

‘Behold, I come quickly’
Lessons for 1st Quarter, 2019
General Introduction

‘Would you be what you are now if you had never heard the doctrine of Christ’s soon coming? What hope has it inspired in your heart; what peace, joy, and love has it given you?’ *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 37.

‘The coming of Christ is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. The judgements of God are in the land. They speak in solemn warning, saying: “Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:44. But there are many many in our churches who know little of the real meaning of the truth for this time. I appeal to them not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which says so plainly that the end is near. Oh, how many who have not sought their souls’ salvation will soon make the bitter lamentation: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved”! We are living in the closing scenes of this earth’s history. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time, not a moment, to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works: “My Lord delayeth His coming.”’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 356.

‘Looking down through the ages to the close of time, Peter was inspired to outline conditions that would exist in the world just prior to the second coming of Christ. “There shall come in the last days scoffers,” he wrote, “walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” But “when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 535.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’ Titus 2:13.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.’ Hebrews 10:36-37.

Compiler’s Note: The second coming of Jesus encompasses all the major Gospel teachings of the Scriptures. It provides a spiritual focus in life; reveals the final redemption of His purchased possession; admonishes us to be ready, by perfection of character and purification of life; confirms the certainty of prophecy; offers hope and light in a dark world; gives a purpose in life to work to save others, to finish the gospel work and to hasten His coming; provides an understanding of world events and human tragedy and sadness; points to the judgement of all and the close of human probation; enlightens our understanding of death; points to the end of all evil; shows us the faithfulness of His promises; reveals the Christian’s coronation day; Opens to view full church unity of heaven and earth; enriches our experience of the Lord’s Supper—Till He come! To remove or corrupt the teaching of the Second Advent is to cut the nerves of life from the Gospel. The whole Bible would collapse.

Lesson 1: December 30-January 5
‘Stablish your hearts’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ James 5:7-8.

LESSON AIM: To show how we should live while waiting for Lord’s long awaited return.

Introduction

‘Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning, and refuse or neglect to know when His advent is near, will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming. And the parable in the same chapter, contrasting the faithful and the unfaithful servant, and giving the doom of him who said in his heart, “My Lord delayeth His coming,” shows in what light Christ will regard and reward those whom He finds watching, and teaching His coming, and those denying it. “Watch therefore,” He says. “Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.” “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Revelation 3:3’ *Great Controversy*, page 370.

‘All things continue as they were’

1. What did Peter warn that scoffers in the last days would be saying about Christ’s promise to return? 2 Peter 3:3-4.

NOTE: ‘Scoffers pointed to the things of nature, to the unvarying succession of the seasons, to the blue skies that had never poured out rain, to the green fields refreshed by the soft dews of night, and they cried out: “Doth he not speak parables?” In contempt they declared the preacher of righteousness to be a wild enthusiast; and they went on, more eager in their pursuit of pleasure, more intent upon their evil ways, than before. But their unbelief did not hinder the predicted event.’ *Great Controversy*, page 338.

2. When the world derides the apparent delay in the promise that Jesus will return, what can we learn from the Flood?

Genesis 7:7-10, 22; 2 Peter 3:5-6.

NOTE: ‘Notwithstanding the solemn scenes which they had witnessed, the beasts and birds entering the ark, and the angel of God closing the door, they still continued their sport and revelry, even making a jest of these signal manifestations of God’s power. They gathered in crowds about the ark, deriding its inmates with a daring violence which they had never ventured upon before. But upon the eighth day dark clouds overspread the heavens. There followed the muttering of thunder and the flash of lightning. Soon large drops of rain began to fall.’ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 98.

‘Thou hast done foolishly’

3. How was the character of King Saul tested by delay? 1 Samuel 13:8-10. Compare 1 Samuel 10:8.

NOTE: ‘When Saul was first anointed king of Israel, he had received from Samuel explicit directions concerning the course to be pursued at this time. “Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal,” said the prophet; “and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.” 1 Samuel 10:8. Day after day Saul tarried, but without making decided efforts toward encouraging the people and inspiring confidence in God. Before the time appointed by the prophet had fully expired, he became impatient at the delay and allowed himself to be discouraged by the trying circumstances that surrounded him. Instead of faithfully seeking to prepare the people for the service that Samuel was coming to perform, he indulged in unbelief and foreboding.’ *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 617.

4. What excuses did Saul make to Samuel for presumptuously going ahead and offering the burnt offering himself? 1

Samuel 13:6-8; 1 Samuel 13:11-13.

NOTE: ‘We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfilment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgement of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honour His name, and bless His people.’ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 621.

‘Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied’

5. For how long have we had opportunity to know that Jesus is to come to earth in power and great glory? Jude 1:14.

NOTE ‘More than eighteen hundred years have passed since John heard this great truth, and the Lord has not yet come to reign. But shall we give up looking for His appearance? Shall we say, “My Lord delayeth His coming”? “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints”. The doctrine of Christ’s coming was made known at this early date to the man who walked with God in continual communion.’ *Confrontation*, page 72.

6. How did Jesus describe the servant who said, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming’? Luke 12:45-46.

NOTE: ‘Faith and love are golden treasures, elements that are greatly wanting among God’s people. I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God’s people. Unbelief is closing their eyes so that they are ignorant of their true condition. The True Witness thus describes their blindness: “And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning. “My Lord delayeth His coming” is not only said in the heart, but expressed in words and most decidedly in works.’ *Testimonies*, volume 3, page 255.

7. Which warning parable did Jesus teach to show the dangers faced during a time of waiting? Matthew 25:1-13.

NOTE: 'Lingering near the bride's house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The ten maidens seize their lamps and begin to trim them, in haste to go forth. But five have neglected to fill their flasks with oil. They did not anticipate so long a delay, and they have not prepared for the emergency.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 405.

'Let us hold fast our profession'

8. Considering the faithfulness of Him that made the promises to come again, how does Paul exhort us to live? Hebrews 10:23-25.

NOTE: 'Glorious is the triumph awaiting the faithful. The apostle, realising the possibilities before the Corinthian believers, sought to set before them that which uplifts from the selfish and the sensual, and glorifies life with the hope of immortality. Earnestly he exhorted them to be true to their high calling in Christ. "My beloved brethren," he pleaded, "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." *Acts of the Apostles*, page 321.

9. In what ways should we be concerned for one another in these times of seeming delay? Hebrews 10:24-25.

NOTE: 'He who walks in the light heeds the apostle's admonition to provoke his fellow pilgrims to love and good works. Those who have a careful regard for one another's needs, those who speak words of kindly sympathy, those who give thoughtful assistance to others, to help them in their work, encourage not only their fellow men, but themselves as well, because they thus become labourers together with God.' *Reflecting Christ*, page 235.

'Till my change come'

10. How does the Old Testament show that Job, as well as Enoch, understood the events of the second coming of Jesus? Job 14:14.

NOTE: 'Christ is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to raise the dead, and to change the living saints from glory to glory. He will come to honour those who have loved Him, and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them nor His promise. *Desire of Ages*, page 632.

11. In the New Testament how does Paul speak of the fulfilment of Job's great hope? 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

NOTE: 'All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for Him and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us." And they will be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality, and shouting, "Victory! Victory over death and the grave!" The changed saints are then caught up together with the angels to meet the Lord in the air, never more to be separated from the object of their love.' *Early Writings*, page 110.

'There will be a relinking of the family chain. When we look upon our dead, we may think of the morning when the trump of God shall sound, when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:52.' *Desire of Ages*, page 632.

'What manner of persons ought ye to be?'

12. Why can we have complete confidence in Jesus' promise that He will return? 2 Peter 3:9.

NOTE: 'As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end. Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ's return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:3. To the tried and faithful ones the coming might seem long delayed, but the apostle assured them: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." *Acts of the Apostles*, page 535

13. How does Peter admonish those awaiting Christ's return? 2 Peter 3:11, 14;

NOTE: 'The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days. There is Moses still speaking, teaching self-renunciation by wishing himself blotted from the Book of Life for his fellow men, that they might be saved. David is leading the intercession of the church for the salvation of souls to the ends of the earth. The prophets are still testifying of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. There the whole accumulated truths are presented in force to us that we may profit by their teachings. We are under the influence of the whole. What manner of persons ought we to be to whom all this rich light of inheritance has been given.' *Selected Messages, volume 3*, page 339.

LESSON INSIGHT: The knowledge of the glorious coming of our Lord has been known since the times of Enoch the seventh from Adam. The good words of God have never failed therefore we must look to the Lord and His Word for courage in these times, by faith keeping the Blessed Hope of His return alive in heart and work.

Lesson 2: January 6-12

'What shall be the sign ... of the end of the world?'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?' Matthew 24:3.

LESSON AIM: To show that in teaching Jesus was defining more clearly the latter-day concepts already held by His hearers.

Introduction

'What manner of persons ought we to be to whom all this rich light of inheritance has been given? Concentrating all the influence of the past with new and increased light of the present, accrued power is given to all who will follow the light. Their faith will increase, and be brought into exercise at the present time, awakening an energy and an intensely increased earnestness, and through dependence upon God for His power to replenish the world and send the light of the Sun of Righteousness to the ends of the earth.' *Selected Messages, volume 3*, page 339.

'I know that he shall rise again ... at the last day'

1. How did Jesus build on the knowledge of the resurrection that Martha already had? John 11:24-27.

NOTE: 'With human and divine pity Jesus looked into her sorrowful, careworn face. Martha had no inclination to recount the past; all was expressed by the pathetic words, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But looking into that face of love, she added, "I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Jesus encouraged her faith, saying, "Thy brother shall rise again." His answer was not intended to inspire hope of an immediate change. He carried Martha's thoughts beyond the present restoration of her brother, and fixed them upon the resurrection of the just. This He did that she might see in the resurrection of Lazarus a pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead, and an assurance that it would be accomplished by the Saviour's power. Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." *Desire of Ages*, page 529.

2. What question did the disciples ask Jesus, revealing that they knew that the world would come to an end? Matthew 24:3.

NOTE: 'When He was alone, Peter, John, James, and Andrew came to Him as He sat upon the Mount of Olives. "Tell us," they said, "when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events. Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them He blended the description of the two great crises, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves.' *Desire of Ages*, page 628.

'Sorrow hath filled your heart'

3. Building on their understanding of Old Testament verses concerning the kingdom of God, what further information did Jesus give to the disciples about the future? John 14:3.

NOTE: 'And after He had been with them full forty days, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom, they did not yet understand "the times and the seasons," and therefore asked Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to

Israel?" Would it not then, have been surprising if they had been mistaken in the order of the events of which the Saviour spoke, at the time of His speaking, as recorded in Matthew 24? It would be quite natural for them to suppose that the holy city and the temple of the Most High would stand until the judgement and the final consummation. As we now see, had such been their opinion, it would not be proof that such was the chronological relation of these events. But, we repeat, that cannot be proved; it is only conjecture. It is necessary to notice that prophecy is not always fulfilled in the order in which it is given.' A.T. Jones, *Exposition of Matthew 24*, page 14.

4. Why did Jesus need to give these encouraging words to the disciples? John 14:1-5.

NOTE: 'The truths uttered by the Redeemer in that upper chamber have spread from the testimony of the disciples over all lands, and will live through all ages to comfort the hearts of the desponding, and give peace and hope to thousands who believe.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, page 88.

'After a long time the lord of those servants cometh'

5. What teaching method did Jesus use to convey the spiritual lessons He wished to share? Mark 4:2; Mark 4:10-12.

NOTE: 'Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness. And He had another reason for teaching in parables. Among the multitudes that gathered about Him, there were priests and rabbis, scribes and elders, Herodians and rulers, world-loving, bigoted, ambitious men, who desired above all things to find some accusation against Him. Their spies followed His steps day after day, to catch from His lips something that would cause His condemnation, and forever silence the One who seemed to draw the world after Him. The Saviour understood the character of these men, and He presented truth in such a way that they could find nothing by which to bring His case before the Sanhedrin.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 21.

6. In the parable of the talents what delay was Jesus preparing the disciples for, while teaching them, and us, our responsibility? Matthew 25:14-19.

NOTE: 'The talents, however few, are to be put to use. The question that most concerns us is not, How much have I received? but, What am I doing with that which I have? The development of all our powers is the first duty we owe to God and to our fellow men. No one who is not growing daily in capability and usefulness is fulfilling the purpose of life. In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 329.

'Inherit the kingdom prepared for you'

7. What lesson did Jesus use to teach about the separation that would take place between good and bad before the kingdom could be established? Matthew 25:31-34; Matthew 13:47-52.

NOTE: 'These parables teach that there is to be no probation after the judgement. When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed. God does not desire the destruction of any. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 122.

8. When will we be able to see who are the sheep and who are the goats, the good fish and the bad fish? Malachi 3:17-18.

NOTE: 'Finite man is likely to misjudge character, but God does not leave the work of judgement and pronouncing upon character to those who are not fitted for it. We are not to say what constitutes the wheat, and what the tares. The time of the harvest will fully determine the character of the two classes specified under the figure of the tares and the wheat. The work of separation is given to the angels of God, and not committed into the hands of any man.' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 47.

'Out of his treasure things old and new'

9. What will the angel reapers do with the wheat in the time of harvest? Matthew 13:30 last part & 39.

NOTE: ‘The tares so closely resembled the wheat that the labourers might easily be deceived when the blades were green, and root out the good plants. But when the field was white for the harvest, then the worthless weeds bore no resemblance to the wheat that bowed under the weight of its full, ripe heads. Then the tares were ruthlessly plucked up and destroyed, while the precious grain was gathered into barns. Sinners who make false pretensions of piety mingle together for a time with the true followers of Christ, and this external semblance of Christianity is calculated to deceive many. But in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil.’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, page 249.*

10. How did Jesus take their existing hope for a coming earthly kingdom and show that His kingdom was to be a heavenly kingdom? Matthew 13:52

NOTE: ‘The downtrodden law of God is to be exalted before the people; as soon as they turn with earnestness and reverence to the Holy Scriptures, light from heaven will reveal to them wondrous things out of God’s law. Great truths that have long been obscured by superstition and false doctrine will blaze forth from the illuminated pages of the Sacred Word. The living oracles pour forth their treasures new and old, bringing light and joy to all who will receive them. Many are roused from their slumber. They rise as it were from the dead and receive the light and life which Christ alone can give.’ *Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 388.*

‘He that believeth in Me’

11. How did Christ reveal to Martha that it is He who is at the heart of all Scriptural teaching and life and hope? John 11:24-25. Compare John 6:31-35; John 4:10-14.

NOTE: ‘The Lord has been revealed to us in ever-increasing light. Our privileges are far greater than were the privileges of God’s ancient people. We have not only the great light committed to Israel, but we have the increased evidence of the great salvation brought to us through Christ. That which was type and symbol to the Jews is reality to us. They had the Old Testament history; we have that and the New Testament also. We have the assurance of a Saviour who has come, a Saviour who has been crucified, who has risen, and over the rent sepulchre of Joseph has proclaimed, “I am the resurrection and the life.” In our knowledge of Christ and His love the kingdom of God is placed in the midst of us.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons, page 317.*

12. What deeper lesson did Christ wish to bring to their more literal understanding of the last days? 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Romans 2:7-8.

NOTE: ‘I tell you in the name of the Lord that those who have had great light are today in the state described by Christ in His message to the Laodicean church. They think that they are rich, and increased in goods, and feel that they have need of nothing. Christ speaks to you. Hear, O hear, if you have any regard for your souls, the words of the great Counsellor, and act upon them: “I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.” Practical truth must be brought into the life, and the Word, like a sharp two-edged sword, must cut away the surplus of self that there is in our characters. *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers, volume 10, page 8.*

LESSON INSIGHT: As Jesus was talking to Martha and to His own disciples, they were able to tell Him of their expectations for the setting up of a kingdom, their resurrection hope for the latter day and the coming of the end of the world. Jesus, however, was able to take them deeper than the theory of their learning to show that He, the Messiah, is at the heart of these last-day events. He revealed to them that their lives must be sanctified by the Truth to correspond with their hopes. This, also, is the lesson for us to learn today.

Lesson 3: January 13-19

‘I will come again’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.’ John 14:3.

LESSON AIM: To consider the words of Jesus about His return and its purpose.

Introduction

‘The promise of Christ’s second coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end,” would bid them welcome to His presence in the

heavenly kingdom. As in the typical service the high priest laid aside his pontifical robes and officiated in the white linen dress of an ordinary priest, so Christ laid aside His royal robes and garbed Himself with humanity and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. As the high priest, after performing his service in the holy of holies, came forth to the waiting congregation in his pontifical robes; so Christ will come the second time, clothed in garments of whitest white, “so as no fuller on earth can white them.” Mark 9:3. He will come in His own glory, and in the glory of His Father, and all the angelic host will escort Him on His way. Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honour and immortality.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 33.

‘Gather His wheat into the garner’

1. How did the prophet John, the forerunner of the Messiah, speak of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost with fire, and the final fires of destruction? Matthew 3:11-12.

NOTE: ‘In John the Baptist the Lord raised up for Himself a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord. He was to bear to the world an unflinching testimony in reproving and denouncing sin. Luke, in announcing his mission and work, says, “And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”’ *Selected Messages, volume 2*, page 148.

2. How did John the Baptist speak of the wheat that would be safely gathered in before the fires broke? Matthew 3:12.

NOTE: ‘We as a people profess to have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. Then our life and character should be in harmony with such a faith. The day is just upon us when the righteous shall be bound like precious grain in bundles for the heavenly garner, while the wicked are, like the tares, gathered for the fires of the last great day.’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 343.

‘Then shall He reward every man’

3. How did Jesus prepare the way for giving the disciples further insights into His purposes as the Messiah? Matthew 16:13, 21.

NOTE: ‘He was about to tell them of the suffering that awaited Him. But first He went away alone, and prayed that their hearts might be prepared to receive His words. Upon joining them, He did not at once communicate that which He desired to impart. Before doing this, He gave them an opportunity of confessing their faith in Him that they might be strengthened for the coming trial. He asked, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Sadly the disciples were forced to acknowledge that Israel had failed to recognise their Messiah. Some indeed, when they saw His miracles, had declared Him to be the Son of David. The multitudes that had been fed at Bethsaida had desired to proclaim Him king of Israel. Many were ready to accept Him as a prophet; but they did not believe Him to be the Messiah. Jesus now put a second question, relating to the disciples themselves: “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”’ *Desire of Ages*, page 411.

4. How did Jesus describe to them both His second coming and its purpose? Matthew 16:27

NOTE: ‘For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His holy angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.’ Those teachers who ignore works and would teach that all you have to do is to believe in Christ, are rebuked by the Saviour of the world. Faith is made perfect by works. The cry will come to us from the servers of Mammon: You are too exacting; we cannot be saved by works. Was Christ exacting? He placed the salvation of man, not upon his believing, not upon his profession, but upon his faith made perfect by his works. Doing, and not saying merely, was required of the followers of Christ. Principle is always exacting.’ *Signs of the Times*, January 7, 1886.

‘From that time forth’

5. Whom did Jesus call together to Himself? Mark 8:34.

NOTE: ‘I saw that we must be more like Jesus. Everything in heaven is in perfect order, and the events of the judgement will come in perfect order. . . . Said the angel, “Press together, press together, press together, press together, ye shepherds, lest the sheep be scattered. Love one another as I have loved you. Swim, swim, swim, plunge deep, deep, deep in the ocean of God’s love. Come into a nearness with God.” I saw that we must overcome perfectly and get the victory over the powers of darkness.’ *Manuscript Releases, volume 12*, page 251.

6. After warning them of the need to take up their cross without being ashamed of Him, how did He conclude His exhortation? Mark 8:38.

NOTE: 'They will see Him then as heaven's King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. *Desire of Ages*, page 739.

'I will come again'

7. With the utmost gentleness what did Jesus tell His disciples in the Upper Room? John 13:33, 36. Compare what Jesus had said to the Pharisees and the chief priests. John 7:33-34.

NOTE: 'Then addressing them by the endearing term, "Little children," He said, "Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." The disciples could not rejoice when they heard this. Fear fell upon them. They pressed close about the Saviour. Their Master and Lord, their beloved Teacher and Friend, He was dearer to them than life. To Him they had looked for help in all their difficulties, for comfort in their sorrows and disappointments. Now He was to leave them, a lonely, dependent company. Dark were the forebodings that filled their hearts.' *Desire of Ages*, page 662.

8. In their perplexity how did Jesus comfort the sorrowing disciples? John 14:1-3.

NOTE: 'The Saviour's words to them were full of hope. He knew that they were to be assailed by the enemy, and that Satan's craft is most successful against those who are depressed by difficulties. Therefore He pointed them away from "the things which are seen," to "the things which are not seen." 2 Corinthians 4:18. From earthly exile He turned their thoughts to the heavenly home.' *Desire of Ages*, page 663.

'With all the holy angels'

9. How did Jesus describe His promised return? Matthew 25:31; Luke 17:24; Matthew 24:30-31; Luke 21:27; Luke 17:24; Mark 13:26.

NOTE: 'Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly, and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out: "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sung again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.' *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 58.

10. When Jesus came the first time, the angels sang and praised God over the hills of Bethlehem, but how many angels did Jesus say will come with Him when He returns as King? Matthew 25:31; Revelation 19:14. Consider also Daniel 7:10 and Revelation 5:11.

NOTE: 'Not now a "Man of Sorrows," to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. "Faithful and True," "in righteousness He doth judge and make war." And "the armies which were in heaven" follow Him. With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms, "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendour. "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.'" *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 50.

11. For what purpose did Jesus promise to return? Matthew 24:31; Matthew 25:34; John 14:1-3.

NOTE: By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: "They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;" and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory. It is at midnight that God

manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: "It is done." *Great Controversy*, page 636.

**‘Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man
sitting on the right hand of power’**

12. Before Caiaphas, the High Priest, a Sadducee who rejected any teaching of the resurrection, how forcefully and personally did Jesus describe the manner of His coming again? Matthew 26:63-64.

NOTE: "Hereafter," said Jesus, "shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In these words Christ presented the reverse of the scene then taking place. He, the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at God's right hand. He would be the judge of all the earth, and from His decision there could be no appeal. Then every secret thing would be set in the light of God's countenance, and judgement be passed upon every man according to his deeds. The words of Christ startled the high priest. The thought that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, when all would stand at the bar of God, to be rewarded according to their works, was a thought of terror to Caiaphas. He did not wish to believe that in future he would receive sentence according to his works. There rushed before his mind as a panorama the scenes of the final judgement. For a moment he saw the fearful spectacle of the graves giving up their dead, with the secrets he had hoped were forever hidden. For a moment he felt as if standing before the eternal Judge, whose eye, which sees all things, was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead. The scene passed from the priest's vision. Christ's words cut him, the Sadducee, to the quick. Caiaphas had denied the doctrine of the resurrection, the judgement and a future life. Now he was maddened by satanic fury. Was this man, a prisoner before him, to assail his most cherished theories? Rending his robe, that the people might see his pretended horror, he demanded that without further preliminaries the prisoner be condemned for blasphemy. "What further need have we of witnesses?" he said; "behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye?" And they all condemned Him.' *Desire of Ages*, page 707.

13. Knowing that the promise of His return would be perverted by the evil one, what warnings did Jesus give? Matthew 24:4; Matthew 24:24.

NOTE: 'Prior to, and at the first advent of Christ, religious teachers set forth strange ideas that were so mingled with portions of truth that they were full of deceptive power, and led souls away from God, although they still preserved the appearance of being His true worshipers. We find a similar condition of society in these last days, and those who depart from the faith mingle with their belief diversities of human opinion. The Bible is brought into criticism. Is it because the Scriptures are inconsistent and contradictory that ministers differ so widely in their interpretation? No, the trouble is that men are doing today as they did in the time of Christ, and are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Religious teachers are in the same condition as were the Pharisees of whom He said, "Ye are both ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God". *This day with God*, page 164.

LESSON INSIGHT: When Jesus comes the second time it will be with all the glory of heaven, and all the angels with Him. For many centuries the faithful of God have encouraged their hearts with this hope and then it will be a reality. They will be caught up to be with Him forever. The simple words of comfort spoken in the Upper Room will be fulfilled.

Lesson 4: January 17-23

‘What sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?’

MEMORY VERSE: 'So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near even at the door.' Matthew 24:33

LESSON AIM: This lesson will consider the many signs in the physical realm that herald the return of Christ.

Introduction

'Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." Luke 21:25. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then

shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” Mark 13:24-26.’ *Great Controversy*, page 304.

‘When he had opened the sixth seal’

1. What was the first great sign found in prophecy, telling us that the day of His great wrath was about to break upon the earth? Revelation 6:12, first part.

NOTE: ‘Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ’s coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. Said Jesus: “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.” Luke 21:25. “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” Mark 13:24-26. The revelator thus describes the first of the signs to precede the second advent: “There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.” These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfilment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction. It was in Spain and Portugal that the shock manifested its extreme violence. At Cadiz the inflowing wave was said to be sixty feet high. Mountains, “some of the largest in Portugal, were impetuously shaken, as it were, from their very foundations, and some of them opened at their summits, which were split and rent in a wonderful manner, huge masses of them being thrown down into the adjacent valleys. Flames are related to have issued from these mountains.” Sir Charles Lyell: *Principles of Geology*, page 495.’ *Great Controversy*, page 304.

2. Which words of intense spiritual anxiety close this period of history? Revelation 6:17.

NOTE: ‘Brethren, to whom the truths of God’s word have been opened, what part will you act in the closing scenes of this world’s history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realise the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and on earth? Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to those things that are written therein; “for the time is at hand.” Let none now tamper with sin, the source of every misery in our world. No longer remain in lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know that you are fully on the Lord’s side. Let the inquiry go forth from sincere hearts and trembling lips, “Who shall be able to stand?” Have you, in these last precious hours of probation, been putting the very best material into your character building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain? Have you followed the light? Have you works corresponding to your profession of faith?’ *Counsels for the Church*, page 342.

‘And let them be for signs’

3. Under the sixth seal which other physical signs would occur? Revelation 6:12; Luke 21:25; Mark 13:24-25, first part. Compare Joel 3:15.

NOTE: ‘The Saviour gives signs of His coming, and more than this, He fixes the time when the first of these signs shall appear: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” *Desire of Ages*, page 631.

4. When did Jesus say these signs would take place? Matthew 24:29.

NOTE: ‘At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples, “When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” After these signs, John beheld, as the great event next impending, the heavens departing as a scroll, while the earth quaked, mountains and islands removed out of their places, and the wicked in terror sought to flee from the presence of the Son of man.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 344.

‘So mighty an earthquake and so great’

5. Which plague accompanies the great and final earthquake? Revelation 16:18.

NOTE: 'That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Verses 17, 18. The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." Great hailstones, every one "about the weight of a talent," are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world's great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God's people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.' *Darkness before Dawn*, page 46.

6. As this will happen under the seventh of the seven last plagues, what final plague will also be occurring? Revelation 16:20-21. Compare Job 38:22-23.

NOTE: 'More terrible manifestations than the world has ever yet beheld will be witnessed at the second advent of Christ. "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger?" Nahum 1:5, 6. "Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out Thine arrows, and destroy them." Psalm 144:5, 6. "I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke." Acts 2:19. "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent." As lightnings from heaven unite with the fire in the earth, the mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrific streams of lava, overwhelming gardens and fields, villages and cities. Seething molten masses thrown into the rivers will cause the waters to boil, sending forth massive rocks with indescribable violence and scattering their broken fragments upon the land. Rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed; everywhere there will be dreadful earthquakes and eruptions. Thus God will destroy the wicked from off the earth. But the righteous will be preserved in the midst of these commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark. God will be their refuge, and under His wings shall they trust.' *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 109.

'After that tribulation'

7. Read the following eyewitness accounts of how the first two signs in the heavens were fulfilled.

NOTE: 'Twenty-five years later [after the earthquake] appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy, the darkening of the sun and moon. May 18, 1780. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfilment had been definitely pointed out. In the Saviour's conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church, the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened, He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." [Mark 13:24.] The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Between these two dates, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled. "Almost if not altogether alone as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, ... stands the dark day of May 19, 1780, a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England." That the darkness was not due to an eclipse is evident from the fact that the moon was then nearly full. It was not caused by clouds, or the thickness of the atmosphere, for in some localities where the darkness extended, the sky was so clear that the stars could be seen. Concerning the inability of science to assign a satisfactory cause for this manifestation, Herschel the astronomer declares: "The dark day in North America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which philosophy is at a loss to explain." "The extent of the darkness was also very remarkable. It was observed at the most easterly regions of New England; westward, to the farthest part of Connecticut, and at Albany, N. Y.; to the southward, it was observed all along the sea coast; and to the north, as far as the American settlements extended. It probably far exceeded those boundaries, but the exact limits were never positively known. With regard to its duration, it continued in the neighbourhood of Boston for at least fourteen or fifteen hours.'" *Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, page 306.

8. In 1833 when William Miller was preaching of the soon return of Christ how was his preaching validated by the third of these signs? Matthew 24:29, middle section. Compare Revelation 6:13 with the account cited below.

NOTE: 'In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidences of Christ's soon coming, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Saviour as tokens of His second advent. Said Jesus: "The stars shall fall from heaven."

Matthew 24:29. And John in the Revelation declared, as he beheld in vision the scenes that should herald the day of God: "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revelation 6:13. This prophecy received a striking and impressive fulfilment in the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. That was the most extensive and wonderful display of falling stars which has ever been recorded; "the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion! No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another." "Its sublimity and awful beauty still linger in many minds. ... Never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion.... The display, as described in Professor Silliman's Journal, was seen all over North America. ... From two o'clock until broad daylight, the sky being perfectly serene and cloudless, an incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens." R. M. Devens, *American Progress*; or, *The Great Events of the Greatest Century*, ch. 28, pars. 1-5. "No language, indeed, can come up to the splendour of that magnificent display; ... no one who did not witness it can form an adequate conception of its glory. It seemed as if the whole starry heavens had congregated at one point near the zenith, and were simultaneously shooting forth, with the velocity of lightning, to every part of the horizon; and yet they were not exhausted, thousands swiftly followed in the tracks of thousands, as if created for the occasion." F. Reed, in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, December 13, 1833. "A more correct picture of a fig tree casting its figs when blown by a mighty wind, it was not possible to behold." "The Old Countryman," in *Portland Evening Advertiser*, November 26, 1833.' *Great Controversy*, page 333.

'Sea and waves roaring'

9. What other physical signs did Jesus say would happen before He returns in glory? Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:25 last part.

Compare Revelation 13:13-14.

['Divers' as in 'divers places' means diverse, or different, places]

NOTE: 'Paul testifies that before the second advent of Christ there will be similar manifestations of satanic power. The coming of the Lord is to be preceded by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. And the apostle John, describing the miracle-working power that will be manifested in the last days, declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." Revelation 13:13, 14. No mere impostures are here foretold. Men are deceived by the miracles which Satan's agents have power to do, not which they pretend to do.' *Darkness Before Dawn*, page 19.

10. What will be the effect of these signs on people's hearts and minds? Luke 21:26.

NOTE: 'Our Saviour foretold a time when men's hearts should be "failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26. That time of peril and of fear has come; and the next thing is the coming of the Lord.' A. T. Jones, *American Sentinel*, July 26, 1894.

'Powers of heaven shall be shaken'

11. What will be the final physical sign to be seen in the heavens immediately before Jesus comes Mark 13:25, last part;

Luke 21:26; Matthew 24:29.

NOTE: 'December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said "heaven," in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said "earth" He meant earth. The powers of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars. They rule in the heavens. The powers of earth are those that rule on the earth. The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God.' *Early Writings*, page 41.

12. How many signs does Jesus tell us to look for to know that His coming is near? Matthew 24:33.

NOTE: 'The words were spoken by Christ in that memorable conversation with His disciples upon Olivet after He had for the last time departed from the temple. The disciples had asked the question: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus gave them signs, and said: "**When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.**" Verses 3, 33. One saying of the Saviour must not be made to destroy another. Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are instructed and required to know when it is near.' *Great Controversy*, page 371. Emphasis added.

13. Who shall be able to stand? Revelation 7:2-3

NOTE: 'Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads, it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling

into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved, just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already.' *Last Day Events* page 219.

'We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands. If we make no effort to win souls to Christ, we shall be held responsible for the work we might have done, but did not do because of our spiritual indolence. Those who belong to the Lord's kingdom must work earnestly for the saving of souls. They must do their part to bind up the law and seal it among the disciples.' *Review and Herald*, January 22, 1901.

LESSON INSIGHT: We have not been told that there is one last sign to look for. But when we see ALL the signs taking place at the same time, when everything is happening together, then we know that He is near even at the door. Now is the time to make ready – while it is called today.

Lesson 5: January 27-February 2

'From such turn away'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.' Luke 21:34-35.

LESSON AIM: The social signs of the imminent coming of the Lord are all around us, but the Word of the Lord tells us to take heed, to turn away, lest we be overcome.

Introduction

'Jesus, seated on the Mount of Olives, gave instruction to His disciples concerning the signs which should precede His coming: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The same sins that brought judgements upon the world in the days of Noah, exist in our day. Men and women now carry their eating and drinking so far that it ends in gluttony and drunkenness. This prevailing sin, the indulgence of perverted appetite, inflamed the passions of men in the days of Noah, and led to widespread corruption. Violence and sin reached to heaven.' *Counsels on Diets and Foods*, page 145.

'Troubled about many things'

1. How do the cares of this life present a real danger to those living at the end of prophetic time? Mark 4:18-19.

NOTE: 'If the heart is not kept under the control of God, if the Holy Spirit does not work unceasingly to refine and ennoble the character, the old habits will reveal themselves in the life. Men may profess to believe the gospel; but unless they are sanctified by the gospel their profession is of no avail. If they do not gain the victory over sin, then sin is gaining the victory over them. The thorns that have been cut off, but not uprooted, grow apace, until the soul is overspread with them. Christ specified the things that are dangerous to the soul. As recorded by Mark, He mentions the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things. Luke specifies the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. These are what choke the word, the growing spiritual seed. The soul ceases to draw nourishment from Christ, and spirituality dies out of the heart.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 50.

2. How are these dangers portrayed in the story of Mary and Martha? Luke 10:40-42.

NOTE: 'As Christ gave His wonderful lessons, Mary sat at His feet, a reverent and devoted listener. On one occasion, Martha, perplexed with the care of preparing the meal, went to Christ, saying, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." This was the time of Christ's first visit to Bethany. The Saviour and His disciples had just made the toilsome journey on foot from Jericho. Martha was anxious to provide for their comfort, and in her anxiety she forgot the courtesy due to her Guest. Jesus answered her with mild and patient words, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary was storing her mind with the precious words falling from the Saviour's lips, words that were more precious to her than earth's most costly jewels. The "one thing" that Martha needed was a calm, devotional spirit, a deeper anxiety for knowledge concerning the future, immortal life, and the graces necessary for spiritual advancement. She needed less anxiety for the things

which pass away, and more for those things which endure forever.' *Desire of Ages*, page 525.

'My Lord delayeth His coming'

3. What did Jesus warn His followers would be one sign of His coming? Matthew 24:38, first part.

NOTE: 'Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 228.

4. When is it that unfaithful servants turn to violence and to eating and drinking? Luke 12:45-46.

NOTE: 'That evil servant who said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a "servant," outwardly devoted to the service of God while at heart he had yielded to Satan. He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart, that the Lord's coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. He accepts the world's maxims and conforms to its customs and practices. Selfishness, worldly pride, and ambitions predominate. Fearing that his brethren may stand higher than himself, he begins to disparage their efforts and impugn their motives. Thus he smites his fellow servants. As he alienates himself from the people of God, he unites more and more with the ungodly. He is found eating and drinking "with the drunken," joining with worldlings and partaking of their spirit. Thus he is lulled into a carnal security and overcome by forgetfulness, indifference, and sloth.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 344.

'As in the days of Noe'

5. What did Jesus warn would pose a serious threat to preparation for His second coming? Luke 21:34-35.

NOTE: 'When the Saviour pointed out to His followers the signs of His return, He foretold the state of backsliding that would exist just prior to His second advent. There would be, as in the days of Noah, the activity and stir of worldly business and pleasure seeking, buying, selling, planting, building, marrying, and giving in marriage, with forgetfulness of God and the future life. For those living at this time, Christ's admonition is: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."'
Great Controversy, page 309.

6. At what other crucial time in history did these same distractions become a snare? Matthew 24:37-38.

NOTE: 'God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking; He had given them the fruits of the earth in great abundance to supply their physical wants. Their sin consisted in taking these gifts without gratitude to the Giver, and debasing themselves by indulging appetite without restraint. It was lawful for them to marry. Marriage was in God's order; it was one of the first institutions which He established. He gave special directions concerning this ordinance, clothing it with sanctity and beauty; but these directions were forgotten, and marriage was perverted and made to minister to passion. A similar condition of things exists now. That which is lawful in itself is carried to excess. Appetite is indulged without restraint. Professed followers of Christ are today eating and drinking with the drunken, while their names stand in honoured church records. Intemperance benumbs the moral and spiritual powers and prepares the way for indulgence of the lower passions. Multitudes feel under no moral obligation to curb their sensual desires, and they become the slaves of lust. Men are living for the pleasures of sense; for this world and this life alone.' *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 101.

'They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded'

7. What additional warning is given us from the days of Lot? Luke 17:28 .

NOTE: 'Some, fearing they will suffer loss of earthly treasure, neglect prayer and the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, that they may have more time to devote to their farms or their business. They show by their works which world they place the highest estimate upon.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 653.

8. What does Paul warn against concerning sleep and the darkness of the devil's delusions? 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7.

NOTE: 'Christ has left us here a most important lesson. He would lay before us the danger of making our eating and drinking paramount. He presents the result of unrestrained indulgence of appetite. The moral powers are enfeebled, so that sin does not appear sinful. Crime is lightly regarded, and passion controls the mind, until good principles and impulses are rooted out, and God

is blasphemed. All this is the result of eating and drinking to excess. This is the very condition of things which Christ declares will exist at His second coming.' *Counsels on Health*, page 24.

'There shall be ... troubles'

9. What discouraging difficulties and troubles will come upon both individuals and families before Jesus returns? Luke 21:16; Luke 12:52. Consider what the troubles might be in Mark 13:8.

NOTE: 'Christ said of Himself, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34. The Prince of Peace, He was yet the cause of division. He, who came to proclaim glad tidings and to create hope and joy in the hearts of the children of men, opened a controversy that burns deep and arouses intense passion in the human heart. And He warns His followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake." "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.'" *Acts of the Apostles*, page 84.

10. Discover some of the promises that God holds out to those who have no other help but Him? Psalm 27:10; Psalm 118:6,8.

NOTE: 'By His own example the Saviour has shown that His followers can be in the world and yet not of the world. He came not to partake of its delusive pleasures, to be swayed by its customs, and to follow its practices, but to do His Father's will, to seek and save the lost. With this object before him the Christian may stand uncontaminated in any surroundings. Whatever his station or circumstances, exalted or humble, he will manifest the power of true religion in the faithful performance of duty. Not in freedom from trial, but in the midst of it, is Christian character developed. Exposure to rebuffs and opposition leads the follower of Christ to greater watchfulness and more earnest prayer to the mighty Helper. Severe trial endured by the grace of God develops patience, vigilance, fortitude, and a deep and abiding trust in God. It is the triumph of the Christian faith that it enables its followers to suffer and be strong; to submit, and thus to conquer; to be killed all the day long, and yet to live; to bear the cross, and thus to win the crown of glory.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 467.

'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God'

11. What warning did Paul record? 2 Timothy 3:1.

NOTE: 'Perilous times are before us. Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armour of God.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 326.

12. Among the many unexpected and sad signs found in the Christian world, what did Paul warn was to be the one thing that should be turned away from? 2 Timothy 3:4, last part-5.

NOTE: "'Those who have a hold of the truth theoretically, with their finger tips as it were, who have not brought its principles into the inner sanctuary of the soul, but have kept the vital truth in the outer court, will see nothing sacred in the past history of this people, which has made them what they are, and has established them as earnest, determined missionary workers in the world. The truth for this time is precious; but those whose hearts have not been broken by falling on the rock Christ Jesus, will not see and understand what is truth. They will accept that which pleases their ideas, and will begin to manufacture another foundation than that which is laid. They will flatter their own vanity and esteem, thinking that they are capable of removing the pillars of our faith, and replacing them with pillars they have devised. This will continue to be as long as time shall last. Anyone who has been a close student of the Bible will see and understand the solemn position of those who are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. They will feel their own inefficiency and weakness, and will make it their first business to have not merely a form of godliness, but a vital connection with God. They will not dare to rest until Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. Self will die; pride will be expelled from the soul, and they will have the meekness and gentleness of Christ.'" *Life Sketches of Ellen G White*, page 430.

LESSON INSIGHT: We may be familiar with the physical signs that tell us the nearness of Our Lord's coming in glory, but in order to stand firm till the end with the faith of Jesus, it is essential that we understand and recognise the signs in society, and in the religious world, for we are all at risk, from discouragement concerning these things if not actual participation. Our safety is in looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Lesson 6: February 3-9

‘All things continue as they were’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ 2 Peter 3:4.

LESSON AIM: To reveal two causes of unpreparedness for Jesus’ coming: those who backslide and scoff saying it only seems that the signs are fulfilling due to better recording methods; and others who, seeing the fulfilments, begin to set dates for the return of our Lord, which leads only to disappointment and a falling away.

Introduction

‘We are not of that class who define the exact period of time that shall elapse before the coming of Jesus the second time with power and great glory. Some have set a time, and when that has passed, their presumptuous spirits have not accepted rebuke, but they have set another, and another, time. But many successive failures have stamped them as false prophets.’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 335.

‘God gives no man a message that it will be five years or ten years or twenty years before this earth’s history shall close. He would not give any living being an excuse for delaying the preparation for His appearing. He would have no one say, as did the unfaithful servant, “My lord delayeth his coming,” for this leads to reckless neglect of the opportunities and privileges given to prepare us for that great day.’ *Last Day Events*, page 34.

‘I understand that Brother E. P. Daniels has, as it were, set time, stating that the Lord will come within five years. Now I hope the impression will not go abroad that we are time-setters. Let no such remarks be made. They do no good. Seek not to obtain a revival upon any such grounds, but let due caution be used in every word uttered.’ *Selected Messages, volume 2*, page 84.

‘Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord’s coming.’ *Last Day Events*, page 36.

‘Watch and wait’

1. How does the parable of the ten virgins show the sad state of those who say they are expecting the return of our Lord?

Matthew 25:5

NOTE: ‘All the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,” many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 408

2. When the bridegroom came, what was the unprepared position of five of the maidens? Matthew 25:6-9. Consider Mark 4:16-17 & Ezekiel 33:31.

NOTE: ‘Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan. The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 408.

‘To every man his work’

3. What does the Bible admonish those who wait for their Lord's return? Mark 13:34-37.

NOTE: 'Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men. "Watch ye therefore: ... lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." Mark 13:35, 36. Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments, it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Daniel 5:27.' *Great Controversy*, page 491.

4. What counsel is given us by Paul for these days of test? Romans 13:11-13.

NOTE: 'The end is near, stealing upon us stealthily, imperceptibly, like the noiseless approach of a thief in the night. May the Lord grant that we shall no longer sleep as do others, but that we shall watch and be sober. The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, and all who now choose to be labourers together with God will triumph with it. The time is short; the night soon cometh when no man can work. Let those who are rejoicing in the light of present truth, now make haste to impart the truth to others. The Lord is inquiring, "Whom shall I send?" Those who wish to sacrifice for the truth's sake, are now to respond, "Here am I, Lord; send me." *Counsels for the Church*, page 64.

'For a witness and then shall the end come'

5. What is the personal work for ourselves that must run parallel to our gospel activity? 1 John 3:1-3.

NOTE: 'John was a teacher of holiness, and in his letters to the church he laid down unerring rules for the conduct of Christians. "Every man that hath this hope in him," he wrote, "purifieth himself, even as He is pure." "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 3:3; 2:6. He taught that the Christian must be pure in heart and life. Never should he be satisfied with an empty profession. As God is holy in His sphere, so fallen man, through faith in Christ, is to be holy in his sphere.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 559.

6. What will be the result when gospel of truth, given by sanctified tongues, has gone to all the world? Matthew 24:14; 2 Peter 3:11-12, margin.

NOTE: 'Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declared that the gospel was preached to "every creature which is under heaven." So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world." Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory.' *Desire of Ages*, page 633.

'Ye know neither the day nor the hour'

7. How can we see that setting a date for Christ to return has no part in the last message of warning? Revelation 14:6.

Consider the words of the angel who confirms that the harvest is ripe. Revelation 14:14-16.

NOTE: Logically, we cannot set a date for Jesus to come, for we cannot see when the Gospel has gone to all the world, nor when the harvest is ripe. These are heavenly decisions alone.

"And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." The husbandman who "putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come," can be no other than Christ. It is He who at the last great day will reap the harvest of the earth. But the sower of the seed represents those who labour in Christ's stead. The seed is said to "spring and grow up, he knoweth not how," and this is not true of the Son of God. Christ does not sleep over His charge, but watches it day and night. He is not ignorant of how the seed grows.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 62.

8. How did Jesus make it clear that we should set no date, or even a year when He may return? Matthew 25:13.

NOTE: 'We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ. ... Why has not God given us this knowledge? Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.' *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

‘We are nearing the great day of God. The signs are fulfilling. And yet we have no message to tell us of the day and hour of Christ’s appearing. The Lord has wisely concealed this from us that we may always be in a state of expectancy and preparation for the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven.’ *Last Day Events*, page 33.

‘Where is the promise of His coming?’

9. What did Peter warn about those who say that all things continue as they were? 2 Peter 3:3.

NOTE: ‘The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, “All things continue as they were from the beginning.” “Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” 2 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 56:12. We will go deeper into pleasure loving. But Christ says, “Behold, I come as a thief.” Revelation 16:15. At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, “Where is the promise of His coming?” the signs are fulfilling. While they cry, “Peace and safety,” sudden destruction is coming. When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 635.

10. Which previous judgement of the ungodly are they wilfully ignoring? 2 Peter 3:4-7

NOTE: ‘Before the Flood God sent Noah to warn the world, that the people might be led to repentance, and thus escape the threatened destruction. As the time of Christ’s second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with a warning to the world to prepare for that great event. Multitudes have been living in transgression of God’s law, and now He in mercy calls them to obey its sacred precepts. All who will put away their sins by repentance toward God and faith in Christ are offered pardon. But many feel that it requires too great a sacrifice to put away sin. Because their life does not harmonise with the pure principles of God’s moral government, they reject His warnings and deny the authority of His law. Of the vast population of the earth before the Flood, only eight souls believed and obeyed God’s word through Noah. For a hundred and twenty years the preacher of righteousness warned the world of the coming destruction, but his message was rejected and despised. So it will be now. Before the Lawgiver shall come to punish the disobedient, transgressors are warned to repent, and return to their allegiance; but with the majority these warnings will be in vain.’ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 102.

‘We have waited for Him’

11. With the apparent delay in the second advent of our Saviour, what will be the effect among some who claim to be waiting for Jesus to come? Matthew 24:48-49.

NOTE: ‘The evil servant says in his heart, “My lord delayeth His coming.” He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord’s coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 342.

12. If you know that you have grown weary in the waiting time, what plea does God make to your heart? Jeremiah 3:22.

NOTE: ‘Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer His expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done, through His grace strengthening them. In the books of heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet the case of even this class is not utterly hopeless. With those who have slighted God’s mercy and abused His grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads. “Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, ... redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”’ *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 70.

LESSON INSIGHT: The Evil One will use any means to delay the coming of the Lord and cause those who should be active in His service to slumber and sleep at their post. Do not allow any form of discouragement to take you to the ways of the world.

Lesson 7: February 10-16

‘My reward is with Me’

MEMORY VERSE: 'And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.' Revelation 22:12.

LESSON AIM: To consider the reasons why Jesus is coming back.

Introduction

'The Saviour's words to them were full of hope. He knew that they were to be assailed by the enemy, and that Satan's craft is most successful against those who are depressed by difficulties. Therefore He pointed them away from "the things which are seen," to "the things which are not seen." 2 Corinthians 4:18. From earthly exile He turned their thoughts to the heavenly home. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said; "ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." For your sake I came into the world. I am on your behalf. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came into the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to the Father to co-operate with Him on your behalf. The object of Christ's departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude.' *Desire of Ages*, page 662.

'Hath given Him authority to execute judgement'

1. What is Jesus returning to earth for? Jude 1:14-15.

NOTE: 'From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. It is He who has encountered the deceiver, and who through all the ages has been seeking to wrest the captives from his grasp, who will pass judgement upon every soul. And God "hath given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of man." Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save, because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgement.' *Desire of Ages*, page 210.

2. What sins are particularly spoken against in this judgement? Revelation 22:15. Consider Ephesians 5:5 and Malachi 3:5.

NOTE: 'When Moses came from the divine Presence in the mount, where he had received the tables of the testimony, guilty Israel could not endure the light that glorified his countenance. How much less can transgressors look upon the Son of God when He shall appear in the glory of His Father, surrounded by all the heavenly host, to execute judgement upon the transgressors of His law and the rejecters of His atonement. Those who have disregarded the law of God and trodden under foot the blood of Christ, "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men," shall hide themselves "in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains," and they shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:15-17. "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, ... to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isaiah 2:20, 21.' *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 340.

'Till my change come'

3. What are some of the problems that come to ageing, mortal, physical bodies? Ecclesiastes 12:3-6

NOTE: A number of suggestions have been put forward by Bible scholars:

- watchmen tremble—legs and knees are weak; they stoop;
- grinders cease—eating is difficult due to poor or missing teeth;
- windows dim—eyesight poor;
- sound of the grinding is low—hearing is poor;
- rise up at the sound of a bird—trouble sleeping;
- the almond tree flourishes—the hair is as white almond blossom;
- desire shall fail; grasshopper a burden—sexual drive fails;
- he goes to his long home—the grave.

‘David marked that although the lives of some while in the strength of manhood had been righteous, as old age came upon them they seemed to lose their self-control. Satan stepped in and guided their minds, making them restless and dissatisfied. David was deeply moved; he was distressed as he looked forwards to the time when he should be aged. He feared that God would leave him and that he would be as unhappy as other aged persons whose course he had noticed, and would be left to the reproach of the enemies of the Lord. With this burden upon him he earnestly prays, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.” “O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to everyone that is to come” (Psalm 71:9, 17, 18). David felt the necessity of guarding against the evils which attend old age.’ *Testimonies, volume 1, page 423.*

4. When Jesus comes, what will occur in the bodies of those who have been faithful unto death? Isaiah 35:3-6, first part. 1 Corinthians 15:51. Compare how Job held on to this same hope. Job 14:14.

NOTE: ‘Soon I heard the voice of God, which shook the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. Buildings were shaken down on every side. I then heard a triumphant shout of victory, loud, musical, and clear. I looked upon the company who, a short time before, were in such distress and bondage. Their captivity was turned. A glorious light shone upon them. How beautiful they then looked! All marks of care and weariness were gone, and health and beauty were seen in every countenance. Their enemies, the heathen around them, fell like dead men; they could not endure the light that shone upon the delivered, holy ones. This light and glory remained upon them, until Jesus was seen in the clouds of heaven, and the faithful, tried company were changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, from glory to glory. And the graves were opened, and the saints came forth, clothed with immortality, crying, “Victory over death and the grave;” and together with the living saints they were caught up to meet their Lord in the air, while rich, musical shouts of glory and victory were upon every immortal tongue.’ *Christian Experience and Teachings, page 178.*

‘The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call and came forth clothed with glorious immortality, crying, “Victory, victory, over death and the grave! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigour. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air. Oh, what a glorious meeting! Friends whom death had separated were united, never more to part.’ *Early Writings, page 286.*

‘I am the resurrection and the life’

5. What gift did Jesus promise to those who believe in Him? John 3:15; John 6:40; John 11:25.

NOTE: ‘To the believer, Christ is the resurrection and the life. In our Saviour the life that was lost through sin is restored; for He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will. He is invested with the right to give immortality. The life that He laid down in humanity, He takes up again, and gives to humanity. “I am come,” He said, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” “Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 10:10; 4:14; 6:54. To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. “If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death,” “he shall never taste of death.” To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” John 8:51, 52.’ *A Call to Stand Apart, page 44.*

6. When will this promise be fulfilled? 1 Corinthians 15:53-54.

NOTE: ‘It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Hebrews 10:35-37. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7, 8.’ *Christian Experience and Teachings, page 236.*

‘And receive you unto Myself’

7. Why did Jesus promise His disciples He was coming back? John 14:1-3.

NOTE: 'I have decided that I must have heaven, and I want you to have it. I never would have come from California to Europe, had I not wanted to tell you how precious the Saviour is, and what a precious truth we have. You should search the Bible; for it tells you of Jesus. As you read the Bible, you will see the matchless charms of Jesus. You will fall in love with the Man of Calvary, and at every step you can say to the world, 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.' You are to represent Christ to the world. You may show to the world that you have a hope big with immortality. You may drink of the waters of salvation. Teach your children to love and fear God. You want the heavenly angels to be in your dwelling. You want the Sun of Righteousness shining in the darkened chambers of your mind, then your lips will speak thanksgiving to God Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for us. He said: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' John 14:1-3. It is these mansions that I am looking to; it is not the earthly mansions here, for ere long they are to be shaken down by the mighty earthquake; but those heavenly mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for the faithful. "We have no home here; we are only pilgrims and strangers, passing to a better country, even a heavenly. Place your mind upon these things, and while you are doing this, Christ will be right by your side. May God help us to win the precious boon of eternal life." *Life Sketches*, page 293.

8. What wonderful descriptions are we given of the places Jesus is preparing for us? Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Consider Revelation 21-22.

NOTE: 'Long have we waited for our Saviour's return. But none the less sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne. Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home, that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." *Adventist Home*, page 544.

'So it shall come to pass'

9. What testimony was given by Solomon concerning the faithfulness of God's Word? 1 Kings 8:56. Compare 2 Peter 3:9.

NOTE: 'We must have an increase of faith, else we cannot be renewed in the divine image, and love and obey the requirements of God. Let the prayer go forth from unfeigned lips, "Lord, increase my faith; give me divine enlightenment; for without help from Thee I can do nothing." Come in humility and bow before God; open before the Lord your Bibles, containing the divine promises; take your position upon them; make a covenant with God that you will answer His requirements; tell Him you will believe, without any other evidence except the naked promise. This is not presumption; but unless you work with zeal, unless you are earnest and determined, Satan will obtain the advantage, and you will be left in unbelief and darkness. The words and promises of God are the only foundation of our faith. Take the word of God as truth, as a living, speaking voice to you, and obey faithfully every requirement. God is faithful, who hath promised. . . . Our blessings are limited by the weakness of our faith. God is not unwilling to bestow; He is a reservoir of power. We must cherish meekness and holiness of heart.' *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, page 72.

10. What does Paul call the promised reunion with Jesus? Titus 2:13.

NOTE: 'The second coming of the Son of man is to be the wonderful theme kept before the people. Here is a subject that should not be left out of our discourses. Eternal realities must be kept before the mind's eye, and the attractions of the world will appear as they are, altogether profitless as vanity. What are we to do with the world's vanities, its praises, its riches, its honours or its enjoyments? We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world?' *Evangelism*, page 220.

'He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied'

11. What is the great joy with which our Saviour Himself is returning? Matthew 25:21; Jude 1:24; Isaiah 53:11.

NOTE: ‘Then, in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. In that great multitude which no man could number, presented “faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24), He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us, “shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” *Education*, page 309.

12. How does the Bible describe the shared pleasure that we shall experience with Christ? Matthew 25:34; Romans 8:17.

NOTE: ‘Those who live for God and heaven, pointing out the way of life to others, will find that the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And they will hear by and by the welcome invitation, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” The joy of Christ was that of seeing souls saved in His glorious kingdom; and for this joy He “endured the cross, despising the shame.” But soon “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” How happy will those be, who, having shared in His work, are permitted to share in His joy!’ *Christian Service*, page 213.

LESSON INSIGHT: ‘Christ returneth, Hallelujah’ The words of this hymn show the reality of His promise and we rejoice. But it is good to know why He is returning. He has made the supreme sacrifice for our fallen world. He died to take us back to Eden, to its joys and pleasures. His joy will be in introducing His brothers and sisters to the Father. He is coming to give us eternal life, eternal youth and health with the freshness of morning. He wants to give us new responsibilities with Him. He has prepared places for us and longs to take us back with Him to dwell with Him forever.

Lesson 8: February 17-23 **‘Alas! for that day is great’**

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’ Matthew 28:20.

LESSON AIM: To consider the events that will take place just prior to the return of Christ.

Compiler’s Note: The events outlined in this lesson are all future; therefore it is not wise to seek for an exact sequence, or to speculate, or to go beyond the simple words of inspiration.

Introduction

‘As men depart further and further from God, Satan is permitted to have power over the children of disobedience. He hurls destruction among men. There is calamity by land and sea. Property and life are destroyed by fire and flood. Satan resolves to charge this upon those who refuse to bow to the idol which he has set up. His agents point to Seventh-day Adventists as the cause of the trouble. “These people stand out in defiance of law,” they say. “They desecrate Sunday. Were they compelled to obey the law for Sunday observance, there would be a cessation of these terrible judgements.”’ *Maranatha*, page 176.

‘Satan puts his interpretation upon events, and they, leading men, think, as he would have them, that the calamities which fill the land are a result of Sunday-breaking. Thinking to appease the wrath of God, these influential men make laws enforcing Sunday observance. They think that by exalting this false rest-day higher, and still higher, compelling obedience to the Sunday law, the spurious sabbath, they are doing God service. Those who honour God by observing the true Sabbath are looked upon as disloyal to God, when it is really those who thus regard them who are themselves disloyal, because they are trampling under foot the Sabbath originated in Eden.’ *Maranatha*, page 176.

‘We are not now able to describe with accuracy the scenes to be enacted in our world in the future, but this we do know, that this is a time when we must watch unto prayer, for the great day of the Lord is at hand.’ *Last Day Events*, page 17.

‘A time of trouble, such as never was’

1. What has Jesus warned will happen to those who choose to follow Him to the end? John 15:18.

NOTE ‘Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that Satan was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away God’s people, just now in this sealing time. I saw some who were not standing stiffly for present truth. Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were not firmly planted on the truth, and the covering of Almighty God could not be drawn over them while they were thus trembling. Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God’s people, and they were left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter. God

will work in power for His people; and Satan will be permitted to work also.' *Early Writings*, page 44.

2. How should we react to the knowledge of the troubles that are to come upon us? Matthew 6:34.

NOTE: 'There is a time of trouble coming to the people of God, but we are not to keep that constantly before the people and rein them up to have a time of trouble beforehand. There is to be a shaking among God's people, but this is not the present truth to carry to the churches.' *Selected Messages*, volume 1, page 180.

'Live the life of faith day by day. Do not become anxious and distressed about the time of trouble, and thus have a time of trouble beforehand. Do not keep thinking, "I am afraid I shall not stand in the great testing day." You are to live for the present, for this day only. Tomorrow is not yours. Today you are to maintain the victory over self. Today you are to live a life of prayer. Today you are to fight the good fight of faith. Today you are to believe that God blesses you.' *Historical Sketches*, page 143.

'He that is filthy let him be filthy still'

3. What do we mean by the close of probation? Revelation 22:11; Jeremiah 8:20.

NOTE: 'God has not revealed to us the time when this message will close or when probation will have an end. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children, but let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the councils of the Almighty.' *Last Day Events*, page 227.

'Oh, let us live wholly for the Lord, and show by a well-ordered life and godly conversation that we have been with Jesus, and are His meek and lowly followers. We must work while the day lasts, for when the dark night of trouble and anguish comes, it will be too late to work for God. Jesus is in His holy temple, and will now accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins, and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous, will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy, will be unjust and filthy still; for then there will be no priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father's throne. Therefore what is done to rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath, must be done before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.' *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 105.

'We are to make the best of our present opportunities. There will be no other probation given to us in which to prepare for heaven. This is our only and last opportunity to form characters which will fit us for the future home which the Lord has prepared for all who are obedient to His commandments. There will be no probation after the coming of the Lord. Those who say that there will be are deceived and misled. Before Christ comes, just such a state of things will exist as existed before the Flood. And after the Saviour appears in the clouds of heaven, no one will be given another chance to gain salvation. All will have made their decisions.' *Last Day Events*, page 236.

4. How do we know the end of the judgement and the close of human probation take place before Jesus returns?

Revelation 22:12.

NOTE: 'I have borne you a message of the near coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. I have not presented before you any definite time, but have repeated to you the injunction of Christ Himself, to watch unto prayer, "For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." The warning has come echoing down the ages to our time, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' *Review and Herald*, August 21, 1888.

'Garments of vengeance'

5. When probation is closed, what will Jesus then do? Isaiah 59:17, last part.

NOTE: 'At the commencement of the holy Sabbath, January 5, 1849, we engaged in prayer with Brother Belden's family at Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and the Holy Ghost fell upon us. I was taken off in vision to the most holy place, where I saw Jesus still interceding for Israel. On the bottom of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance.' *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 100.

6. What will be the visible sign proclaiming that the judgement has been completed and human probation has ended?

Revelation 16:1-2.

NOTE: 'Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and men, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath

on those who have rejected His truth ... The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out. I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues.' *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 100.

'The wrath of God'

7. How does the Bible describe the seven last plagues? Revelation 14:10, first part; Revelation 15:1; Revelation 16:1.

NOTE: 'The wrath of God is not declared against unrepentant sinners merely because of the sins they have committed, but because, when called to repent, they choose to continue in resistance, repeating the sins of the past in defiance of the light given them.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 62.

8. What are the seven last plagues? Revelation 16:1-21

NOTE: The seven angels pour out the vials of God's wrath upon the earth.

- Revelation 16:2. The first plague is a "noisome and grievous sore."

Revelation 16:3. The second plague causes the sea to become "as the blood of a • dead man."

- Revelation 16:4. The third plague causes the rivers and fountains of water to become blood.

- Revelation 16:8. The fourth plague will cause the sun to "scorch men with fire."

Revelation 16:9. These plagues will cause men to blaspheme God.

- Revelation 16:10. The fifth plague is darkness that fills all the kingdom of the beast.

Revelation 16:11. The wicked are still suffering because of the sores that come under the first plague, and they blaspheme God

- Revelation 16:12, 16. The sixth plague, -drying up of the river Euphrates.

Revelation 16:13. Aside from the people of God, there remain three classes led by; "the dragon," Revelation 12:9; "the beast," Revelation 13:1-3; and "the false prophet," Revelation 13:11-17, compare Revelation 19:20.

Revelation 16:13, 14. Spiritualism takes control of all three of these classes and unites them in a war against God and His people.

Revelation 13:15. The decree goes forth that all who do not worship the beast will be slain. Compare Esther 3:13-15.

- Revelation 16:17-21. The seventh plague: A great earthquake takes place. A great hail falls from heaven. They continue to blaspheme God.

'The men which had the mark of the beast'

9. Who will receive the plagues, the undiluted wrath of God? Revelation 14:9-10, first part; Revelation 16:2, 6, 19 last part.

NOTE: 'Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God. The warning from heaven is: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." Revelation 14:9, 10. But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desires a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.' *Great Controversy*, page 604.

10. Where particularly is the darkness of the fifth plague concentrated? Revelation 16:10. Read Revelation 13:2 to discover who gave the beast this seat and his great authority.

NOTE: "'The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. . . . And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord. . . . Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His

jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Terrible is the wrath of God; He has but to hide His face, and all men are put to confusion. Satan, once light bearer in the heavenly court, claimed that light dwelt in him. This will be a time for him to manifest his power; but the world finds that its prince, with all his followers, is enshrouded in the same dense gloom.’ S. N. Haskell, *Seer of Patmos*, page 281.

‘It is done’

11. What events and influences under the sixth plague prepare for the last great conflict and the deliverance of God’s people? Revelation 16:12 -14.

NOTE: ‘Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: “Ye shall not surely die.” “In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:4, 5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: “I saw three unclean spirits like frogs; ... they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion. The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God.’ *Great Controversy*, page 561.

12. As the seventh plague is poured out and the greatest earthquake of all time takes place, what is declared from heaven amid voices, thundering and lightnings? Revelation 16:17. Compare Job 38:22-23.

NOTE: ‘With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God’s covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness. By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, “Look up,” and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.” John 17:24. Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: “They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;” and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory. It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: “It is done.” That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, “such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, “to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” Great hailstones, every one “about the weight of a talent*,” are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.’ *Darkness before Dawn*, page 46. *Equivalent to the weight of a large car battery.

13. If we are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High under His wings, need we be afraid of the plagues? Psalm 91:5, 6, first part; Psalm 91:8-11.

NOTE: ‘There are troublous times before us; the judgements of God are coming upon our world. The nations of the earth are to tremble. There will be trials and perplexities on every hand; men’s hearts will fail them for fear. And what shall we do in that day? Though the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage, if we have made God our trust, He will deliver us. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee.... For He shall give His

angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 354.

LESSON INSIGHT: We are living in the very last days of the history of this earth. Just like the days before the Flood or Sodom and Gomorrah, the end comes suddenly. We shall be tested but God has promised us protection. That comfort is only found in knowing we have been obedient to His will, trusting His promises. It is our privilege in these times of peace to seek out and learn His promises, and begin building the pavilion. Now is the time to experience the love of God by faith, so the comfort and assurance of His wings will be the hiding place for our hearts and minds.

Lesson 9: February 24-March 2

‘To meet the Lord in the air’

MEMORY VERSE: Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him, Even so, Amen.’ Revelation 1:7

LESSON AIM: To show how we can distinguish the true second advent from the counterfeits that were prophesied to come.

Introduction

‘We need to search the Scriptures daily, that we may know the way of the Lord, and that we be not deceived by religious fallacies. The world is full of false theories and seductive spiritualistic ideas, which tend to destroy clear spiritual perception, and to lead away from truth and holiness. Especially at this time do we need to heed the warning, “Let no man deceive you with vain words”’ *Selected Messages, volume 1*, page 170.

‘Jesus, who gave His life to save men, has given us a warning as to what shall come to pass in the last days. The disciples came to Him privately to ask Him concerning the end of the world, and Jesus said: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many”. Matthew 24:4, 5.’ *This Day with God*, page 164.

‘This same Jesus’

1. What promise about His return were the followers of Jesus given by the angels? Acts 1:11.

NOTE: ‘The angels who lingered upon Olivet after Christ’s ascension repeated to the disciples the promise of His return: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” Precious, indeed, was this promise to those sorrowing disciples, that they should again see Jesus, who was greatly beloved by them all. Precious also is this promise to every true follower of Christ ... Jesus is coming!’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 351.

2. How many will see Jesus at His coming? Revelation 1:7.

NOTE: When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven’s King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory, a crown within a crown. In place of that old purple kingly robe, He will be clothed in raiment of whitest white, “so as no fuller on earth can white them.” Mark 9:3. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Revelation 19:16. Those who mocked and smote Him will be there. The priests and rulers will behold again the scene in the judgment hall. Every circumstance will appear before them, as if written in letters of fire. Then those who prayed, “His blood be on us, and on our children,” will receive the answer to their prayer. Then the whole world will know and understand. They will realise who and what they, poor, feeble, finite beings, have been warring against. In awful agony and horror they will cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” *Desire of Ages*, page 739.

‘When the earth is reeling to and fro like a drunkard, when the heavens are shaking and the great day of the Lord has come, who shall be able to stand? One object they behold in trembling agony from which they will try in vain to escape. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him”. The unsaved utter wild imprecations to dumb nature, their god: “Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.”’ *Last Day Events*, page 273.

‘Many shall come in My name saying, “I am Christ”’

3. What strong warning did Jesus give? Matthew 24:4-5.

NOTE: ‘Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ’s advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.... Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known, witnessed by the whole world.’ *Darkness before Dawn*, page 42.

Compiler’s Note: Many in the world are expecting a Messiah figure: Maitreya to the Buddhists; Messiah to the Jews; Christ to the Christians; Krishna to the Hindus; Imam Mahdi to the Muslims. This personage is expected to talk about world unity through climate change and other social issues, validated by supernatural manifestations and maybe accompanied by those who appear as holy people or world figures.

4. What specific counsel did the Saviour give for those living in the time of these prophesied manifestations? Matthew 24:23-24; Revelation 13:13-14, first part.

NOTE: ‘This prophecy was spoken also for the last days. This sign is given as a sign of the second advent. Even now false Christs and false prophets are showing signs and wonders to seduce His disciples. Do we not hear the cry, “Behold, He is in the desert”? Have not thousands gone forth into the desert, hoping to find Christ? And from thousands of gatherings where men profess to hold communion with departed spirits is not the call now heard, “Behold, He is in the secret chambers”? This is the very claim that spiritism puts forth. But what says Christ? “Believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”’ *Desire of Ages*, page 631.

Compilers Note: When Jesus said, Go not out, today He could have said not to look at your tablets or screens in curiosity about the breaking news.. Evil spirits will be at work to deceive. Hypnotism is powerful. Lot’s wife turned to look.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvellous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.’ *Darkness before Dawn*, page 36,

‘Coming in a cloud with power and great glory’

5. What will be seen by all as Jesus draws nearer the earth? Psalm 50:3; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 25:31; Matthew 16:27; Luke 21:27.

NOTE: ‘Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly, and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet.’ *Christian Experience and Teaching*, page 58.

6. When Jesus returns in his glory will He be standing or sitting? Revelation 14:14.

NOTE: ‘By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, “Look up,” and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.”’ *Darkness before Dawn*, page 46.

‘The trumpet shall sound’

7. What will be heard as Christ returns? 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Isaiah 26:19; Psalm 50:3.

NOTE: ‘That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, “such as was not since men were upon the

earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” The firmament appears to open and shut. The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, “to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” Great hailstones, every one “about the weight of a talent,” are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.’ *Great Controversy*, page 636

8. How will Isaiah’s prophecy be fulfilled? Isaiah 13:6; Matthew 13:49-50.

NOTE: ‘Thick clouds still cover the sky; yet the sun now and then breaks through, appearing like the avenging eye of Jehovah. Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flame. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked. The words spoken are not comprehended by all; but they are distinctly understood by the false teachers. Those who a little before were so reckless, so boastful and defiant, so exultant in their cruelty to God’s commandment-keeping people, are now overwhelmed with consternation and shuddering in fear. Their wails are heard above the sound of the elements. Demons acknowledge the deity of Christ and tremble before His power, while men are supplicating for mercy and grovelling in abject terror. Said the prophets of old, as they beheld in holy vision the day of God: “Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”’ *Great Controversy*, page 637.

‘To meet the Lord in the air’

9. What shall we feel as Christ draws near? Revelation 16:18. Compare Matthew 27:50-53; Matthew 28:2.

NOTE: ‘Before anyone had reached the sepulchre, there was a great earthquake. The mightiest angel from heaven, he who held the position from which Satan fell, received his commission from the Father, and clothed with the panoply of heaven, he parted the darkness from his track. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. As soon as his feet touched the ground, it quaked beneath his tread. The Roman guard were keeping their weary watch when this wonderful scene took place, and they were enabled to endure the sight, for they had a message to bear as witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. The angel approached the grave, rolled away the stone as though it had been a pebble, and sat upon it. The light of heaven encircled the tomb, and the whole heaven was lighted by the glory of the angels. Then his voice was heard, “Thy Father calls Thee; come forth”’ *Manuscript 115*, 1897.

‘If the soldiers at the sepulchre were so filled with terror at the appearance of one angel clothed with heavenly light and strength, that they fell as dead men to the ground, how will His enemies stand before the Son of God, when He comes in power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels from the courts of heaven? Then the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.’ *Signs of the Times*, April 22, 1913.

10. Whose face will all the righteous see as their feet lift up from off the earth. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 John 3:2.

NOTE: ‘As the high priest, after performing his service in the holy of holies, came forth to the waiting congregation in his pontifical robes; so Christ will come the second time, clothed in garments of whitest white, “so as no fuller on earth can white them.” Mark 9:3. He will come in His own glory, and in the glory of His Father, and all the angelic host will escort Him on His way. Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honour and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. Well might the disciples rejoice in the hope of their Lord’s return.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 33.

11. Though the wicked in general are not raised till after the thousand years and the righteous are not raised until the day of Christ’s coming, how does the Bible show that there will be a special earlier resurrection for God’s purposes. Matthew 26:64; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 14:13; Daniel 12:2.

NOTE: ‘It was at midnight that God chose to deliver His people. As the wicked were mocking around them, suddenly the sun appeared, shining in his strength, and the moon stood still.... Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, shaking the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel’s message* keeping the

Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law. “They also which pierced him,” those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honour placed upon the loyal and obedient. [At His trial], Caiaphas, raising his right hand toward heaven, addressed Jesus in the form of a solemn oath: “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” ... Every ear was bent to listen, and every eye was fixed on His face as He answered, “Thou hast said.” A heavenly light seemed to illuminate His pale countenance as He added, “Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” *Maranatha*, page 281. *from 1844 onwards.

‘He doeth great wonders’

12. What are we warned about the dangers of deception by signs and wonders? Revelation 13:13-14.

NOTE: As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour’s advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. (Revelation 1:13-15: “...One like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.”) The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!” The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion ... But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God’s unmingled wrath shall be poured out. And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ’s advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.... Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; **go not forth**; behold, He is in the secret chambers; **believe it not**. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known, witnessed by the whole world.’ *Darkness before Dawn*, page 42. (Emphases and verses in brackets added)

13. How does Paul warn of these same deceptions? 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

NOTE: ‘Satan is preparing his deceptions that, in his last campaign against the people of God, they may not understand that it is he. 2 Corinthians 11:14: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” While some deceived souls are advocating that he does not exist, he is taking them captive, and is working through them to a great extent. Satan knows better than God’s people the power that they can have over him, when their strength is in Christ. When they humbly entreat the mighty Conqueror for help, the weakest believers in the truth, relying firmly upon Christ, can successfully repulse Satan and all his host. He is too cunning to come openly, boldly, with his temptations, for then the drowsy energies of the Christian would arouse, and he would rely upon the strong and mighty Deliverer. But Satan comes in unperceived, and in disguise he works through the children of disobedience, who profess godliness. Satan will go to the extent of his power to harass, tempt, and mislead God’s people.’ *Messages to Young People*, page 51.

LESSON INSIGHT: Our three major safeguards against the last deceptions by false teachers, false prophets and evil spirits masquerading as angels of light, as well as Satan himself when he personates Christ walking on the earth are the great resurrection of all the sleeping faithful, and knowing that that Christ does not set up His kingdom on earth at His coming, making global laws with global penalties, and finally and importantly the fact that Jesus feet do not touch the earth when He comes. We should note—counterfeits usually come first. It is imperative that we read and know from our Bibles everything that God has revealed to us.

Lesson 10: March 3-9

‘Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom?’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ Matthew 6:10.

LESSON AIM: To show that the Second Advent of Jesus does not usher in a temporal reign of Christ on earth, with a second chance, for the earth will be in ruins through the judgements of God, Jerusalem in heaps, and the wicked lying dead on the ground. Earthly time is now finished and the righteous have moved into eternity.

Introduction

‘Christ presented to the multitude of Jews and Gentiles of all nations the real original truths connected with His kingdom, which had been buried out of sight. He sought to clear away the mist and fog of their false, long-cherished ideas in regard to His mission and his kingdom. They supposed it was a temporal [set in earthly time], earthly kingdom; but He showed them its spiritual and eternal nature.’ *Review and Herald*, March 21, 1893.

‘Prince of the House of David’

1. Which Bible references are used to support the teaching that Messiah will set up a kingdom on the earth? 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44.

NOTE: ‘The Messiah was to be of the royal line, for in the prophecy uttered by Jacob the Lord said, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Genesis 49:10. Isaiah prophesied: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” “Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee.” Isaiah 11:1; 55:3-5. Jeremiah also bore witness of the coming Redeemer as a Prince of the house of David: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.” And again: “Thus saith the Lord: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.” Jeremiah 23:5, 6; 33:17, 18. Even the birthplace of the Messiah was foretold: “Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 223.

2. How did the disciples show that they expected the kingdom to be a temporal kingdom that the Messiah would restore to Israel? Acts 1:6.

NOTE: ‘Christ’s sacrifice on 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. He was on His way to the throne of God, to be honoured by the heavenly host. Clothed with boundless authority, He gave His disciples their commission, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end.” Just before leaving His disciples, Christ once more plainly stated the nature of His kingdom. He recalled to their remembrance things He had previously told them regarding it. He declared that it was not His purpose to establish in this world a temporal kingdom. He was not appointed to reign as an earthly monarch on David’s throne. When the disciples asked Him, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” He answered, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” It was not necessary for them to see farther into the future than the revelations He had made enabled them to see. Their work was to proclaim the gospel message.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 30.

‘I will make Jerusalem heaps’

3. What familiar words of Jesus cause many today to look towards a literal earthly kingdom? Matthew 6:9-10.

NOTE: “‘Thy kingdom come.’” Matthew 6:10. God is our Father, who loves and cares for us as His children; He is also the great King of the universe. The interests of His kingdom are our interests, and we are to work for its upbuilding. The disciples of Christ were looking for the immediate coming of the kingdom of His glory, but in giving them this prayer Jesus taught that the kingdom

was not then to be established. They were to pray for its coming as an event yet future. But this petition was also an assurance to them. While they were not to behold the coming of the kingdom in their day, the fact that Jesus bade them pray for it is evidence that in God's own time it will surely come. The kingdom of God's grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is to be given to "the people of the saints of the Most High." Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them "from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34. And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.' *Heaven*, page 22.

4. Many expect that Jesus will go to old Jerusalem to commence His reign, but what Bible verses show that He would have neither subjects on earth to rule over or a city on earth from which to reign? 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jeremiah 9:11.

NOTE: 'I was pointed to some who are in the great error of believing that it is their duty to go to Old Jerusalem, and think they have a work to do there before the Lord comes. Such a view is calculated to take the mind and interest from the present work of the Lord, under the message of the third angel; for those who think that they are yet to go to Jerusalem will have their minds there, and their means will be withheld from the cause of present truth to get themselves and others there.' *Early Writings*, page 75.

'Give to Jesus your devotion where He is in the heavenly sanctuary; seek for the Holy Spirit as His representative wherever His people bow to worship Him. It becomes us to know Jesus by an experimental knowledge, as a personal Saviour. We should be gathering up every ray of divine light, not looking to old Jerusalem where Christ was once, but to the New Jerusalem where He is now.' *Lessons from the Visions of Ezekiel, Paulson Collection*, page 139.

'The book of life'

5. Where is the kingdom of God being built up today? Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3-5.

NOTE: 'We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 44.

'It is a life of obedience which will please God and be acceptable to him. Delay not to make an entire consecration to God, that your names may be recorded in the Lamb's book of life.' *An Appeal to the Youth*, page 70.

6. Where are the names of potential citizens of God's kingdom either recorded or blotted out? Revelation 3:5; Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:27.

NOTE: 'By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgement. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. Before His coming, then, the character of every man's work will have been determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward will have been apportioned according to his deeds.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310.

7. How do we know from the Bible that the destiny of all will have been decided before Jesus returns in glory and there will be no second chance? Daniel 7:10; Revelation 22:11-12.

NOTE: 'When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 349.

'And there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom'

8. At the end of the judgement, who is given a kingdom? Daniel 7:14

NOTE: "And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming

of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844.' *Great Controversy*, page 480.

9. To whom does Jesus give the privilege to be joint heirs with Him in His kingdom? Daniel 7:27; Revelation 3:21; Romans 8:17.

NOTE: 'Again I looked and saw the earth purified. There was not a single sign of the curse. The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God's entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended. Wherever we looked, everything upon which the eye rested was beautiful and holy. And all the redeemed host, old and young, great and small, cast their glittering crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him, and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever. The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.' *Early Writings*, page 295.

'A new earth'

10. When did God plan the joys of this kingdom? Matthew 25:34.

NOTE: 'The same fire from God that consumed the wicked purified the whole earth. The broken, ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere also, and all the stubble was consumed. Then our inheritance opened before us, glorious and beautiful, and we inherited the whole earth made new. We all shouted with a loud voice, "Glory; Alleluia!" *Early Writings*, page 54.

'Thus will be fulfilled Christ's promise to His disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honour and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 34.

11. What are the delights of this kingdom? Revelation 22:4; Revelation 22:1-3; Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 55:12-13.

NOTE: 'In the earth made new the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realised. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul.' *Adventist Home*, page 549.

'The former shall not be remembered'

12. How much will the faithful remember of the pains and sorrows and trials of this earth? Isaiah 65:17.

NOTE: 'The lion we should much dread and fear here will then lie down with the lamb, and everything in the New Earth will be peace and harmony. The trees of the New Earth will be straight and lofty, without deformity. The saints will have crowns of glory upon their heads, and harps of gold in their hands. They will play upon the golden harp, and sing redeeming love, and make melody unto God. Their former trials and suffering in this world will be forgotten and lost amid the glories of the New Earth. Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home, that world of beauty which no artist can picture and no mortal tongue describe. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray.' *Heaven*, page 133.

'Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it.' *Maranatha*, page 355

13. When does the kingdom of glory come to earth? Daniel 7:26-27; Revelation 20:15- 21:3.

NOTE: 'Between the school established in Eden at the beginning and the school of the hereafter there lies the whole compass of this world's history, the history of human transgression and suffering, of divine sacrifice, and of victory over death and sin. Not all

the conditions of that first school of Eden will be found in the school of the future life. No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong. Every character has withstood the testing of evil, and none are longer susceptible to its power. "To him that overcometh," Christ says, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." The giving of the tree of life in Eden was conditional, and it was finally withdrawn. But the gifts of the future life are absolute and eternal. The prophet beholds the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." *Education*, page 302.

LESSON INSIGHT: God intended that Eden should be our Paradise, but Adam and Eve forfeited that inheritance. All the centuries between have been part of our training ground. It will be the pure and the faithful and the obedient whose names are retained in the Lamb's Book of Life who will be trusted to enter the inheritance of the New Earth. What are we doing in our school years?

Lesson 11: March 10-16

'Be ye ready'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' Matthew 24:44.

LESSON AIM: This lesson stresses the need to **be** ready and waiting, able to be used now by the Lord as His witnesses - not still **making** the needed preparation. Being ready, not getting ready. He needs us now.

Introduction

'Instead of looking forward to some future time when, through a special endowment of spiritual power, they will receive a miraculous fitting up for soul winning, they are yielding themselves daily to God, that He may make them vessels meet for His use. Daily they are improving the opportunities for service that lie within their reach. Daily they are witnessing for the Master wherever they may be, whether in some humble sphere of labour in the home, or in a public field of usefulness. To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God, He went forth to strengthen and bless others.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 55.

'Saying with a loud voice'

1. What are the final appeals of the everlasting gospel within the Three Angel's Messages? ? Revelation 14:6-12

NOTE: God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God's messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 58.

2. In analysing these three messages, which warnings are particularly appropriate to today? Revelation 14:6-12.

NOTE: 'The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet's [Elijah's] day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their baleful influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. It is publicly taught that we have reached a time when human reason should be exalted above the teachings of the Word. The law of God, the divine standard of righteousness, is declared to be of no effect. The enemy of all truth is working with deceptive power to cause men and women to place human institutions where God should be, and to forget that which was ordained for the happiness and salvation of mankind.' *Prophets and Kings*, page 170.

'And in His hand a sharp sickle'

3. When these messages have done their work, what is the next event to take place? Revelation 14:14.

NOTE: 'When the storm of God's wrath breaks upon the world, it will be a terrible revelation for souls to find that their house is being swept away because it is built upon the sand. Let the warning be given them before it is too late. We should now feel the responsibility of labouring with intense earnestness to impart to others the light we have received. We cannot be too much in earnest. Even those who have felt much have not felt enough. They must feel still more deeply. The heart of God is moved. Souls are very precious in his sight. It was for this world that Christ wept in agony, for this world He was crucified. God gave His only begotten Son to save sinners, and He desires us to love others as He has loved us. He desires to see those who have had great light flashing that light upon the pathway of their fellowmen. As you see the peril and misery of the world under the working of Satan, do not exhaust your God-given energies in idle lamentations, but go to work for yourselves and for others. It is fitting for us to weep as Christ wept, but let us weep to some purpose. Awake, and feel a burden for those that are perishing.' *Pamphlets 004*, page 13.

4. What grand declaration is made by the angel from the temple? Revelation 14:15.

NOTE: 'There are many, many in our churches who know little of the real meaning of the truth for this time. I appeal to them not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which says so plainly that the end is near. Oh, how many who have not sought their souls' salvation will soon make the bitter lamentation: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"! We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time, not a moment, to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works: "My Lord delayeth His coming." Let the message of Christ's soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation, for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields to tell the unconcerned and indifferent to seek the Lord while He may be found. The workers will find their harvest wherever they proclaim the forgotten truths of the Bible. They will find those who will accept the truth and will devote their lives to winning souls to Christ. The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 356.

'Because the harvest is come'

5. When the angel cries to the King on His throne, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap," what does this say about the harvest?

Mark 4:29.

NOTE: 'Immediately following the closing words of the third angel is "heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth", from this time forward; and immediately following this, are the words: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." ...And Jesus himself said, "The harvest is the end of the world." These facts show that the Third Angel's Message is a mighty, threefold, loud-voiced message, which goes forth to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people, just before the coming of the Lord; which ripens the harvest of the earth; and which makes a people prepared for the Lord. And so, it is the last, the closing, message of God to the world.' A.T. Jones, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 2, 1900.

6. How soon does Christ put the sickle into the ripe field to reap the harvest? Mark 4:29

NOTE: "'Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'" In that message is embodied the truth which will save all who receive the love of it. It will not only save them from the worship of the beast and his image, and from the power and deception of Satan, but it will save them with the everlasting salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with Him. It is for this that the truth of the message is to fit all who will receive the love of it, for the event which immediately follows the message is the coming of the Lord . . . And "the harvest is the end of the world." Matthew 13:39.' A. T. Jones, *Signs of the Times*, November 17, 1887.

'Long patience for it'

7. What is the fruit for which the Husbandman of the earth is waiting with patience? James 5:7; Galatians 5:22-23.

NOTE: "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly

the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

8. When it seems that the Second Coming is delayed, what should be our prayer? Matthew 9:37-38.

NOTE: 'But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.'" Our work is plainly laid down in the word of God. Christian is to be united to Christian, church to church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency to be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all to be combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.' *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 28, 1893.

'Labourers together with God'

9. While Jesus waits, what is our part? 1 Corinthians 3:9 first part.

NOTE: There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.' *Christian Service*, page 254.

10. What does Paul say to arouse believers to action? Romans 13:11-12.

NOTE: 'Many, many are approaching the day of God doing nothing, shunning responsibilities, and as the result they are religious dwarfs. So far as work for God is concerned, the pages of their life history present a mournful blank. They are trees in the garden of God, but only cumberers of the ground, darkening with their unproductive boughs the ground which fruit-bearing trees might have occupied. There is danger for those who do little or nothing for Christ. The grace of God will not long abide in the soul of him who, having great privileges and opportunities, remains silent. There is no time to sleep now, no time to indulge in useless regrets. He who ventures to slumber now will miss precious opportunities of doing good. We are granted the blessed privilege of gathering sheaves in the great harvest; and every soul saved will be an additional star in the crown of Jesus, our adorable Redeemer. Who is eager to lay off the armour when by pushing the battle a little longer he will achieve new victories and gather new trophies for eternity? The heavenly messengers are doing their work; but what are we doing? Brethren and sisters, God calls upon you to redeem the time. Draw nigh to God. Stir up the gift that is within you. Let those who have had the opportunity to become familiar with the reasons of our faith, now use this knowledge to some purpose. How can you who repeat the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," sit at ease in your homes without helping to carry the torch of truth to others? How can you lift up your hands before God and ask His blessing upon yourselves and your families, when you are doing so little to help others?' *Christian Service*, page 89.

'Here am I, send me!'

11. Will these words of Isaiah be your response to the Lord's appeal? Isaiah 6:8.

NOTE: 'The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Immanuel "shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." "The tabernacle of God" shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." But before that coming, Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." Matthew 24:14. His kingdom will not come until the good tidings of His grace have been carried to all the earth. Hence, as we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him, we hasten the coming of His kingdom. Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, "Here am I; send me" to open blind eyes, to turn men "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified" they alone pray in sincerity, "Thy kingdom come." ' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 107.

12. Or might your reply be the words of Jeremiah? Jeremiah 1:6-8.

NOTE: 'Of the apostles it is written, "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark 16:20. As Christ sent forth His disciples, so today He sends forth the members of His church. The same power that the apostles had is for them. If they will make God their strength, He will work with them, and they shall not labour in vain. Let them realise that the work in which they are engaged is one upon which the Lord has placed His signet. God said to Jeremiah, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee." Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched His servant's mouth, saying, "Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:7-9. And He bids us go forth to speak the words

He gives us, feeling His holy touch upon our lips.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 599.

LESSON INSIGHT: The evil one has his agents on the earth, well schooled and well-trained. They work 100% for evil, working against Christ. But who does Christ have in this world as His agents? What are those doing who should know and understand the last messages of the Gospel and the seal in the law of God? The Coming of the Lord is preached less and less, yet with a zealous army at His disposal His coming could be hastened and the ills of this world could be forever over.

Lesson 12: March 17-23

‘The Husbandman waiteth’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘His lord said unto him, ‘Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord’ Matthew 25:21.

LESSON AIM: To show that how we cope with delay shows the measure of our faith and our desire to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

Introduction

‘We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer’s glory in the kingdom of God. It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness.’ *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 236.

‘My Two Witnesses’

1. Which long time prophecy of apostasy and persecution in the Christian church was yet to be fulfilled before Christ’s promised coming could take place? Daniel 7:23-25; Revelation 11:2-3.

NOTE: “They [the two witnesses] shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth.” During the greater part of this period, God’s witnesses remained in a state of obscurity. The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. When the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authority; when its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it; when those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried in dungeon cells, martyred for their faith, or compelled to flee to mountain fastnesses, and to dens and caves of the earth, then the faithful witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Yet they continued their testimony throughout the entire period of 1260 years. In the darkest times there were faithful men who loved God’s word and were jealous for His honour. To these loyal servants were given wisdom, power, and authority to declare His truth during the whole of this time.’ *Great Controversy*, page 267.

2. The hope of the disciples had been that Jesus would return speedily, but what other, even longer, time prophecy leading to the judgement had not been unsealed in their generation? Daniel 8:14.

NOTE: ‘As a people, we should be earnest students of prophecy; we should not rest until we become intelligent in regard to the subject of the sanctuary, which is brought out in the visions of Daniel and John. This subject sheds great light on our present position and work, and gives us unmistakable proof that God has led us in our past experience. It explains our disappointment in 1844, showing us that the sanctuary to be cleansed was not the earth, as we had supposed, but that Christ then entered into the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and is there performing the closing work of His priestly office, in fulfilment of the words of the angel to the prophet Daniel, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”’ *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.

‘The hour of His judgement is come’

3. How do we know that the long time prophecies of the Bible been fulfilled? Revelation 14:7; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12.

NOTE: ‘Those who had accepted the light concerning the mediation of Christ and the perpetuity of the law of God found that these were the truths presented in Revelation 14. The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord’s second coming. The announcement, “The hour of His judgement is come,” points to the closing work of Christ’s ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour’s intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. The work of judgement which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation. That men may be prepared to stand in the judgement, the message commands them to “fear God, and give glory to Him,” “and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” In order to be prepared for the judgement, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment. The apostle Paul declares: “As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law, ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.”’ *Great Controversy*, page 436.

4. Are the signs that Jesus gave as waymarks in the time before He returns being fulfilled? Matthew 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-30; Mark 13:24-25.

NOTE: ‘Jesus, seated on the Mount of Olives, gave instruction to His disciples concerning the signs which should precede His coming: “As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” The same sins that brought judgements upon the world in the days of Noah, exist in our day.’ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, page 11.

‘Cast not away therefore your confidence’

5. With each passing generation we see those who have been losing hope, but what exhortation did Paul give? Hebrews 10:35.

NOTE: ‘It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centred. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Hebrews 10:35-37. Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed.’ *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 236.

6. What lessons did James teach us from the work of the farmer? James 5:7.

NOTE: ‘The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner. But “righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne.” “The Lord is slow to anger;” but He is “great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” The world has become bold in transgression of God’s law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honour, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.’ *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 177.

‘Hold fast till I come’

7. What are almost the final words of the Three Angel’s Messages? Revelation 14:12, first part.

NOTE: ‘As the ministration of Jesus closed in the Holy Place, and He passed into the Holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel to earth with the third message. He placed a parchment in the angel’s hand, and as he descended to earth in majesty and power, he proclaimed a fearful warning, the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, and show them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, yet they must hold fast the truth. The third angel closes his message with these words: Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ *Spiritual Gifts, volume 1*, page 163.

8. What encouragement does God give to His people? Colossians 2:6-7; Colossians 1:23 first part; John 15:8-10.

NOTE: 'Let every hour be one of trust and prayer and faith. You may expect trials. We must all be purified from dross, and made white and tried. In the time of trial, seek to bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. One foe after another may come in unexpected ways, but dismiss the temptations of the enemy. In this way, we go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, obtaining one spiritual victory after another. Hold fast to Christ, and He will give you His strong arm to lean upon. There is a crown of life for the overcomer. Close union with Christ means to do the words of Christ. He calls this union a continuance of His love. Then the heart is in harmony with God. Treasure up the promises, doing every little duty faithfully, as unto God. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." Here is compliance and dependence. You have a strong Helper, and while you trust in your surety, you are safe.' *Daughters of God*, page 184.

'For He is faithful that promised'

9. What does it mean to hold fast? Hebrews 10:23, first part; James 1:5-8.

NOTE: 'Men, women, and youth, God requires you to possess moral courage, steadiness of purpose, fortitude and perseverance, minds that cannot take the assertions of another, but which will investigate for themselves before receiving or rejecting, that will study and weigh evidence, and take it to the Lord in prayer. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Now the condition: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." This petition for wisdom is not to be a meaningless prayer, out of mind as soon as finished. It is a prayer that expresses the strong, earnest desire of the heart, arising from a conscious lack of wisdom to determine the will of God.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 130.

10. In practical terms, to what words of Christ are we to hold firmly by faith? 2 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 10:23, last part.

NOTE: 'After the prayer is made, if the answer is not realised immediately, do not weary of waiting and become unstable. Waver not. Cling to the promise, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Like the importunate widow, urge your case, being firm in your purpose. Is the object important and of great consequence to you? It certainly is. Then waver not, for your faith may be tried. If the thing you desire is valuable, it is worthy of a strong, earnest effort. You have the promise; watch and pray. Be steadfast and the prayer will be answered; for is it not God who has promised? If it costs you something to obtain it, you will prize it the more when obtained. You are plainly told that, if you waver, you need not think that you shall receive anything of the Lord. A caution is here given not to become weary, but to rest firmly upon the promise. If you ask, He will give you liberally and upbraid not. Here is where many make a mistake. They waver from their purpose, and their faith fails. This is the reason they receive nothing of the Lord, who is our Source of strength.' *Testimonies, volume 2*, page 131.

'To be glorified in His saints'

11. What does our firm reliance on His promises bring to our Saviour? 2 Corinthians 1:20.

NOTE: 'We should be much in secret prayer. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. And if we would grow and flourish, we must continually draw sap and nourishment from the Living Vine; for separated from the Vine, we have no strength. I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said: "Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them." I was then pointed to Elijah. He was subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly. His faith endured the trial. Seven times he prayed before the Lord, and at last the cloud was seen. I saw that we had doubted the sure promises, and wounded the Saviour by our lack of faith. *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 127.

12. What does our faith in holding His promises and preparing for His coming bring to our Lord? 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12; 1 Peter 1:7.

NOTE: 'In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious, there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: ... "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ..." *God's Amazing Grace*, page 81.

LESSON INSIGHT: What does the teaching of the Second Advent of Christ bring to our inner experience? It is the constraining power, the motivation for our service, the hope that measures our readiness, and prompts to selflessness and sacrifice. The moral purpose of the prophecy leads us to take up the cross, our duty, and our work to prepare a people to meet Him. Knowledge of the

Second Coming of Jesus focuses our minds on the right and wrong in our lives. It deepens our trust in the promises of God. Those who know these things should be searching the Scriptures for a living understanding of every aspect of the second coming of Jesus.

Lesson 13: March 24-30

‘A sure reward’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘And He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.’ Revelation 21:10.

LESSON AIM: To teach that Christ’s coming to reign on the earth, His third coming, can happen only after the glorious second coming of Christ and the end of intervening thousand years of desolation on the earth.

Introduction

‘There is the New Jerusalem, the metropolis of the glorified new earth, “a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” In the city of God “there shall be no night.” None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning, and shall ever be far from its close. “And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.” The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the holy city with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day. “I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we “see through a glass, darkly.” We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence, and behold the glory of His countenance. There the redeemed shall “know, even as also they are known.” The loves and sympathies, which God Himself has planted in the soul, shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together “the whole family in Heaven and earth,” these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.’ *Great Controversy*, page 676.

‘They seek a country’

1. Where was John when he was given the vision of the glorious city of God in the earth made new? Revelation 1:9.

NOTE: ‘Says the prophet of Patmos: “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.” About His coming cluster the glories of that “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” Then the long-continued rule of evil shall be broken; “the kingdoms of this world” will become “the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.” “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” “The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” He shall be “for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people.” It is then that the peaceful and long-desired kingdom of the Messiah shall be established under the whole heaven.’ *Great Controversy*, page 301.

2. How had the promise of the inheritance of a city and a country been the hope of the early patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Hebrews 11:10, 13-14, 16.

NOTE: ‘The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan, but the whole earth. So says the apostle, “The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” And the Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ. All that are Christ’s are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”, heirs to “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away”, the earth freed from the curse of sin. For “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;” and “the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” God gave to Abraham a view of this immortal inheritance, and with this hope he was content. “By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Of the posterity of Abraham it is written, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” We must

dwell as pilgrims and strangers here if we would gain “a better country, that is, an heavenly.” Those who are children of Abraham will be seeking the city which he looked for, “whose builder and maker is God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 170.

‘Be ye glad and rejoice forever’

3. What beautiful promises of hope were recorded by the prophets? Isaiah 55:12-13; Isaiah 65:17; Jeremiah 31:11-12.

NOTE: ‘After the wicked are destroyed, as shown in Revelation 20, He that sits upon the throne will say, “Behold, I make all things new.” “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea;” and the new Jerusalem, the holy city, having already come down from God out of heaven, and being thus upon the earth, it is written: “I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” And thus is fulfilled the promise made of old, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”’ A. T. Jones, *Signs of the Times*, page 363.

4. How were these promises divinely refreshed in the minds of the disciples and the early Christians? John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:5.

NOTE: ‘He spoke to them also words of hope and courage. “Let not your heart be troubled,” He said; “ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” For your sake I came into the world; for you I have been working. When I go away I shall still work earnestly for you.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 22.

‘The meek shall inherit the earth’

5. Whom does God say will inherit the earth? Psalm 37:10-11.

NOTE: ‘This same earth, freed from the curse of sin, is to be man’s eternal home. Of the earth the Scripture says, that God “created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited.” And “whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever.” So in the Sermon on the Mount the Saviour declared, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” So the psalmist long before had written, “The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” With this agree the words of the Scripture, “The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth.” They “shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.” The fires of the last day are to destroy “the heavens and the earth, which are now;” but there shall come forth “new heavens and a new earth.” The heavens and the earth will be made new. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” No human language can fully describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. We cannot comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.’ *The Story of Jesus*, page 184.

“Consider the lilies.” Every flower that opens its petals to the sunshine obeys the same great laws that guide the stars, and how simple and beautiful and how sweet its life! Through the flowers, God would call our attention to the loveliness of Christ-like character. He who has given such beauty to the blossoms desires far more that the soul should be clothed with the beauty of the character of Christ. Consider, says Jesus, how the lilies grow; how, springing from the cold, dark earth, or from the mud of the river bed, the plants unfold in loveliness and fragrance. Who would dream of the possibilities of beauty in the rough brown bulb of the lily? But when the life of God, hidden therein, unfolds at His call in the rain and the sunshine, men marvel at the vision of grace and loveliness. Even so will the life of God unfold in every human soul that will yield itself to the ministry of His grace, which, free as the rain and the sunshine, comes with its benediction to all. It is the word of God that creates the flowers, and the same word will produce in you the graces of His Spirit. God’s law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ, like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love.’ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 97.

6. What is the blessing pronounced in the third Beatitude? Matthew 5:5.

NOTE: “Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” The difficulties that the Christian encounters may be very much lessened by that meekness of character which hides itself in Christ. Jesus invites all the weary and heavy-laden to come unto Him who is meek and lowly in heart, that they may find rest. If the Christian possesses the humility of his Master, he will rise above the slights, the rebuffs, and annoyances to which he is daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over his spirit. That

meekness, which Jesus blessed, operates amid the scenes of domestic life; it makes the home happy, it provokes no quarrels, gives back no angry answers, but soothes the irritated temper, and diffuses a gentleness which is felt by all within its charmed circle. It calms the inflammable spirit of retaliation, and mirrors forth the character of Christ.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, page 207.*

7. What fears will no longer trouble us? Revelation 21:4.

NOTE: 'The time spent here is the Christian's winter. Here the chilly winds of affliction blow upon us, and the waves of trouble roll against us. But in the near future, when Christ comes, sorrow and sighing will be forever ended. Then will be the Christian's summer. All trials will be over, and there will be no more sickness or death. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying ... for the former things are passed away.'" *Manuscript 28. 1886.*

'Sanctified by faith'

8. What are two of the essential qualifications found in those who will inherit the new earth? Romans 4:13; Acts 26:18.

NOTE: 'I know that if I love God, and keep His commandments, there is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory reserved in heaven for me.' *The Faith I Live By, page 364.*

9. Who are the only ones who will enter into the joy of the Lord? Matthew 25:23; Daniel 7:27. Consider Matthew 7:21.

NOTE: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads." In this world their minds were consecrated to God; they served Him with the intellect and with the heart; and now He can place His name "in their foreheads." "And they shall reign for ever and ever." They do not go in and out as those who beg a place. They are of that number to whom Christ says, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He welcomes them as His children, saying, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4. The vision of the prophet pictures them as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven must first have followed Him on earth, not fretfully or capriciously, but in trustful, loving, willing obedience, as the flock follows the shepherd. "I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne: ... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.... In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." *Acts of the Apostles, page 591.*

'The earth was lightened with His glory'

10. As we contemplate the final days of this dark world, what is our responsibility towards those who do not have the light and hope of the earth made new? Matthew 5:14.

NOTE: 'God was in the work, and every saint, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message. I saw that this message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry. Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction. God's people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation. I heard everywhere a multitude of voices saying, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'" *Early Writings, page 278.*

11. What will be the final appeal to come out of apostasy and corruption? Revelation 18:1-4.

NOTE: There was a coming out, a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life. So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so it will be in the last days. Again the voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity. The state of corruption and apostasy, that in the last days would exist in the religious world, was presented to the prophet John in the vision of Babylon, "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Before its destruction the call is to be given from heaven, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." As in the days of Noah and Lot, there must be a marked separation from sin and sinners. There can be no compromise between God and the world, no turning back to secure earthly treasures. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Like the dwellers in the vale of Siddim, the people are dreaming of prosperity and peace. "Escape for thy life," is the warning from the angels of God; but other voices are heard saying, "Be not excited; there is no cause for alarm." The multitudes cry, "Peace and safety," while Heaven declares that swift destruction is about

to come upon the transgressor. On the night prior to their destruction, the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure and derided the fears and warnings of the messenger of God; but those scoffers perished in the flames; that very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom. God will not always be mocked; He will not long be trifled with. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isaiah 13:9. The great mass of the world will reject God's mercy, and will be overwhelmed in swift and irretrievable ruin. But those who heed the warning shall dwell "in the secret place of the Most High," and "abide under the shadow of the Almighty." His truth shall be their shield and buckler. For them is the promise, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 167

'Long enjoy the work of their hands'

12. What will be some of the satisfactions of everyday life in the new earth? Isaiah 65:21-22.

NOTE: 'In the earth made new the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.'" *Prophets and Kings*, page 730.

13. What will be the joys of the natural world? Isaiah 11:6-9 first part.

NOTE: 'Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God. I saw another field full of all kinds of flowers, and as I plucked them, I cried out, "They will never fade." Next I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green, and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus. Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts, the lion, the lamb, the leopard, and the wolf, all together in perfect union. We passed through the midst of them, and they followed on peaceably after. Then we entered a wood, not like the dark woods we have here; no, no; but light, and all over glorious; the branches of the trees waved to and fro, and we all cried out, "We will dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." We passed through the woods, for we were on our way to Mount Zion.' *Christian Experience and Teachings*, page 62.

'As we were travelling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were martyrs that had been slain for Him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they also had a hem of red on their garments. Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly to the top of the mountains, and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place; the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig-tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs, these made the place all over glorious. There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear in "the beauty of the Lord our God," what a field will be open to our study! There the student of science may read the records of creation and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature's voices and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting—in the vast universe behold "God's name writ large," and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray. In the varied gifts of God in nature we see but the faintest gleaming of His glory. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 364

LESSON INSIGHT: Throughout the Bible, prophetic promises and warnings have pointed to the time of the second coming of Christ. This is the marker point for the end of all time and all opportunity. Once decisions have been made in probationary time these decisions will be counted as our choice for or against God for always. At the Second Coming evil and wickedness will begin to be finished for ever. This will be a time of great joy for those who have been oppressed and have suffered at the hands of the Evil One. Now the servants who have been faithful to their Master will be recompensed, and everlasting life and joy will begin. What can we do hasten the Coming of our Saviour and Redeemer?

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

**henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:
and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”**

2 Timothy 4:7-8