the relation between Himself and His Father? John 14:8-10.

“As Christ was speaking these words, the glory of God was shining from His countenance, and all present felt a sacred awe as they listened with rapt attention to His words.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

On what other occasions did divinity flash through humanity and why? (All references below are from *The Desire of Ages*.)

During His last day of teaching in the temple there was “a divine light enshrouding His person.”—Page 619. While before Caiaphas, “the divinity of Christ flashed through.”—Page 707. “His countenance lighted up” before Pilate (p. 726; compare p. 738), and divinity flashed through humanity before Herod (p. 731). On the mount of transfiguration “divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above.”—Page 421. In Gethsemane “a divine light illuminated the Saviour’s face.”—Page 694. And in death, “a light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun.”—Page 756. These occurrences took place for the sake of others—not for His sake.

Part 2—Men’s Hearts Were Read

“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:29).

“The listener trembled. A mysterious hand was turning the pages of her life history, bringing to view that which she had hoped to keep forever hidden.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 187, 188.

When Jesus told the woman of Samaria that she had been wife to five husbands and that the present one was not her husband, she replied in amazement, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet” (John 4:19). But when Jesus went on to reveal to her that He was the Messiah (verses 25, 26), she immediately believed and witnessed to the fact (verse 29).

What lay behind Christ’s words to Zacchaeus, “Make haste . . . ; I must abide at thy house”?

“Above the clamor of priests and rabbis and the shouts of welcome from the multitude, that unuttered desire of the chief publican spoke to the heart of Jesus. Suddenly, just beneath the fig tree, a group halts. . . . One looks upward whose glance seems to read the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 553.

Just as the woman with an issue gently touched Christ’s outer cloak (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 343) and her touch was felt above the press of the jostling crowd, so the heart cry of Zacchaeus was heard above the noisy voices all around. In both cases it was because Jesus read the heart of these people—not for His sake but for theirs.

For what purpose did Jesus let Judas know that He read his secret to betray Him? (See John 13:21-26; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 655.)

The Desire of Ages mentions that He read the hearts of Nathanael (p. 140), Nicodemus (p. 168), the rich young ruler (p. 519), Matthew (p. 272), Peter (p. 139), the Pharisees (pp. 307, 458), the people at the temple cleansing (p. 158), those surrounding the woman taken in adultery (p. 461), those around Lazarus’ home (p. 533), and those present when Christ faced the test of Caesar’s coin (p. 602). He often read hearts (p. 398). “Jesus gave the rabbis an evidence of His divinity by showing that He read their hearts.”—Page 456. It was more than a matter of intelligence as shown by Pilate when he read the purpose of the priests (pp. 725-728).

THINK IT THROUGH: What was the significance of Christ’s ability to read the heart of others?

Part 3—The Future Revealed

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matt. 16:21).

Note the specific details of the prophecy. The place of suffering, who would inflict it, the result, and the resurrection are all mentioned. This was the first time Jesus spoke of His coming crisis to the disciples. But He had known of it long before. He alluded to His death and resurrection to the Pharisees and Sadducees when stating that it would be a sign of who He was—a sign like that of Jonah. (See Matt. 12:39; 16:4.)

To Nicodemus, Jesus compared Himself to the serpent raised in the wilderness. (See John 3:14-17.) When launching His ministry with the cleansing of the temple, He referred to the temple being raised up in three days after its destruction. (See John 2:19.) He knew of His mission from His twelfth year, when visiting that same temple for the first time. (See Luke 2:49.)

Building upon His revelations would have helped people to be ready for the shock of the coming crisis, would have saved them from undue hardship.

What did Jesus prophesy about final world events? Matthew 24.

What enabled Jesus to endure the terror of the cross? Heb. 12:2.

“Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, ‘It is finished.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 764. Knowing the great future, He had courage to complete His sacrifice for man. His prophetic insight (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 534) was not for His own sake, but to help others to believe and to encourage Him to complete His mission, which was not for Himself, but for others.

What future did Jesus reveal to the disciples in His last discourse with them in the upper room? John 14 through 17.

THINK IT THROUGH: What effect did Jesus hope His prophetic ministry would have? John 14:29.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, p. 453.

Part 4—Escaped Enemies

“But he passing through the midst of them went his way” (Luke 4:30).

Moments after Jesus announced His mission as One who was to bring deliverance to the captives and liberty to the bruised, the church members, “filled with wrath,” rose up to cast Him headlong over a precipice. (See Luke 4:28-30). Suddenly He who had come to deliver humanity was a captive needing deliverance Himself.

The probable site of this incident was a limestone cliff about 30 or 40 feet high on the southwestern side of Nazareth. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 732.) To be thrown headlong over that precipice would have meant instant death.

How did Jesus escape? Did He use His divinity to save Himself? Or did He remain dependent upon His Father?

“Shouts and maledictions filled the air. Some were casting stones at Him, when suddenly He disappeared from among them. The heavenly messengers who had been by His side in the synagogue were with Him in the midst of that maddened throng. They shut Him in from His enemies, and conducted Him to a place of safety.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 240.

The account in *The Desire of Ages* continues by comparing this escape to that of Lot from Sodom. In both cases angels accomplished the feat. Like any other man, Jesus was dependent upon angels to protect Him. He, the Deliverer of captives, was a man dependent upon His Father—through life and in death. That same dependence delivered Him when a captive at Nazareth.

What was the significance of a similar incident in the temple? John 8:59.

The Jews, maddened against Jesus, took up stones in the temple area and were about to throw them at Him, when He disappeared.

What further such event took place a few months after the temple incident? John 10:39.

THINK IT THROUGH: How do you reconcile these escapes of Jesus with His arrest in Gethsemane, His trials, and His crucifixion?

Part 5—Forgave Sins

What surprised the scribes in the words that Jesus spoke to a paralytic? Matt. 9:2. (Compare verses 3-6.)

Jesus knew all about the paralytic, and while he was still in his home, "the Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268. In this way He drew the sick man to Himself. Jesus knew that he longed to be forgiven. Sin had brought this man's disease, and he was near death. Already his body was decomposing. It took "creative power to restore health" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 269) and the Creator's power to say "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Even though His claim to forgive sins angered the scribes, Jesus had a right to say it. The One who could read the mind of a needy soul could put within that mind a longing to come to Him, and then could re-create his body and forgive his sins.

What comfort did Jesus give to a woman named Mary? Luke 7:48.

Jesus was at Simon's house—the one who had led Mary into sin. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 566.) Judas influenced the disciples and Simon to feel that Mary's anointing of Jesus with costly spikenard was an utter waste of money. Yet Jesus had done everything for these men. They were sinners who at least were as sinful as Mary. Judas and Simon became aware that Jesus knew their true condition. But Jesus did not expose them. He had not exposed Mary. His mission, at infinite personal cost, was to save men and women—to forgive sins.

In the case of the paralytic, what did the Pharisees unconsciously but truthfully witness about Jesus? Luke 5:21.

Why did Jesus forgive sins? Matt. 9:6.

The Son of man has power—not *dunamis*, or dynamic powers; but *exousia*, or authority—to forgive sins. Divine authority was used for sinners.

THINK IT THROUGH: Did Christ forgive sin before healing or afterward?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 560-566.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

Emmanuel means "God with us." This "God with us" has always been "God for us." He did not have to leave heaven to come to earth. He came willingly, burdened with a love that would pay any price to help humanity. The entire life of Christ was an unfolding of the hoarded love of eternity. He poured Himself out to all within His reach. He passed through towns, and every sick person was healed before He left. No one was beneath His notice. No one went unattended. As darkness is banished by the rising light of the sun, so sickness and sorrow fled at the approach of the Sun of Righteousness. He brought daybreak—the dawn of a new day, new hope, new life, temporal and eternal—to people all along His journey through this world. He had but one purpose for being here. He lived to bless others.

But how did He accomplish this blessing? How did He become the great creative presence that He was? How did decaying bodies become new again? How did the dead rise to life? How did He forgive sins, and how did He impart eternal life?

Paradoxically, Jesus set men free by becoming dependent Himself. He did not thunder in flashes of lightning as at Mount Sinai, where distance was placed between Him and Israel and death was imposed as punishment for touching the mountain upon which He spoke. No! "God with us" was also "man with us," seated amid fellow humans who vied for closeness to Him, as on the mount where He spoke the Beatitudes.

"Man with us" meant that He was really one of us. He had actually entered into the stream of human history. He was a part of human genealogy and lived within it. He had entered the tunnel of human history and remained within it till His ascension. Or, to refer again to the "diving" analogy, He entered the water in Bethlehem and stayed submerged until coming up in the ascension. It was from within the depths that He lived and acted. He performed His miracles for others, never for Himself. He had not come for Himself but for others. Never did He come out from the depths till His mission was finished. He remained within the confinement of human history, working only for others.

These miracles for others were not performed as "God with us," but as "man with us." The man Jesus looked beyond the depths to which His stepping down had taken Him. He looked beyond humanity, breaking through to His Father. No one prayed like this Man. God does not need to pray to God. But man does. Never did any man live for others like this Man, because never did any man pray for others like this Man. So firm and unbroken was His connection with His heavenly Father that God's power was ever flowing manward through Him. Submerged in the depths, His lifeline to heaven was vital, and miracles resulted.

APPLICATION: What can I do in my prayer life during the coming week to tap more of Heaven's resources?

The God-man

MEMORY TEXT: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

This week we continue the emphasis begun last week. Jesus Christ was Emmanuel, or "God with us." In the beginning God's Son made the world that He now entered as a man. (See Heb. 1:2.) He made it by speaking things into existence. There was power—creative power—in His word. He said, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Because He was divine, He could create light and life.

But now He Himself came into a beginning, that is, His humanity did. Instead of speaking the word, the Word became flesh. There was a new reality in the universe—the unique God-man. Previously the Holy Spirit had brought God to dwell in creatures (2 Cor. 3:18), but now the Holy Spirit brought God to become a creature. In Jesus Christ, God and man were fully present in one being.

Thus God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). He never ceased being God's Son while in this world. But He took up within His very being the new reality of humanity and joined the human with His divinity forever. The divine and human within Jesus Christ remained united but distinct throughout His life.

How did Jesus feed the 5000 and then the 4000? How did He calm a terrible storm on Galilee that had brought experienced sailors to despair? How did He constantly meet encounters with His enemies without failure and with surprising wisdom and skill? How did He teach with authority unlike that of any other person? How was He transfigured on the mountain before Peter, James, and John? And how did He arise in His resurrection?

We read: "The life of Christ, that gives life to the world, is in his Word. It was by his word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by his word he stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that his word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as he had spoken to all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 11, 1908.

Part 1—Feeding Thousands

"When they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:3, 4).

The reply of Jesus in English sounds disrespectful to His mother, but in the idiom of His day it was polite and gently pointed to the fact that He had a higher allegiance to His heavenly Father to consider. He was not merely Mary's son, but the Son of God—in mission for Him. The fact that Mary understood Him, not taking offense, is found in her word to the waiters. (See verse 5.)

"The words, 'Mine hour is not yet come,' point to the fact that every act of Christ's life on earth was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the days of eternity. Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details. But as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father's will. He did not hesitate to act at the appointed time. With the same submission He waited until the time had come."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 147. All His miracles were performed in the context of this submission.

With what power did Jesus feed the 5000? Mark 6:41-44. (Compare the feeding of 4000 in Matthew 15:32-39.)

Just as the five loaves and two fishes seemed inadequate to the task, so did the humanity of Jesus to His mission. But both, in the hands of the Father, would be His medium for feeding the people. He was as helpless now as when He fasted in the wilderness, when weary in the boat on Galilee, when falling under the load of the cross. As man, the God-man "depended on His heavenly Father for the means to relieve the necessity."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 368. As God He could have performed the miracle, but as the God-man He remained as man to save men.

Did Christ suffer because He refused to use His own divine power in His own times of need? Matt. 4:2-4; John 19:28-30.

He suffered hunger in the wilderness and thirst on the cross—doing nothing to alleviate His needs.

THINK IT THROUGH: Did Christ ever perform a miracle through His own divine power?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 45-50; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 87, 143, 406.

Part 2—Stilling the Storm

What was the setting for what Christ and His disciples experienced in a storm on Galilee? Luke 8:23. (See also *The Desire of Ages*, p. 333.)

He had been teaching and healing the multitudes all day. And now at its close He was “utterly wearied” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 333) and immediately fell asleep in the boat. This emphasizes Christ’s humanity—dependent, like one of us.

How desperate did the plight of men and ship become? Matt. 8:24, 25; Luke 8:23; Mark 4:38.

In stilling the storm, what did Jesus say to the disciples, and how did He accomplish this miracle? Mark 4:40; Matt. 8:26; Luke 8:25.

Jesus did not perform a miracle for Himself to meet either hunger or danger. But now He had supplied a miracle to save the disciples who were fearful they might perish in the storm. But how? “He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the ‘Master of earth and sea and sky’ that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, ‘I can of Mine own self do nothing.’ John 5:30. He trusted in the Father’s might. It was in faith—faith in God’s love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 336. He had faith, unlike the disciples, and thereby stilled the storm.

What unusual phenomenon did the disciples witness during the next recorded storm on Galilee? Mark 6:49-51. (See also *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 380, 381.)

What was Peter’s reaction to discovering Jesus? Matt. 14:28, 29.

Like Peter, Jesus also walked on the sea—but only as He too kept His focus on His Father as Peter, for a time, looked only to Christ.

When bidden by Jesus to do so and while keeping trust in and focus on Him alone, Peter walked safely on the sea. So did Jesus walk on the water, and He stilled the storm because, as a man, He trusted in and kept His focus upon His heavenly Father.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 379-382.

Part 3—Master Teacher

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Jesus came to earth to do the will of His Father, and that connection with God was maintained even in babyhood and youth. He was indwelt by the Holy Spirit from birth, but He had to learn the nature and the specifics of His mission.

God’s Son, who before He came knew the end from the beginning, who knew the entire history of Israel, and who instructed its prophets, now laid aside all such knowledge as part of His refusal to use His divine powers. “The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother’s knee. . . . God was His instructor.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

What did Jesus realize for the first time while visiting the temple at the age of twelve? Luke 2:49.

This is the first biblical signal that Jesus was conscious of His mission on earth. On this first visit to the temple (except for when He was a baby) He watched the sacrifices for the first time. “Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 78.

What did Jesus later teach about His divinity? John 14:6.

Jesus proclaimed to His disciples, “*I am* the way, the truth, and the life”—the only way to come to God. In doing so he acknowledged His unique divinity.

John records many of Jesus’ “*I am*” sayings. “*I AM*” is the name of God as the self-existent and eternal One. Jesus taught, “*I am* the bread of life” (6:35), “*I am* the light of the world” (8:12), “*I am* the door” (10:7, 9), “*I am* the good Shepherd” (10:11, 14), and “*I am* the resurrection, and the life” (11:25).

Part of the growing understanding of His mission was the discovery of His divinity. Jesus could speak with authority, drawing men to Himself because He was divine. But He did not receive the insight or strength to do this from within Himself. He received it from His Father. The Old Testament was His constant study (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 84), and God was His Teacher (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 453).

P Part 4—The Transfiguration

What need of Jesus brought Him up into the mount of transfiguration? Luke 9:28.

The humanity of Jesus not only was “wearied with the ascent” up the mountain (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 419) but was in great need of His Father. He ascended there to pray. There “the Man of Sorrows pours out His supplications with strong crying and tears. He prays for strength to endure the test in behalf of humanity. He must Himself gain a fresh hold on Omnipotence, for only thus can He contemplate the future.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 419, 420.

How did the Father encourage the Son of man? Mark 9:4.

How was the Son of man also shown to be the Son of God on the mount of transfiguration? Matt. 17:2.

The transfiguration was the glorification of this dependent Man in such a way that glory from above Him met together with glory from within Him. He was seen to be more than man—He was God. “Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above. Arising from His prostrate position, Christ stands in godlike majesty. The soul agony is gone.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 421.

What other proof of Christ’s divinity was given on the mount? Mark 9:2; Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:35.

Just as, above Bethlehem’s hills, the angels announced His divine origin and Simeon and Anna witnessed to His divinity in Jerusalem, so God Himself twice spoke of Christ’s divinity—once at His baptism and once on the mount of transfiguration. He identified Him as His Son.

Why do you think that God sent Moses and Elijah to talk with Jesus? See Matt. 17:3.

They too had walked alone. He was bearing this terrible loneliness because He longed to save us. They had suffered in order to save man at another level. Both were types of Christ, totally dependent upon God. Moses and Elijah came from God to encourage Him. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 422-425.)

part 5—Resurrection and Ascension

“No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:18).

Jesus had the authority (Greek *exousia*) both to give and take up His life. This is why He could truly say, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). On resurrection Sunday, for the first time Christ used His divinity for Himself—together with His Father and Holy Spirit. (See Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:11.)

Because His mission as a dependent man was finished (John 19:30), He could call upon His divinity once more.

How did Jesus exercise His divine power in the late afternoon of resurrection Sunday? Luke 24:31.

The post-resurrection presence of Jesus seems to differ from the pre-crucifixion presence. He did not abide with the disciples but occasionally appeared to them. He appeared to Simon (Luke 24:34), to James (1 Cor. 15:7), and showed Himself to His disciples (John 21:1). (Compare Acts 1:3, 4.)

He appeared and walked with the two along the Emmaus road (Luke 24:15) and then later vanished (verse 31). Then He walked unseen with these men on their return trip. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 801.)

What sudden appearance did Jesus make on the Sunday evening of His resurrection? Luke 24:36.

“Unseen,” Christ entered the room (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 802) and then manifested Himself. He seemed a stranger until He spoke; then He was recognized. Evidently the post-resurrection Christ was able to hide His real identity as He did on the Emmaus road.

What happened eight days later? John 20:26-29.

The cross was the “true coronation” of Christ (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 379). He was Conqueror. In death He was installed as King. This came to light on resurrection Sunday. All post-resurrection appearances and disappearances of Jesus were as the Divine King. His mission for man was completed at the cross; but His body was still “flesh and blood” and convinced the doubting Thomas. He was still the God-man.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Christ was Creator before He ever became the Redeemer. One of His functions in the Trinity was to bring new beings into existence. In fact, all things on earth were made by God’s Son. (See Heb. 1:2.) Redemption has to do with re-creation. His mission in this world was to bring restoration to the total person—body, mind, and spirit. The Source of all life dwelt among men. And where He was, there was seen a decided difference. It was as if He said once more, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). “And, behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).

The “let us” is important. In the first Creation, God’s Son worked in cooperation with His Father. In fact, the Father made the world, and all in it, through His Son (Heb. 1:2). Both were equally capable, as God, to perform the task in Their own right, through Their own power. They simply worked at it together. But when the Creator entered human history as a part of that history, He also became a part of creation as well as being its Creator. It was from within the creaturely realm, as a part of it, that the man Jesus strode out to accomplish His re-creative work for humanity. Once more the Father was creatively at work through His Son. But this time the Son could not have accomplished the task in His own right, through His own power, and still have remained man in the process of saving man. Salvation is a creative work of God from within the realm of the creature rather than from outside as in Eden. The human problem was an internal one. Christ was the Creator who came to death in such a way that creative energy could cure the human problem from within.

But in coming manward, God’s Son was dependent upon God. Even in His descent into human history He could not come in His own right, through His own power. Jesus was born through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20); the infant Jesus was a result of the creative act of another member of the Trinity. Incarnation was through the *willingness* of God’s Son but through the *work* of God’s Spirit. Without the creative presence of the Holy Spirit there would not have been the man Jesus. In the same way, without the creative presence of the Holy Spirit there would not have been the re-creative activity of the God-man in human history. Just as God’s Son was present as creature, through dependence upon God’s Spirit, so He is present in our re-creation through our dependence upon the same Spirit. Jesus was God from heaven who took upon Himself the limitations of humanity. The Holy Spirit within Him creatively broke through those restrictions. The Holy Spirit will do the same for us if we allow Him to.

Suffering Saviour

MEMORY TEXT: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Suffering as humans do was a new experience for Christ. In heaven He had been eternally loved by the Father and the Holy Spirit and then adored and worshiped by created beings in innumerable worlds. Yet even from eternity He was aware of the suffering to be met in this world. Assumedly there never was a moment in the eternal past when He was not aware of what His becoming man would cost Him, but still He came, and willingly; for His love for us was greater than the suffering received because of us.

As one of us He experienced suffering as a lifelong struggle. “The way from the manger to Calvary was marked with blood.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 29, 1911. “How few have any conception of the anguish which rent the heart of the Son of God during His 30 years of life upon earth. The path from the manger to Calvary was shadowed by sorrow and grief. He was the man of sorrows, and endured such heartache as no human language can portray.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1892. Thus “the life of Christ was made one long scene of conflict. Satan stirred up the evil hearts of men, and set envy and prejudice at work against the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He caused men to question and to doubt the word, works and mission of Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 25, 1895.

In this setting, what is the man Jesus to us—Example, Substitute, or both? “We shall never be called upon to suffer as Christ suffered; for the sins not of one, but the sins of the whole world were laid upon Christ. He endured humiliation, reproach, suffering, and death, that we by following his example might inherit all things. . . .

“ . . . We can never equal the pattern; but we may imitate and resemble it according to our ability.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 5, 1895.

Hebrews 5:8 holds two facts in balance. (1) Jesus was the Son of God—He was divine. (2) Nevertheless He learned obedience through suffering. He suffered as a human being. When Hebrews 5:7 points to His “strong crying and tears” in “the days of his flesh,” we gain insight into the terrible human struggle involved for this man who was God.

Part 1—The Despised One

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa. 53:3).

When was Christ first despised? Eze. 28:1-26. (Compare Isa. 14:12-14.)

The passage about the king of Tyrus changes to allow the prophet to see behind this king the one who controlled him—Satan. The once covering cherub at God’s throne revolted against God, specifically jealous of Christ, despising Him, wishing to take His place. Lucifer, whose brightness outshone all angels, became proud of his position, of his beauty and wisdom. He considered that he deserved to be God in the place held by Christ.

Satan stood up for his alleged rights, whereas Christ respected the rights of creatures, not even holding them back from rebellion. He pleaded with Satan to return, and he almost did, knowing that Christ was really just; but pride forbade him. By contrast, Christ refused to stand up for His “rights,” choosing to humble Himself to the level of being despised by the very ones He came to save.

To what condition had Israel fallen 400 years before Christ came? Mal. 1:6.

Through Malachi, Christ confronted Israel eight times, all in the context of His love for that nation (1:2); but eight times Israel protested, denied, and rejected His concerns, Israel despised Christ and was ready to put Him to death centuries before Calvary.

To what extent was Jesus despised? Isa. 52:13 to 53:12.

Those seeing Jesus saw no “beauty” (or appearance) that drew them to Him. In fact, after His wilderness temptations and His Gethsemane ordeal, “his visage was so marred more than any man” that others may have actually been repelled when noticing Jesus. Onlookers utterly despised Him—even to killing Him—because to them His lowly estate was in direct contrast to His mission as mankind’s Messiah.

FURTHER STUDY: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 137, 138.

Part 2—The Hunted One

“They watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor” (Luke 20:20).

“They [the rulers] were determined to take His life. They sent messengers all over the country to warn the people against Jesus as an impostor. Spies were sent to watch Him, and report what He said and did. The precious Saviour was now most surely standing under the shadow of the cross.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 213.

What is one of the first pictures of hatred against Jesus in the New Testament? Matt. 2:3-18.

Herod’s devil-inspired plot to kill Jesus caused Christ’s parents to flee to Egypt as instructed by the angel in order to protect Him from the jealous ruler. The gifts of the wise men gave His poor parents funds to go to and stay in Egypt until the crisis had passed.

What does the record say concerning the work of the spies and what they did to trap Christ? Matt 22:15-22; Luke 11:53, 54.

Throughout His ministry the Lord was continually pursued by crafty and hypocritical men who sought to take His life.

“There was no more peace or rest for the Saviour; for they manifested the most bitter opposition and intense hatred, and their plans and schemes to entrap Him were abundant, never ceasing until the purpose of hate was fully accomplished on Calvary.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Dec. 12, 1900.

The entire life of Christ was lived on enemy territory. From His flight with parents when but an infant until the rabble came into Gethsemane and took Him by night to trial, His entire life was like that of a hunted wild beast. He was like a wanted man—under the threat of death. During His last three years, “he had to flee from one place to another until his life work was accomplished. . . . He was not insensible to ignominy and contempt; he submitted to it, but he felt its bitterness as no other being could feel it.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Feb. 20, 1893.

THINK IT THROUGH: Would you still be able to love your friends if they treated you as Jesus’ friends treated Him?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 601-609.

1 Part 3—The Lonely One

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me" (Isa. 63:3).

This last-hour loneliness was not a new experience. Even His chosen people, the Jews, did not recognize or receive Jesus (John 1:11). His claim to be the Messiah angered them. To them it was blasphemy. They longed for deliverance from the hated Romans. What could this carpenter's son do to accomplish this? What arrogance to think Himself Israel's deliverer, when He did not have an army, would not fight, and seemed content to walk around telling people to love one another! The people wanted action—a fighter, not a philosopher.

What did His home church attempt to do to Jesus? Luke 4:18-29.

In His home church at Nazareth, Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll (Isa. 61:1, 2) concerning His mission to "heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives." Almost at once He found Himself a captive as the maddened congregation rushed Him to a nearby cliff. They were about to push Him over to certain death when He disappeared.

As the disgruntled, disappointed crowd drifted back to the synagogue, some may have pondered His words: "No prophet is accepted in his own country." How true! Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted, and in this rejection by those nearest to Him He was lonely and brokenhearted for them—longing to help those who needed help but refused it.

Did popularity at times make Jesus lonely? John 6:15.

Near Galilee Jesus fed the 5000. These people, because of the miracle, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." While Nazareth rejected this prophet, those near Galilee accepted Jesus as a prophet and tried to make Him king by force. Once more He departed and went alone unto a mountain.

How was His public ministry made lonely? Luke 20:20.

He came to save men, but they sent spies to destroy Him. They dogged His footsteps, eager to distort His words. They pretended to be earnest and admiring listeners. But behind this front was their plot to grasp at any saying or deed that would successfully deliver Him to death.

Part 4—The Grieved One

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4).

That His own—those He created—could turn from Him was ever a sorrow to Christ. Thousands of years of separation focused in and flung their full fury upon Him when He tried to bridge the chasm by becoming man—to be one with us. But, as man, He also entered into the results of man's struggle, bearing our griefs with and for us.

Why did Jesus weep at Lazarus' death? (See John 11:33-38.)

1. "In view of . . . the fact that the afflicted friends could mourn over the dead while the Saviour of the world stood by—'Jesus wept.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 533. They did not recognize Him as the One who could fulfill their every need. They were full of grief in His presence—He who could take away their grief.

2. He wept because many now weeping for Lazarus would put Him to death—so ignorant were they of who He was and what He could do for them. He hoped that the miracle would provide evidence that He was divine and able to meet their every need.

3. He wept because the blindness of these people was leading them to their destruction in the onslaught against Jerusalem by Titus—some 35 years away.

4. He wept because "the weight of the grief of ages was upon Him. . . . His heart was pierced with the pain of the human family of all ages and in all lands. The woes of the sinful race were heavy upon His soul, and the fountain of His tears was broken up as He longed to relieve all their distress."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 534.

What happened in the midst of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem? Luke 19:41.

For over a thousand years Christ had longed to gather His people. "In the lamentation of Christ, the very heart of God was pouring itself forth in his representative. This was the separation struggle, the mysterious farewell of the long-suffering love of the Deity; it was the expression of abused, rejected love."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 22, 1898.

THINK IT THROUGH: How do I grieve Christ today? Am I willing to stop doing so through the Holy Spirit's power?

Part 5—A Suppliant

“Who in the days of this flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7).

The suffering Saviour wept as He looked out to His people and as He looked up to His Father. Jesus had a sensitive nature—a sinless, outgoing love for everyone. No one was beneath His notice. He healed every sick one in villages and towns He journeyed through. He could not leave even one out. But they left Him out. He was treated with disdain—hatred. His life was full of sorrow and loneliness. Only One loved Him as He loved others, and that was His Father. He poured out His troubled thoughts to Him from the depths of His breaking heart. He yearned for man. He had made man. He came to save man. He would die for man. But man, for the most part, would have little to do with Him. Jesus “wept and agonized in prayer alone” in Gethsemane.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 713.

Was Jesus discouraged in this terrible hour? Matt. 26:38-46.

His soul became “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (verse 38). He “fell on his face, and prayed” (verse 39). “The Son of God was seized with superhuman agony, and fainting and exhausted, He staggered back to the place of His former struggle. His suffering was even greater than before. As the agony of soul came upon Him, ‘His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 689.

Three struggles and then strength from an angel: “Christ’s agony did not cease, but His depression and discouragement left Him. . . . He had borne that which no human being could ever bear; for He had tasted the sufferings of death for every man.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 694.

To what further depths did He plunge? Matt. 27:46.

Darkness shut Jesus away from man for three hours on the cross, but a deeper darkness—the horror of man’s sin bringing separation from the Source of all light—cut Jesus off from His Father. Although He clung to His Father by faith, the separation was real. It was from these deepest depths—from the abyss of hell—that He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

THINK IT THROUGH: What circumstances test my trust in God?

FURTHER STUDY: John 17:1-26.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

The fruit of the Spirit is love seen in joy and peace (Gal. 5:22, 23), to name but two. Jesus sang as a boy, and even sang the Passover Hallel before going to Gethsemane (see *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 672, 673), His trials and crucifixion. He was fully filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore enjoyed full communion with God. Yet it is also true that God’s Son came from the highest heights of adoration as God and sank to the lowest depths of suffering as man. His manward descent brought Him into inexplicable anguish that rent His heart throughout His lonely and trouble-filled journey from Bethlehem to Calvary. No other being in the universe has traversed such a rugged path.

His journey from birth to death threw open His journey from eternity to eternity. What He went through in His migration from the manger to the cross made manifest what, in a measure, He had gone through from eternity and to a degree might continue to endure throughout eternity. Not that He suffered physical assault in the eternal past or would do so in the eternal future, but spiritual suffering lies deeper than the physical. The anguish of spirit from rejection by billions of His children and the separation of the Sin Bearer from the Father—this is what took His life at the cross in just six short hours, and this is His burden still. In short, it is at the cross, at the deepest point of His descent, when Jesus entered “hell” itself, that we find the point from which His suffering becomes manifest in stark, shocking clarity.

Looking back from the cross, we see that it was for this He had come. He was born to die. He became a man to become a sacrifice. Calvary shadows His entire human existence. He could not live outside of, behind, or beyond that finale. His pathway moved inexorably toward crucifixion. His manward movement from eternity was with this end in view.

Other humans do not live until conceived. They have no eternity beyond their human birth. They have never existed, let alone suffered, before their birth. Neither have they come to be the sacrifice for all other humans. No other Man suffered as Jesus suffered. That is why only His cross can save. That is why His life is for us.

Human beings, hopelessly floundering in human history, submerged within the depths of rebellious estrangement from God, were cut off from the Source of life and doomed to perish. Jesus was God’s lifeline let down to lift mankind up. There was no way to get out of our plight and be restored without Him, yet most humans have refused to have anything to do with Him. They have set themselves to undermine His mission. His greatest suffering was not in their treatment of Him, but in their not letting Him save them as He longed to do.

APPLICATION: Must Jesus bear the cross alone? What can I do that I have not done in bearing the cross for Him?

Trials of His Passion

MEMORY TEXT: "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" (Isa. 53:5).

Jesus Christ as the God-man is represented in Scripture as both Lion and Lamb. He had all the divine abilities to crush His enemies, but He took their cruel punishment like a meek and helpless lamb. Abuse is hard to take when you are in the corner, a captive, with no way of escape; but it is harder to bear when you could be a million miles away in a fraction of time.

Although Jesus did not use His divine power to aid Himself when He needed help the most, paradoxically, this very divinity became the reason why the maddened throng, tearing at Him on all sides, was goaded to destroy Him. "In an un pitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. Though His every word and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 29.

Even as a man He was so unlike other humans, so sinless, that He suffered in proportion to His greater perfection. "There was never one who walked among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of man. He was derided and mocked because of His unswerving obedience to the principles of God's holy law. They hated Him without a cause."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 32.

It was precisely because He was sinless that Jesus Christ suffered so intensely. "He had a deep abhorrence of sin."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 20, 1892. The greatest sins of all were committed during His final trials. To treat an innocent person in such an unfeeling, unfair way was atrocious sin. Jesus had come to save humanity from sin. His whole being shuddered as His tormentors plunged into the deepest horrors of sin as they flung the worst at Him. If only He could reveal Himself—let them see who He really was. It was a great temptation to do this. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 700.) But He kept His level as a man, depending fully upon His Father. He suffered in our stead. Those final trials were for us. Our sins caused Him to suffer—and "with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

Part 1—The Betrayed One

"As they did eat, he said Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me" (Matt. 26:21).

How did Judas betray Jesus? Luke 22:48.

Judas took Christ's hand, hailed him as Master, kissed Him repeatedly (Greek *kataphileō*, to kiss fervently—durative action), and appeared to weep in sympathy with Him in His peril. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 695, 696.) Despicable charlatan! Pretending affection when a traitor!

How did Jesus try to bring Judas to his senses? Matt 26:50.

Why did Judas stoop to betray his Master?

The immediate reason was gain. Judas reasoned thus: (1) If the crucifixion was coming, his part would not change this. (2) If Jesus was not supposed to die, He would be forced to deliver Himself. And then Judas would be 30 pieces of silver the richer. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 720.)

The deeper reasons surface from his thinking during the last three years. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 718, 719.) (1) He was offended at the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. (2) He had worked out a plan by which He expected Christ to work. This included a more "aggressive warfare." (3) Judas had expected John the Baptist to be released from prison. (4) Judas thought Jesus should have given a sign from heaven when the Jewish leaders demanded one from Him. (5) Judas wanted to make Jesus king by force after the feeding of the 5000. (6) Judas believed that Jesus should look to him as a counselor, for he "thought himself wiser than Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 719.

These six reasons reveal a man dependent upon himself. Jesus was the opposite—He depended only upon His Father. He was a dependent man, not independent like Judas. Within this difference lies the deepest cause for the betrayal. Jesus was betrayed by man because He refused to depend upon man, trusting rather to His Father's will.

In His treatment of Judas in the upper room, how was Jesus our Example? John 13:11-30.

THINK IT THROUGH: Peter denied Christ but later had a wonderful ministry. Judas betrayed Christ and then committed suicide. Why were their succeeding experiences so different?

Part 2—The Denied One

“Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee” (Matt. 26:35).
(Compare Peter with Job; see Job 35:15.)

What really led to Peter’s denial? (See Luke 22:54.)

“Peter followed him afar off” (Matt. 26:58). Unlike John (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 711, 712), he stayed in the courtyard rather than near to Jesus during the trial. (See Matt. 26:69.) Mingling with the crowd (Luke 22:55), he warmed himself (John 18:25), not realizing how cold his heart had become.

Why did Peter deny Jesus so vehemently? (See Matt. 26:74.)

How would you compare Judas and Peter in these final trials of Christ?

Both had a faulty relationship with Christ. Both depended upon their own plans, not on His. Both thought Christ was wrong (Judas in everything, and Peter in the denial prediction) and both played a role—a sham. Judas pretended to be affectionate in repeatedly kissing Jesus and weeping in Gethsemane; Peter pretended to have nothing to do with Him and mouthed curses and swore in order to appear convincing. They were equally hypocrites—one feigning affection and the other no connection.

Judas was on the outer circle of disciples, never really in deep fellowship with Jesus. But Peter was one of the inner three who sought Him the most. It was Peter in this threesome who alone went into Jairus’s daughter’s bedroom (Mark 5:37-41), up the transfiguration mount (Mark 9:2), and into Gethsemane (Mark 14:32, 33). Oh, Peter, so soon to forget all that Jesus meant to you—how like us you are! But although Judas hardened himself against Jesus, Peter never did.

What happened when the cock crowed the second time? Mark 14:72.
(Compare Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:61.)

“The Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter’s eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 713.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 710-714.

Part 3—The Forsaken One

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66).

Looking out upon His people, Jesus cried, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). They followed Him for the loaves, fishes, and miracles of healing. (See John 6:2, 14.) They were more interested in the temporal, the here and now physical needs, than in the eternal and spiritual necessities. Jesus offered Himself to them as the “true bread from heaven” (John 6:32). He said, “I am that bread of life” (John 6:48); “he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (John 6:57); “he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (John 6:58). It was when He offered Himself to them (and not things He could do) that they turned away and forsook Him. They did not forsake the things He had done, but forsook Him.

Which of the Twelve left Jesus? John 6:67-71.

What tragic plea did a whole city make to Jesus? Matt. 8:34.

Because their pigs had been destroyed in the healing of the demoniacs, the populace urged Jesus to leave their city. They worried about their loss of money when the wealth of the universe stood before them. In their blind attachment to temporal security, they drove out the One who came to give them eternal riches.

Why did Jesus have only a three-year ministry? (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 541.)

Would the disciples of Jesus really forsake Him? John 16:32.

Jesus said that all His disciples would forsake Him, and in fear of the mob in the garden, “all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56). One betrayed Him, one denied Him, and they all forsook Him. They forsook Him when He needed them the most.

Who apparently forsook Jesus also? Matt. 27:46.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 337-339.

Part 4—The Ridiculed One

"Some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands" (Mark 14:65).

All four Gospels speak of the terrible ridicule Jesus endured. Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe His suffering before Caiaphas, the high priest. (See Matt. 26:67; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63-65.) John does not mention this mockery; but, together with Matthew and Mark, he portrays the derision He suffered in Pilate's court. (See Matt. 27:27-31; Mark 15:16-20; John 19:2, 3.) Although Luke does not mention this suffering under Pilate, he is the only one to reveal the ridicule Herod and his soldiers put Him through. (See Luke 23:11.) Matthew and Mark are the only ones to note the last ridicule He suffered while hanging on the cross. (See Matt. 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32.)

What did they do to Jesus in Caiaphas's house? Luke 22:63-65; Matt. 26:67.

They blindfolded Jesus with an old garment (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 715) and shouted: "Prophecy unto us, . . . Who is he that smote thee?" (Matt. 26:68). They yanked hair from His beard and slobbered spit over Him (see Isa. 50:6) and mouthed many things in blasphemy (see Luke 22:65).

The Desire of Ages mentions two of these ridicules: (1) taunting Him as illegitimate and (2) scolding Him as worthy of the worst death because of claiming to be the Messiah. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 715.) "The Jewish leaders were dead alike to pity and to shame."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 715. Imagine the pain and terror of being beaten upon the head while blindfolded!

What happened to Jesus in Herod's court? Luke 23:11. And in Pilate's court? Matt. 27:29-31.

What ridicule was thrown at Jesus on the cross? Matt. 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32.

In imagination we can hear the taunt: "Hah! Look at You now. Thought You could destroy the temple and rebuild it, did You? Well, go ahead—try it if You can! You saved others, did You? Try saving Yourself—that is, if You are really Christ the king. We will believe if You come down and show us." He could have—but as dependent man, He did His Father's will.

Part 5—The Abused One

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair" (Isa. 50:6).

What abuse did Jesus undergo in the guardroom of Caiaphas? John 18:22. (See also *The Desire of Ages*, p. 710.)

"Mercy and justice were trampled upon. Never was criminal treated in so inhuman a manner as was the Son of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 710. "He could have flashed the light of his glory upon his enemies, but he bore patiently their humiliating abuse."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900.

What aspects of abuse not mentioned in the Gospels does *The Desire of Ages*, bring out? (See pages 715, 731.)

Two terrible scenes of near death took place that night, one in the court of Caiaphas and the other in Pilate's court. (1) "Satanic fury took possession of the people. The roar of voices was like that of wild beasts."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 715. (2) Again, like wild beasts, the people plunged at Jesus, dragging Him one way, then the other. They would have pulled His arms and legs from His body if the Romans had not rescued Him. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 731.)

How many floggings did Jesus suffer? John 19:1; Matt. 27:26.

Flogging is mentioned in both Old and New Testaments. (See Deut. 25:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:24.) According to Jewish law, 40 stripes was the maximum punishment. To stop at 39 implied mercy and protected the letter of the law. Jesus received two such lashings in one night, but under Roman supervision. His back was raw, broken, and bleeding. It was agony to touch. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 56, 377; vol. 8, p. 988.)

What picture does the Bible give of this scourged Jesus? John 19:1-14.

The weak-willed Pilate, hoping to gain popularity, gave Jesus over to be scourged. Jagged thorns tore into His temple. Cutting thongs ripped His back raw. Strong hands hit Him in the face. From side to side He swayed under this demonic show of force.

THINK IT THROUGH: What is the meaning of this statement: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" (Isa. 53:10)?

Part 6—Focus of the Week

“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:10, 11).

Throughout His ministry Jesus had faced demoniacs with authority—casting out the demons. They quailed in His presence just as humans did in the two cleansings of the temple. With a singular command He took hold of the situation and remained Master throughout.

But now He faced not just one or two demoniacs but a mob. This maddened throng, goaded on by the devil and fallen angels, unleashed utter hatred on Jesus. Now He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Now as a sheep before her shearers He opened not His mouth. It seemed that the tables were turned—fiends held Him in control; He was at their mercy. The stately cedar had become a broken flax, bent and bruised in the hurricane—hanging by a thread.

Saved from dying in Gethsemane, Jesus continued His worst night on earth. The noise and clamor of the crowd in trial after trial; mockery and abuse from Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, and the guards; rejection by His own people and His own church; hatred and jealousy of the priests and Pharisees; betrayal, denial, and forsaking of Him by His own disciples when He needed them the most—all constituted part of His intense suffering that will take eternity for us to comprehend.

Christ created human beings in God’s image and infilled them with His Spirit. What utter horror the contrast must have been for Him that night! Surrounded by demons spewing filth from hateful mouths and lunging into His body with possessed fists and feet for the kill, He stood there—a bruised, bleeding, lacerated victim. His face and eyes were swollen, back raw, tender temples jabbed by bare, cruel spikes, and body covered with cuts, black and blue evidences of vicious handling.

The depths of the misery was in seeing humans degraded to the demonic. Where was the image of God? Where was His Spirit? These human temples were full of false traffic—changed into the image of the devil by the indwelling of his spirits. There were His own people—members of His church—the Seventh-day Adventist Church of His day! Civil war is always the most bloody of wars—the most tragic. In the name of religion those members cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” (Luke 23:21). How utterly blind! All religion without Christ is blind.

But Laodicea also is blind. (See Rev. 3:17.) It says it needs nothing (verse 17), but keeps Christ standing outside the heart’s door (verse 20). Religion without Christ—the forms with Christ outside—that is what gave Christ His final trials that sleepless night, and still does in the night of this world.

APPLICATION: How can I allow the Holy Spirit to apply the eyesalve to cure my Laodicean blindness?



Calvary

MEMORY TEXT: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).

“The terrible scenes of the crucifixion revealed what humanity will do when under Satan’s control. They revealed what the outcome would be if Satan was to control the world.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1899.

The issue in the great controversy concerns the justice of God. Satan charged Him with injustice. The showdown came at the cross. Who was unjust? God was willing to die for the guilty. Satan murdered the innocent. Satan, and not God was seen to be unjust.

“His death proved God’s administration and government to be without a flaw. Satan’s charge in regard to the conflicting attributes of justice and mercy was forever settled beyond question. Every voice in heaven and out of heaven will one day testify to the justice, mercy, and love of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 12, 1899. “Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 758.

Calvary was the altar on which the Lamb of God was slain. For centuries millions of lambs had died at the hands of sinners. The first mention of a lamb in the Old Testament is in Genesis 22:7, where Isaac asked his Father, “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Isaac almost became that sacrifice, save for the staying hand of God (verse 12) and the ram caught in the thicket (verse 13). The first mention of a lamb in the New Testament is John’s bold declaration, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). As G. Campbell Morgan put it, “The Old Testament asks the question, ‘Where is the lamb?’ The New Testament answers, ‘Behold the Lamb of God.’” —*The Crises of the Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1903), p. 145. At His baptism, Christ was anointed into His public mission leading to Calvary. Already He was the Lamb—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), the Lamb who ever suffered throughout life. The death of that Lamb at Calvary gave insight into His life of suffering of which the cross was the logical conclusion.

Part 1—Utterly Exhausted

“Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified” (Matt. 27:26).

To appreciate what this flogging meant to Jesus, we need to understand the utter exhaustion He had already suffered from the long hours of agony endured:

1. In Gethsemane “He fell dying to the ground.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 693. He would have died if an angel had not strengthened Him.
2. Abuse and mockery under Annas and Caiaphas.
3. He had been nearly pulled limb from limb by the demon-possessed crowd.
4. He was brutally beaten by unrestrained Roman guards.
5. His nation, demon-possessed, with vehemence and fury screamed for Him to be crucified.
6. One scourging had already been applied in an atmosphere of total hatred to Jesus.
7. Mockery and abuse under Pilate.
8. Mockery and abuse from Herod and his soldiers.

What happened to Jesus when the cross was placed upon His shoulders? Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26; John 19:17.

“When after the second scourging the cross was laid upon Him, human nature could bear no more. He fell fainting beneath the burden.

“The crowd that followed the Saviour saw His weak and staggering steps, but they manifested no compassion. They taunted and reviled Him because He could not carry the heavy cross. Again the burden was laid upon Him, and again He fell fainting to the ground.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 742.

Jesus was a young man of 33. He had always lived healthfully, although He did give Himself tirelessly in service for others. But now He could not take any more. He had been drained to the dregs—and this before being nailed to the cross.

Note a detail Ellen White gives concerning the crucifixion that adds to what is found in the Gospels.

“As soon as Jesus was nailed to the cross, it was lifted by strong men, and with great violence thrust into the place prepared for it. This caused the most intense agony to the Son of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 745.

THINK IT THROUGH: He hung there—bleeding, bruised, exhausted—giving all for me. How much have I given Him?

Part 2—Dying in Anguish

“He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him” (Matt. 27:42). (Compare Mark 15:31; Luke 23:35.)

There are three levels to consider:

1. Even though given in mockery, the chief priests tacitly admitted that Jesus had saved others. They well knew the extent of His healing ministry. They knew that He had raised people from the dead. But now the Life-giver was dying. He seemed helpless.
2. Jesus *could not* save those who were mocking Him. He saved others, but He could not save them—because they did not accept Him as Saviour. Because He was man’s Saviour, He would not come down. He could have come down, saving Himself at the price of not saving anyone else.
3. At the deepest level, these demon-possessed priests were voicing Satan’s attempt to get Jesus to doubt His identity and mission. Their taunt, “If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe,” is of the same kind that Jesus met in the wilderness: “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (Matt. 4:3). (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 548, 549.)

What is the significance of Matthew 27:43?

Satan tried to break the dependent relationship of the incarnate Jesus upon His Father. Look at Him—a dying man! Surely He cannot be God’s Son. He had said the same to the starving, emaciated Jesus in the wilderness. At both times Jesus seemed forsaken of God. “It was as difficult for Him to keep the level of humanity as for men to rise above the low level of their depraved natures, and be partakers of the divine nature.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 930.

What was the greatest cause of the suffering Jesus endured? Mark 15:28. (Compare Isa. 53:12.)

“Numbered with the transgressors.” This plunged Jesus into infinite spiritual suffering, far greater than any physical agony: (1) He suffered the sapping remorse of guilt—the heart of iniquity—for every sinner; and (2) He suffered for each one to a greater depth because (a) of the “second death” He died and (b) He was sinless. By separating Him from God, sin crushed out His life on the cross.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does the cross mean to you and me?

Part 3—The Seven Words

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The first three recorded sayings of Jesus from the cross were spoken in the three hours before noon. Physically exhausted, spiritually anguished, bearing the sins of a world that loved Him not, He still loved sinners. Out of this horror the man Jesus breathed only forgiveness for those who treated Him with abandoned hatred. What long-suffering!

What was Jesus' second saying? Luke 23:43.

One happy moment in all the tragedy! For only one—this criminal—He would have died. What compassion!

What was Jesus' third saying? John 19:26, 27.

In His first saying, Jesus showed His close relationship with His heavenly Father. The second revealed His deep compassion for fallen man. The third manifested His filial kindness to His grieving mother. The death and loss of Jesus was to be the greatest blow of her life. Jesus provided for her need, giving her into the tender care of John.

What was Jesus' fourth saying on the cross? Mark 15:34. (Compare Matt. 27:46.)

The last four sayings of Jesus came after darkness enveloped Calvary from noon till three p.m. The Psalms gave insight into His struggle on the cross. (See Ps. 22:16-18; 69:20-22.)

What was Jesus' fifth saying on Calvary? John 19:28.

The fourth and fifth sayings reveal the agony, spiritual and physical, that Christ endured for us. What suffering!

How do the last two sayings reveal His unbroken communion by faith with the Father? John 19:30; Luke 23:46.

This reliance upon the Father—by faith—qualifies all the other statements uttered from Calvary.

part 4—Dying as Our Substitute

“Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him” (Mark 15:32).

“Prove that You are a king by coming down!” That's precisely what His whole human life had been! And that was His purpose from eternity. He was the King of the universe come down! Not from a cross, but from a throne. He came down to bear a cross—not just at Calvary, but throughout all His lonely, misunderstood, mistreated, and rejected life.

Christ's birth constituted a new start for the race. It was as if, in Him, man was once more back in Eden before the Fall. His birth may be seen as a redeeming substitute for our birth as sinners.

What did the life of Christ constitute for us? Col. 3:1-4.

The entire life of the man Jesus was not lived for His own benefit. Many scholars believe that Christ became human because He always wanted to become such (Irenaeus, Rupert of Deutz, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus, Osiander). The modern theologian Barth states that He would have become a man even if the race had not sinned. This is not true. Christ did not come to satisfy a desire of His own. His entire life was a substitutionary life for us. We benefit as much from His life as we do from His death. He gives us His character as well as His crucifixion.

How do Christ's wilderness and Gethsemane sufferings, like Calvary, emphasize His substitution? Matt. 4:1-11; 26:36-46; 27:39-49.

As the following quotes indicate, each of these experiences was unique, such that no other human could have endured. Christ is not only a model to be copied—He is our Substitute. *Wilderness*: “He had endured the test, greater than we shall ever be called to endure.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 131. *Gethsemane*: “He had borne that which no human could ever bear.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 694. *Calvary*: “The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

THINK IT THROUGH: If Christ is my Substitute in life as well as death, how do I take advantage of this fact and allow Him to live out His life in me day by day?

Part 5—Beyond the Tomb

“Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to day, shalt thou be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

Of the seven sayings of Jesus on the cross, six referred to the present and only one looked beyond the tomb to the future—His promise to the dying thief.

Was the future beyond the tomb vivid in the mind of Jesus prior to His crucifixion? John 14:1-3.

The Last Supper with His disciples in the upper room was the time when Jesus rehearsed matters of importance. It was His last meeting with His followers before He died. How could He prepare them for the terrible shock that His death would bring to them? He spoke of His Father 49 times and of the close relationship between the members of the Trinity and Christians 26 times. (See John 13 through 17.) In this context, He promised to go to prepare dwelling places for the saints and come to get them thereafter. In the meantime, He promised to send the Holy Spirit. (See John 16:7.)

What great trouble descended upon Jesus between the upper room and Calvary? Matt. 26:37-46.

Jesus became sorely troubled. He groaned, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38). This is why He asked Peter, James, and John to pray with and for Him. This was the dreaded moment when the sins of the world were actually laid upon Him for the first time. The Sinless One became sin for us in the garden. (The first Adam brought sin on us in another garden. But the first Adam only carried his own sin, which was enough to cause him to run from God in fear.) Jesus took everyone’s sin and doing so brought such a separation struggle from His Father, such depression and discouragement, that He could not see beyond the tomb. He was entering the dark tunnel beyond which there seemed to be no exit. He now suffered as never before, becoming as a castaway—as sin for us. If it would mean His eternal death in order that we might live eternally in His place, then He would do it. “He will save man at any cost to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 693.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why is the cross the greatest revelation of God for all eternity to come?

FURTHER STUDY: John 14 through 16.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

“Looking unto Jesus . . . ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2).

Returning yet again to the “diving analogy,” we find Calvary at the farthest point from heaven. It was biblical hell—the second death. Of the three crosses standing against the sky over Golgotha, only the middle one sank to this unprecedented level—for only the man Jesus plunged into the second-death abyss without guarantee of coming back out. At that point of entrance He chose oblivion to save man. It constituted the ultimate self-abandonment that caught the breath of the onlooking universe. It was the most horrific, yet most magnificent act ever seen in eternity. It stands without parallel and ever will remain unrivaled. That the eternal God, who once occupied all space and transcended all time, would be willing to perish into nothingness so that puny, finite rebels might be caught up to live forever is inexplicable. But that is what God is like!

Only in the light of Calvary can we catch a glimpse in the character of God and thus into the quality of all truths about and from Him. The cross is the focal point through which biblical doctrines should be understood. They speak of a God who is for us and not against us. They reveal an unselfish God who lives for others and not for His own sake. Just as “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27), so all doctrines were made for us, and not we for them.

The cross will always remain the unequalled revelation of God. It contains an exhaustless content that will occupy minds for eternity. Looking up to the cross, one sees that the heart of Christianity is a person and not a practice, is a relationship and not rules, is Christ and not the Christian. The cross draws struggling pilgrims to place their trembling hands in the strong hand of the king who perished in their place that they might live. He conquered there for us!

Beholding Christ on the cross is the greatest privilege we can have. There, hanging, drained to the dregs, exhausted and dead, is the greatest lover of the universe. There is full acceptance for whoever will but receive it. Beholding the One who gave us life through Creation and crucifixion moves us as nothing else can. The cross is transformed from a Roman instrument of torture into a launching pad. It becomes like a giant arrow pulled back on the bow—straining, ready to fly into the blue yonder of freedom. That is where Christianity begins—where Christ ended His manward movement. His death was for us that we might be unshackled and set free—pointed heavenward. Where He died—our life begins.

Thus the cross constitutes both the end of Christ’s manward journey and the beginning of our Godward journey.

APPLICATION: What can I do to focus my attention more on Christ’s cross and less on myself and my concerns?

"It Is Finished"

MEMORY TEXT: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

Albert Schweitzer, great missionary though he was, did not understand the significance of Calvary. In his book *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963), he wrote: "The Baptist appears, and cries: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign."—Pages 368, 369.

Calvary meant the end of all that was opposed to God, and not the end of Jesus. Christ's victory had several facets:

1. It answered the great controversy issue. It was the end of a perfect law-keeping life which exposed the utter falsehood of Satan's charge that, as God created them, humans could not keep the law.
2. It revealed the depths of God's compassion for all sinners while hating sin. Sin was judged at Calvary, but the judgment was borne by the Substitute Man.
3. The death of that Man for the sins of all humankind shows that no other price is acceptable or necessary for man's sin.
4. Calvary makes sin abhorrent to those who accept Jesus, for sin crucified Him.
5. In short, Calvary brought to an end Satan's charge that Christ was unjust. It was the decisive victory that brought Satan's kingdom to a crashing defeat and revealed Christ's kingdom as utterly triumphant. Calvary, unlike any other death, was a triumphant climax.

Part 1—Israel's End

"They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

In one sense it is of little consequence who was instrumental in bringing about the death of Jesus Christ. (See Matt. 26:24.) As the Lamb of God He came to die for the sins of the whole world. Every Christian confesses that *he* or *she* brought Christ to Calvary. Christ was even betrayed and denied by "Christian" apostles. According to the New Testament, Romans and Jews were the agents of Christ's death. Yet He actually died of a heart broken by the sins of *all*. He came to die.

When Pilate washed his hands, claiming innocence, what did the crowds cry out? Matt. 27:25.

In what ways has this plea borne fruit? (1) Mark 15:38; (2) Matt. 27:52, 53; and (3) Matt. 24:1, 2.

For more than a thousand years Christ was Israel's King, Protector, and Guide. Rejecting Him, they now became unprotected.

1. The words "It is finished" brought an unseen hand to rip open the temple veil: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38).
2. Christ's resurrection caused the resurrection of others (see Eph. 4:8) proclaiming Jesus as their King. The trial leaders were stunned and speechless. What if they were to meet the risen Christ too? "Nevermore would peaceful sleep come to their pillows."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.
3. The destruction of Jerusalem followed in A.D. 70.

What happened to Israel after the cross? Rom. 11:11-26.

The cry "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15) and the death of Jesus brought the mission of Israel to an end. The Christian church is spiritual Israel since Calvary. Jews are saved as Christians.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why is it important to know that Israel is the church today, and not a nation?

FURTHER STUDY: Romans 9, 10 and 11.

Part 2—Human Works

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate said unto them, Behold the man!" (John 19:5).

Only one Man could save humanity. Calvary constituted the only human work that has power to save. Calvary calls in question any other human work to save.

Since it was heard on a Friday, what added meaning might be given to Jesus' cry "It is finished"? (Compare Gen. 1:31; 2:1.)

Creation Friday and crucifixion Friday may be compared. Both Fridays completed the work of Christ. On Creation Friday man's creation came as the climax of a week of creative activity. On crucifixion Friday, the same Christ concluded the work of purchasing the right to re-create the human race. Both creations of Adamic man came on a Friday, so that the first full day to follow was a day to celebrate Christ's completed work (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 769)—a Sabbath rest of utter rejoicing in the finished work of the only Creator and Saviour. Whereas it was as God that Christ created Adam, He fulfilled His call to be the second Adam as a man. His relation to the first Adam was external, but to the second Adam He held an internal identity that would be eternal. On the first Friday He gave life to Adam. On the second Friday, as the second Adam, He Himself gave life to all mankind. On the first Friday He spoke life into Adam through creative energy. On the second Friday, as the second Adam—as a human—He died to bring life to "whosoever will."

In what ways did the cross expose the utter futility of offering any human works as acceptable for salvation? Acts 4:12.

If it required "second death" agony for the only sinless Man to become the Sin Bearer for the entire world, then no works of any sinful mortal can add one jot to the sufficiency of the price paid for our salvation. Not one of us is sinless, by nature or by action. And if redeemed, we shall be spared the second death. Moreover, only the Creator has the power it takes to recreate, to redeem, to restore. Only the initial choice to enter the covenant relationship with God is ours—ours also to remain in the covenant daily.

FURTHER STUDY: Rom. 3:20-31.

Part 3—An Atonement

"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11).

The word "atonement" occurs only once in the English New Testament. It there translates the Greek word *katallagē*, which is elsewhere translated as "reconciling" or "reconciliation." (Compare Rom. 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18-21.) Sin is a broken relationship between God and man in which man is the one who left and still leaves God. The Greek word literally means "a thorough change."

Reconciliation is the restored relationship in which God, by becoming human, provides for the bringing back of humanity to Himself. In Jesus Christ, God and humankind were not only brought back together again, but into a closer relationship than before. More than restoration is involved.

What contribution did the death of Jesus make to the atonement? Heb. 10:10.

Jesus was offered "once for all." This was a one-time, unrepeatable event as unique as His birth or His anointing to mission at His baptism. "Christ's sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The condition of the atonement had been fulfilled. The work for which He had come to this world had been accomplished. He had won the kingdom. He had wrested it from Satan and had become heir of all things."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 29.

What Bible language shows that the price of atonement was complete at the cross and that nothing has been added to it since? John 17:4; 19:30; 1 Cor. 1:30.

Jesus Christ is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We have everything in Him. In fact, Paul can go so far as to say, "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), meaning that our real humanity exists in Him. His life on earth was life lived in our humanity for us. Although the price of the atonement was paid fully at Calvary, Christ ministers His atonement in the heavenly sanctuary today. (See *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 67, 68.)

How did Paul describe his experience? 1 Cor. 15:31; Gal. 2:20.

Paul affirmed that Christ within, through the Holy Spirit, brings us the benefits of the atonement purchased at Calvary.

Part 4—The Power Taken Again

"No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

At least three Bible passages (Acts 13:32, 33; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 1:3) indicate that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. Romans 8:11 says the Holy Spirit also took part. In John 10:18 Jesus says He raised Himself. Thus, all Members of the Trinity had a part in the resurrection of Jesus. Since becoming man, Jesus had not used His divinity for Himself. He laid aside (*kenosis*) the use of this divine power, while remaining divine. But now with the "It is finished," or completion of His mission, He could legitimately use His own divinity, together with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit, as He had done before becoming man.

Was the resurrection a spirit or bodily resurrection? John 20:17, 27-29.

Jesus said literally to Mary, "Do not keep holding Me; I need to go to My Father." He invited Thomas to put His hands upon the nail-prints and thrust a hand into His side. Both these events presuppose a bodily, and not a mere phantom spirit, resurrection.

"Christ ascended to heaven, bearing a sanctified, holy humanity. He took this humanity with Him into the heavenly courts, and through the eternal ages He will bear it, as the one who has redeemed every human being in the city of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1125.

Although the laying aside of Christ's divine powers ended at the cross, what power could He not take back and yet remain human? John 16:7.

Jesus, as a human being is in the presence of God in heaven appearing there for us. Because He is always to be human, He is limited to one location in space and time. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.) This is why the Holy Spirit's coming was expedient, bringing Christ everywhere instead of having Him confined to one locality as was true on earth.

THINK IT THROUGH: In what way does Christ as our Substitute and High Priest minister in heaven today?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 785-787.

Part 5—Old World's End

"Then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

Not only did the birth of Christ divide history into two, so that we speak in terms of B.C. and A.D., but His death brought the old world to a decisive end. Never again could the world be as it was. The "It is finished" of Calvary determines all succeeding history. This is not a neutral world, as if Christ had not come. This is no longer a world that is pledged to be saved—it has been saved.

What advantage, if any, have believers living after the cross over those who lived before it?

Those living before Calvary lived in history qualified by the finished work of the first Adam—under the results of his rebellion but with faith in the Redeemer to come. Those living after Calvary live in history qualified by the finished work of the second Adam, with faith in the Redeemer who *has come*, though the world continues in rebellion.

What did the cross do to Satan? Luke 10:18. (Compare Rev. 12:8, 12.)

Satan fell in the ultimate sense at Calvary. He was exposed for what He was—a creature out to take the life of His Creator. "Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 27, 1902. "By causing the death of the Sovereign of heaven, Satan defeated his own purpose. . . . By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he uprooted himself from the affections of the unfallen beings. He was seen by all to be a liar, a thief, and a murderer."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 7, 1897.

If the old world is finished, what does this mean to us? Col. 3:1-4.

The old world was one usurped by Satan, one he even offered to Jesus in the wilderness. Calvary gave that world back to Christ. In Christ we can live beyond the old world of failure.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does it mean to live in the new world since the resurrection?

FURTHER STUDY: Gal. 6:14-16; Eph. 2:4-6.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

"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; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15).

Sometimes the handing over of Jesus by Judas has been used to illustrate the supposed handing over of Jesus to the cross by the Father. One basic point of difference should be noted, showing that the parallel just does not fit. Christ *allowed Himself* to be taken by Judas. He *chose* to die at the cross. No shred of defeat entered the picture. He died a victor.

Jesus moved in the same freedom at the Jordan when he said to John, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Both baptisms—by water and by crucifixion (see Matt. 20:22, 23)—were willingly entered into by the man Jesus, not for His own necessity but for ours. As water baptism marked the beginning of His public ministry, so the baptism of crucifixion marked its close.

But crucifixion also marked the end of several realities. (1) Besides culminating Jesus' life on earth, (2) the completion of His sacrifice for man, and (3) the finishing of the perfect wedding garment, or human character for man, the cross resulted in (4) the end of Satan's effectiveness with the universe in the great controversy, (5) the taking up again by Christ of divine powers (save for His eternal human embodiment), and (6) the final curtain coming down on this old world as it is. No more can this world continue as if the cross has not taken place. It is as if Jesus, in the incarnation, had come to lift humanity up out of the pit into which the race fell in Eden. At Calvary humankind finally crossed the line back into Eden; with Jesus' cry "It is finished," the world of the Fall came to an end—those who would accept Christ are home in Eden once more. (See Col. 3:1-4.)

The theologian Gregory of Nyssa, in commenting on the "It is finished" of the cross, said that at Calvary the serpent received a mortal defeat. Even after the death of a serpent, when the head is beaten lifeless, the tail can still remain pulsating with a twitch now and again prior to final stillness and quiet. Satan, in a sense, perished at the cross, experienced ultimate defeat. However, he still twitches dangerously now. He knows that it is all over. He cannot undo Calvary. The weakest Christian, reaching out with a trembling hand, can know the grasp of the Man who has guaranteed his eternal future by the "It is finished" of Golgotha.

APPLICATION: What can I do that will allow God to "finish" His work in and through me?



New Age Begun

MEMORY TEXT: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

God left His throne to become man—thus greatly elevating humanity. "Man, a creature of the earth; dust, elevated to the throne of the King of the universe! Marvelous love! inexpressible, incomprehensible love!"—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895. That is what the resurrection and ascension did for the race. At Heaven's throne today is a Man, the God-man, who began a new ministry there for us. That new ministry issues out of His victory at Calvary. The human Victor of Calvary is enthroned at the control center of the universe.

As Victor, He intercedes for us and judges the world. As Victor, He is our Forerunner. As Victor He is our Model—but only because, as Victor, He is forever our Substitute. As Victor, He floods this new age with His victory, His eternal life, His finished work. If Calvary was the end of the old world, resurrection and Pentecost launched the new one.

This world can never be the same since Calvary. "Christ came to this earth to make an atonement for transgression. His atonement was complete in every part. As He hung on the cross, He could say, 'It is finished.' The demands of justice were satisfied. The way to the throne of grace was opened for every sinner."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901. That way begins at Calvary, moving out through the open tomb in the resurrection and from the open heavens at Pentecost. A new world has begun!

Now is the time when the finished work of Christ for us is applied in us. It is the time when the victory of Calvary reaches out to take up within it every willing human.

Calvary wrested the world from the grasp of the usurper. At the cross this world returned to Christ—its rightful Owner. The Creator-Redeemer gained control. Resurrection and Pentecost proclaim that new fact for all to know.

But some people still live as though citizens of that old world. They do not live in the freedom and victory of the new world in Christ. Christ's all-atoning sacrifice has no meaning to their lives. But it can and will if they let Him take over and take them away from the usurper, self, for they are His and He is their Creator-Redeemer.

Part 1—Our Forerunner

“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 6:20).

Christ ascended to heaven to stand before God—not just as the returned Son of God but as the returned Son of man. In Jesus Christ humanity not only can return to the relationship with God lost through the Fall but now can stand at the throne of God, a position humans never occupied before.

Jesus’ presence at the throne guarantees that the redeemed will one day join Him. (See Rev. 20:4.) He has merely gone ahead. The new age has begun in heaven. In Him we already are home.

What is our Forerunner doing in heaven? Heb. 2:17.

What effect should the intercession of Jesus have on us? Heb. 4:14-16.

Our Forerunner is One who has known the sufferings and struggles of humanity. We can, therefore, come with confidence to Him as One who is both sympathetic and able to deliver, for we come to the Victor of Calvary. Hence, our boldness takes on the confidence of those who, though battered, can share in that victory.

Why does our Forerunner need to intercede for us? Zech. 3:1-4.

He does not need to intercede to change the Father’s attitude toward us. The Father loves us already, being the One who gave us Jesus (John 3:16). Jesus categorically said, “I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you” (John 16:26, 27). Rather, He intercedes in our behalf against the adversary who accuses us. He stands up for us in the great controversy judgment.

Why should we not be afraid of the investigative judgment that now is in progress? John 12:31-33; 5:24.

If we cling to His substitution judgment on Calvary, we will have the Advocate who can take us through.

THINK IT THROUGH: If we do not understand what Calvary did for us, can we be confident in the pre-advent judgment?

Part 2—Our Model

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).

What did Jesus do with His cross? John 19:17.

Jesus staggered, carrying His cross, till He crumbled beneath its load. How do we compare our cross bearing with His? Do we really model Him? We model Him, or are like Him, only in willingly following Him as He willingly followed His Father. But there the similarity ends. What we do cannot be compared to what He did. His “cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God.”—*Education*, p. 263. And from eternity Christ knew of that pain. His cross bearing has, in a sense, been eternal. Furthermore, His cross bearing has been for every human. Both in time and quantity, it is radically different from ours. Our cross bearing is only temporal, but He suffered the anguish of an eternal separation from the Father—the second, or final, death. There is a great qualitative distinction between His cross and ours—even if we do meet death.

His cross bearing reached backward into the eternal past and plunged forward into the eternal separation of the future and therefore is an eternal cross bearing. Ours, by comparison, is but one drop of water beside His boundless ocean of sacrifice. Yet, unless we are willing to bear our cross all that He went through was in vain as far as we are concerned personally.

What is the influence of His cross? John 12:32.

Unlike any other event in history, it draws men. Two facts should be considered: (1) The cross does not make people morally better and thereby save them. The cross is not a mere model or moral influence. (2) The cross is a substitution for people who are hopelessly lost, accomplishing for them that which they could never do.

What occupied the central place in the apostolic preaching? 1 Cor. 2:1, 2.

THINK IT THROUGH: When was the cross of Christ truly understood so that Christ’s call to take up the cross was comprehended?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 328-332.

Part 3—Age of the Spirit

What new beginning took place in the kingdom of God the third day after the cross?

“He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him” (Mark 16:6).

“He is risen” launched the new age, unfolding unto humankind all that Christ’s life and death had accomplished for them.

How did the resurrection, under Pentecost, affect the disciples? Acts 4:9-12, 30-36; 5:16; 6:8; 8:5-8; 9:32-35; 14:8-10; 19:11; 28:8.

If Calvary announced to the world of sin and death, “It is finished,” then resurrection and Pentecost shouted out, “It is begun.” The new age brought new life.

Why did the Holy Spirit not come in His fullness until Pentecost? John 7:39.

The Holy Spirit had never been poured out in His fullness until Pentecost. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 37-39.) John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. (See Matt. 3:11.) But even in the last hours before Calvary Jesus still promised the Comforter as yet to come. (See John 14:16-20.) After the cross, on resurrection morning, Jesus appeared to His disciples and “breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). The new age of the Spirit was already breaking forth. But the Spirit could not come in His fullness until Jesus was glorified—enthroned.

Pentecost marks the acceptance of Christ on Heaven’s throne and the Holy Spirit on human-heart thrones. Both enthronements resulted from His finished sacrifice. The Holy Spirit’s greater *fullness* issued from the *fulfilled* work of Jesus Christ. For the first time the Holy Spirit brought the God-man, the completed atonement, the perfect human Christ—His character and righteousness—into man. The new age is qualified by this finished work of the cross.

THINK IT THROUGH: What long-awaited climax began in the resurrection?

FURTHER STUDY: Heb. 10:14-24.

part 4—Eternal Life

“Not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23).

Because of the finished work at Calvary, the firstfruits of Christ’s sacrifice can be experienced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit even now. The life and death of Jesus are brought within us through the Holy Spirit, for He brings the risen Christ, representatively, into our hearts. In a sense, the Holy Spirit brings the future already into the present. It comes as the first installment—the firstfruits, or a foretaste. It comes as such because it brings the victorious Jesus to us, and fellowship with the Victor will be our eternal future.

How does Paul further explain this present life in the Holy Spirit? 2 Cor. 1:22.

We are given the “earnest” (Greek *arrabōn*) of the Holy Spirit. *Arrabōn* is a downpayment, or pledge, used in business to guarantee the rest of the payment for a purchase. We have been purchased at Calvary. Our reception of the Holy Spirit in the present is guarantee that the fullness of the reward of the cross purchase is on its way. In the meantime, the *arrabōn* is not part of the sacrifice, but the full sacrifice—the total Jesus—coming to us. His future coming will be in greater fullness because we shall see Him.

The new age that began in the resurrection and this new experience of eternal life that began at Pentecost are both a result of the end of the old age at the cross and a result of the breaking into history of the merits of Christ’s all-atoning sacrifice for us. All experience of eternal life in the present is partial, but actual. We do not exist in a vacuum between the cross and second advent.

What do we have if we have Jesus? 1 John 5:11-13.

He who has the Son has life. And what kind of life does the Son have? Eternal life. When Christ indwells us through the Holy Spirit, we already have eternal life—in its firstfruits. The future, in part, is already broken into the present. The new world has dawned in the midst of the old.

THINK IT THROUGH: Will Christ be our eternal life forever?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 331, 388-392.

Part 5—Crucified Afresh?

"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

A re-crucifixion of Christ could only begin *after* the cross. Some of those who entered the new age enjoyed the foretaste of the future and received Christ as their enthroned Lord. But then they turned from Him—depending on themselves, not wanting to come back to Him—and thus put Him through the torture of crucifixion once more. Rejection by His own people is part of the tragic story of Calvary.

In what ways can we crucify Christ afresh? Gal. 6:14.

Self-glory of any kind is rank rejection of the cross. Paul cried out, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross" (Gal. 6:14). To the Greeks the cross was an insult. Does the way we live say the same? Do we cling to the old rugged cross and nothing else? Can we say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling"?—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 474.

Some cling to *their* works, *their* "victory" over sin, *their* position, *their* copying of Christ as sufficient to commend them to God. All such crucify Christ afresh, making the cross of no avail for them. Only His victory for us can save us.

How does our inhumanity to one another crucify Christ afresh? Matt. 25:42-45.

All rejection of humans is a rejection of Him—a re-crucifying. "I pray that the vision of the soul may be sanctified, that the sin of accusing and criticizing may be put away, as a sin that crucifies afresh the Son of God, and puts him to an open shame."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1899. At the cross, as we gaze into the anguished face of man's only Substitute, all pride is ugly. My sin put Him there. There is no room for glorying about that. If He can die for me, why not for others too? He did; so why criticize them? There is level ground at the cross. Only by abiding at the cross and being caught up in the utter wonder of it—God's going through that for us—can we be kept from crucifying Him afresh.

THINK IT THROUGH: In what ways might my life crucify Christ afresh?

Part 6—Focus of the Week

The cross and resurrection must be considered together as two sides of the one redemptive act of God for man. If the cross cries out "It is finished" over this old world as it is, then the resurrection shouts out "It is begun" in reference to the coming new world.

In the Old Testament, Israel understood God through the mighty saving act in the Exodus. Exodus stood out stark and large behind all the events of that nation as encouragement to the faithful in times of hardship. Likewise, for modern Israel, the resurrection—like a mighty exodus—looms large behind all Christian history. In the resurrection God's Son led His people out of bondage. Just as it took some 50 days to travel from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai to meet Christ and receive His law; so there were 50 days between resurrection and Pentecost when modern Israel met Christ through the Spirit, who came to write the law on their hearts.

If ancient Israel had a physical Exodus, then modern Israel experienced a spiritual exodus. Freedom from bondage, filled with the Spirit, the law written within—all because the new age, the new world, had begun.

Resurrection is first a revelation of who Jesus is. Prior to His resurrection He was not fully understood. Discouraged disciples, as the Emmaus walk disclosed, thought the end of their world had come. And it had—but not in the way they imagined. The risen Christ brought electrifying new life and hope within their hearts. Think of it—He lives, and because He lives, they too shall live. And live they did—to the full! The overflowing of the life of Jesus flooded these men in the upper room, empowering them to turn the world upside down in short order. Scared crowds were compelled to move a world—some exodus that! All events in heaven and on earth—through Christ, the Holy Spirit, or Christians—have the quality of this new beginning. The check for salvation was endorsed on Calvary. Now it is being cashed in as a great movement that flows from resurrection through Pentecost to the second advent.

Christians do not live in a vacuum, as if the cross and resurrection had never taken place. They do not move toward the second advent as only a future possibility. No! They live in a time in which the return of Christ is already underway. He began His return in the resurrection and continued it through Pentecost and its extension. No one can stop His coming now. That day is on its way. This dawn began in the resurrection, like the sunrise confined to one small corner, and then broke out further at Pentecost, and is now spreading across the sky soon to burst into the full glory of His appearing. And we move toward that finale with the kingdom already within, through the Holy Spirit. Because of this *abiding* Christ we can confidently stride forth to meet the returning Christ.

APPLICATION: What examples are there in this lesson for me to follow? What should I pray for?

Christ as All in All

MEMORY TEXT: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

Christ's all-atoning sacrifice for man has bridged the terrible gulf gouged by sin. God's Son has bridged the chasm between God and man and has crossed the divisions between man and man. In the humanity of Jesus all humanity is present. In Jesus, as the second Adam, the sacrifice for the entire world, all of us find our true humanity. Because all of us, to some degree, still participate in the broken relationship between us and God, there is no fully genuine humanity outside of the humanity of Jesus. Christ is all that we will ever need. He is all the salvation that is possible. He is all for our present needs and future eternal fulfillment. Apart from Him there is no worthwhile future for humanity.

"When God gave Jesus to the world, he gave all heaven in one rich gift."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 23, 1894. "The gifts of God are on every hand, and all his gifts come to us through the merit of Jesus, whom he gave to the world."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 19, 1893. God's greatest gift is Christ. "Christ is all." But to be a gift to us, we must receive Him. He already "is all," but He needs to become "in all." Our receiving Him does not make Him "all." He is that whether we receive Him or not. But His being "all" is of no practical consequence unless we receive Him into our lives. He waits to be "all . . . in all."

In this context, we need to be aware of our utter need of His sacrifice. We can bring nothing but our need. We come with empty hands to be filled. Salvation is from beyond the human race, wrought out by One who entered it to bring that which could never have developed from within it.

The content and center of Christian experience is Christ. There is an utter distinction between Christ and the Christian—forever.

All other distinctions between humans such as race, creed, religion, and status are meaningless in light of that future—Christ *in all*.

In eternity it will be known that "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11), even when God is "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

Part 1—His Enthronement

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Christ is seated at the right hand of God in heaven (see Heb. 1:3); but He also dwells, through the Holy Spirit, on human thrones in the heart of every genuine Christian. He does not merely dwell within, as if reduced to a mere subjectivity; rather, He dwells within as the One who also dwells without—One enthroned in heaven.

What does Paul mean, and not mean, by the phrase "Christ in you, the hope of glory"? Col. 1:27.

Just as resurrection, ascension, intercession, and Pentecost are the fruits of Christ's finished work at Calvary, so is enthronement. It works out within what has been wrought without. Our hope of glory is not based upon the work of Christ "in us" but upon the work of Christ "for us." But our hope of glory is in vain if that which He wrought out "for us" does not become a reality "in us."

As Calvin put it: "And first it must be remarked, that as long as there is a separation between Christ and us, all that he suffered and performed for the salvation of mankind is useless and unavailing to us."—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), vol. 1, p. 589. (Compare *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.)

What promise did Jesus make that contemporary theology does not take seriously? John 14:23.

Christ promised that He and the Father would take up Their abode with us. Much of contemporary theology has no place for this fact today. Because nineteenth-century theology almost confined God within man, much of twentieth-century theology has gone to the opposite extreme by removing God too far from humankind. For much of contemporary theology, Christ's incarnation remains *outside* the realm of humanity, revelation *outside* of the Bible (as a mere encounter), and the Holy Spirit remains *outside*, merely revealing Christ but never restoring Him within.

FURTHER STUDY: Rom. 8:1-39.

Part 2—Branches of the Vine

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

A branch depends on a vine, and the life of the vine abides in the branch. The double indwelling mentioned in John 15:5 represents the intimate relationship between Christ and the Christian. We are surrounded by Christ as well as having Him dwell in us.

In this context it should be understood that (1) Christ is always greater than His indwelling; but (2) it is the total Christ, with all that His sacrifice has accomplished, that indwells each Christian. Christ is far greater than the sum total of His indwellings in every human. But in each human it is not a mere piece of Christ that dwells in us, but the fullness of Christ and His completed sacrifice. “He died on Calvary’s cross, that he might abide in you, and you in him.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 16, 1893.

How does Christ come within and remain? John 15:7.

“As the blood is formed in the body by the food eaten, so Christ is formed within by the eating of the Word of God, which is his flesh and blood. He who feeds upon that Word has Christ formed within, the hope of glory. The written Word introduces to the searcher the flesh and blood of the Son of God; and through obedience to that Word, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 23, 1897.

What must the focus of Bible study be in order to receive Christ through the Scriptures? John 16:13.

The Holy Spirit points to Jesus as the completed sacrifice for man. Beholding Christ’s sacrifice will give purpose to Bible Study. The cross is the center of truth (*Gospel Workers*, p. 315), and making it central brings creative change within (2 Cor. 3:18).

How does Peter describe this process? 2 Peter 1:4.

“To be sanctified is to become a partaker of the divine nature, catching the spirit and mind of Jesus, ever learning in the school of Christ.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 5, 1912.

Part 3—Three Angels’ Messages

“I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6).

The first angel carries the good news of the everlasting gospel, emphasizing the finished work accomplished through the life and death of Jesus Christ.

What are the specifics of the first angel’s message? Rev. 14:7.

Fear (or reverence), give glory and worship to God—particularly in this judgment hour that began in 1844. This is the day of judgment (atonement), and many fear the moment that their name will come up, wondering if they will make it. Such focus is not good news—is not the gospel. Particularly in this judgment hour we must look away from self to our Substitute and Intercessor, Jesus Christ. Then we cannot help but give Him reverence, worship, and glory for all He has accomplished for us. Our salvation resides in Jesus alone and not in ourselves.

What experience does the second angel’s message describe? Rev. 14:8.

Babylon represents self-dependence—salvation through human works. The second angel’s message speaks of Babylon’s fall—the cessation of self-dependence. How does it come? As we look away from self to the finished work of Christ, by beholding Him, change takes place—including full dependence on Him.

What experience is described in the third angel’s message? Rev. 14:9-11.

The image to the beast is the joining of church and state to use secular power to accomplish religious goals. (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 449.) If a Christian tries to be religious—using his own human power—he forms an image to the beast within himself.

What does the summary of the three angels indicate about our experience today? Rev. 14:12.

Instead of self-dependence God’s people will be characterized by commandment keeping that results from full dependence on Christ.

FURTHER STUDY: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 453-455.

Part 4—Christ in the Crisis

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).

“Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 425. Although Christ will have completed His mediation in heaven, He will continue to send His angels to minister to His people on earth. At the close of probation the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the wicked but *not* from the righteous.

What event will have taken place on earth affirming the effective mediation of Christ for us in heaven? Joel 2:23; James. 5:7, 8.

The latter rain, or coming Pentecost, will be a greater fullness of the Holy Spirit. Just as Christ began and closed His earthly ministry with the cleansing of the earthly temple (showing what should not be in us), so He will close His heavenly ministry as He began it with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power (showing what should be in us). Christ will flood human temples with His Spirit during the final crisis.

Does Daniel 3:25 give insight into Christ’s continuing mediation with and for us in the final crisis?

Although refusal to bow to the image on Dura resulted in the fiery-furnace experience, Jesus stood in the flames with His people. In the same way he will remain with us during the time of trouble—our fiery furnace.

How does John’s experience illustrate the fact that God is with His people in their trouble? Rev. 1:9-18.

During John’s lonely days of exile as a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos Christ came to be with him; and from this visit we obtained the book of Revelation. (See Rev. 1:13, 20—Christ in the midst of the seven churches.)

What promise of His presence has Jesus made to His people? Heb. 13:5.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why should we focus on Christ rather than on the crisis?

Part 5—Heaven is Christ

“I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. 21:22).

The temple was God’s dwelling place on earth. So heaven is His dwelling place—heaven is where He dwells. To be with Christ is heaven, for “the definition of heaven is the presence of Christ.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989.

How is the sacrifice of Jesus emphasized in the book of Revelation? Rev. 5:6; 22:3.

Twenty-seven references to Christ as Lamb are found in the Revelation. The Lamb represents the finished sacrifice of Christ as the crucified One. It is as Lamb that 24 elders and the redeemed worship Him. (See Revelation 5 and 7.) The Lamb is in control of final events (opens the seals in Revelation 5 and 6). The saints are called to the marriage of the Lamb. (See Revelation 19.) At the second advent the wicked ask to be hidden from the Lamb. (See Rev. 6:16.) The 144,000 follow the Lamb. (See Revelation 14.) The New Jerusalem’s foundation contains the names of the apostles of the Lamb. (See Rev. 21:14.) The redeemed have their names in the Lamb’s book of life. (See Rev. 21:27.) The Lamb lightens the city (see Rev. 21:23) and has a throne (see Rev. 22:1, 3). This Lamb, slain from the world’s foundation (Rev. 13:8), will forever be the focus of love, life, and study.

If heaven is Jesus, when can heaven begin, and how can it be described? 1 John 5:12.

“As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. As we walk with Jesus in this life, we may be filled with His love, satisfied with His presence. All that human nature can bear, we may receive here.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 331, 332.

THINK IT THROUGH: What will be the chief study of the redeemed and how long will that study last?

FURTHER STUDY: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 675-678.

Part 6—Focus of the Week

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; . . . that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19).

A real Christian is one in whom the cross and the resurrection have become a determining power. For the cross does not only determine history decisively. The cross also decisively determines human destiny. The cross within us means death to self, but the resurrection within us means the presence of the risen Christ who brings us new life.

Genuine Christian experience can cry out "It is finished" as far as ultimate love for this old world of sin is concerned. It can also thrill to the undeserved fact that "It is begun." The love of an abiding Christ already fills our beings with the victory of the cross which is eternal life.

In other words, the Christian is one who has been crucified with Christ. But now he lives. Yet he does not really live—Christ lives in him. (See Gal. 2:20.)

For Christ to be "all in all" throughout eternity, He must first be "all in all" in time. The Christian's delight then is not with how to *live* for God, nor with the *feeling* of God; rather, it is a passionate adoration of and dependence upon Jesus Christ. He will hold that Christianity is Christ and not the Christian. He will be drawn to ever greater study of his Substitute at the same time that he strives to imitate Him. Christ is "all in all" to him. He is absorbed in one thing only—this one thing I do—reaching toward Christ, ever hungering and thirsting for more of Him—more understanding of His life and works, more prayer to Him, more communion with Him, becoming more and more like Him. This is how the branch abides in the vine.

Do not worry about the fruit. Focus on Christ and the fruits will result inevitably from a vibrant relationship with Him. People still can take knowledge that humans have been with Jesus, for it is by beholding that we become changed (2 Cor. 3:18). Ours is the privilege to take time to do the beholding through soul-feeding study about Him. When we yield fully to Him, God will bring about the changing.

Often we get the cart before the horse. We work at the changing. We put up the standard on the wall to copy. We work at trying to be better. But what we need to do is to give the Creator—the only One who can bring change—a chance. Then Christ will truly become "all in all" for us. We will enter that eternal path along which, in an ever deepening and meaningful way, the man Jesus, our only Substitute and Saviour, will be worshiped by us as "all in all" to us.

APPLICATION: As I think back over this quarter's lessons, what can I do to make Christ my all in all?

Lesson for 2nd quarter, 1983

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1983 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is "These Were Victors."

First Lesson

STEPHEN—FAITHFUL MARTYR
Memory Text, Prov. 18:16

1. *Tragedy or Triumph?* (Rev. 14:13)
2. *The Stuff of Martyrs* (Acts 6:5)
3. *To Be a Deacon* (1 Tim. 3:13)
4. *His Last Sermon* (Prov. 6:13)
5. *The Martyrdom* (Acts 7:51)
6. *The Harvest* (Rev. 2:10)

Second Lesson

LYDIA—BUSINESSWOMAN
Memory Text, 2 Chron. 16:9

1. *An Asian in Europe* (Acts 16:9)
2. *A Vision and a Voyage* (Acts 16:10)
3. *Prayerful Worshipers of God* (Acts 16:14)
4. *Consistent Christianity* (Mark 16:16)
5. *Loyalty and Hospitality* (Acts 16:40)
6. *Church of the Joyful Heart* (Phil. 4:3, 4)

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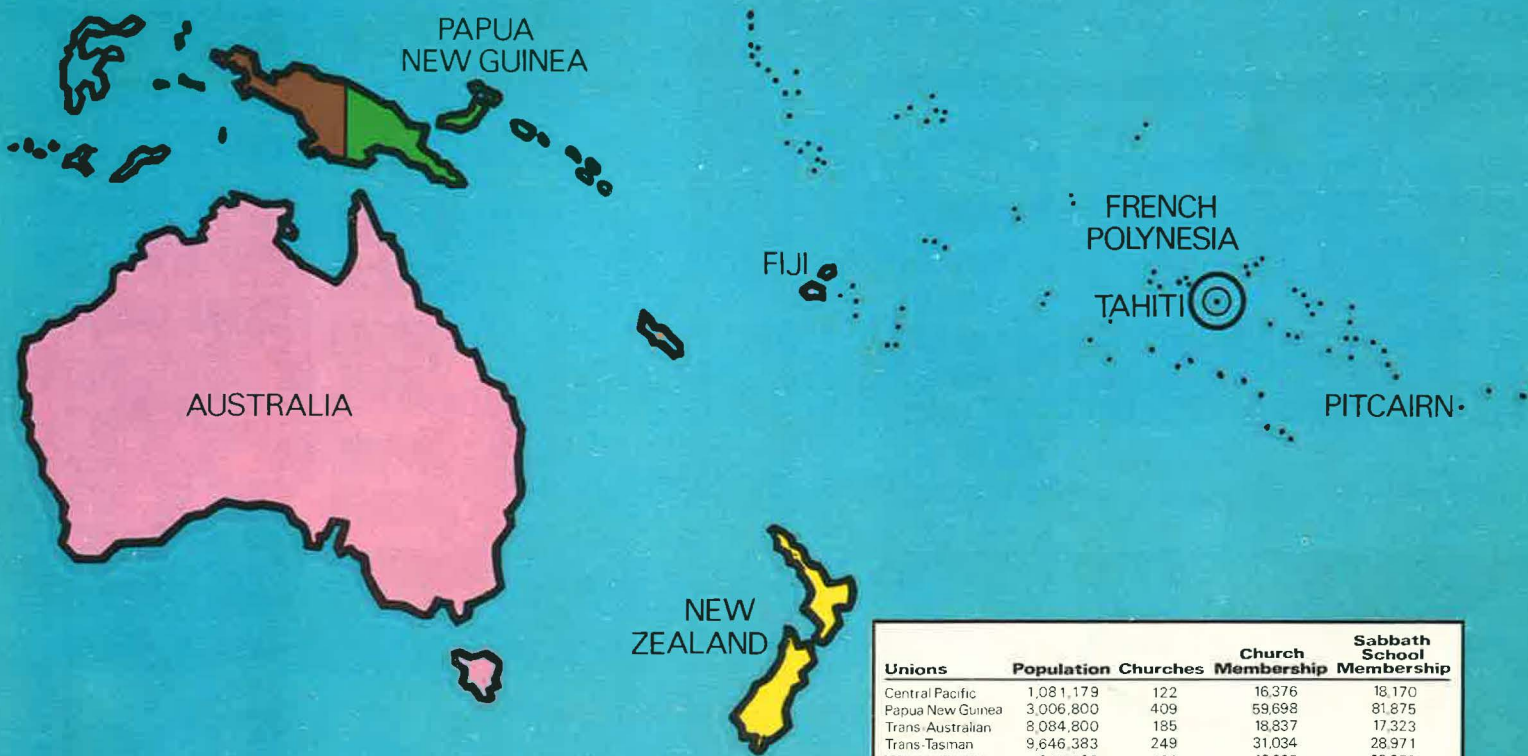


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