

‘To prove Him with hard questions’

‘Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion.

‘The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what.

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth, know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others, who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested, they knew not their great ignorance.

And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God, and a turning to men, putting human wisdom in place of divine.

God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures, and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold.

God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God, so that when the testing time shall come, and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith, they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

Agitate, agitate, agitate! The subjects which we present to the world must be to us a living reality. It is important that in defending the doctrines which we consider fundamental articles of faith, we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. These may avail to silence an opposer, but they do not honour the truth. We should present sound arguments, that will not only silence our opponents, but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny.

Whatever may be man's intellectual advancement, let him not for a moment think that there is no need of thorough and continuous searching of the Scriptures for greater light. As a people, we are called individually to be students of prophecy. We must watch with earnestness that we may discern any ray of light which God shall present to us. We are to catch the first gleamings of truth; and through prayerful study, clearer light may be obtained, which can be brought before others.

When God's people are at ease, and satisfied with their present enlightenment, we may be sure that He will not favour them. It is His will that they should be ever moving forward, to receive the increased and ever-increasing light which is shining for them.

The present attitude of the church is not pleasing to God. There has come in a self-confidence that has led them to feel no necessity for more truth and greater light. We are living at a time when Satan is at work on the right hand and on the left, before and behind us; and yet as a people we are asleep. God wills that a voice shall be heard arousing His people to action.

Brethren, we must sink the shaft deep in the mine of truth. You may question matters with yourselves and with one another, if you only do it in the right spirit; but too often self is large, and as soon as investigation begins, an unchristian spirit is manifested. This is just what Satan delights in, but we should come with a humble heart to know for ourselves what is truth.

The time is coming when we shall be separated and scattered, and each one of us will have to stand without the privilege of communion with those of like precious faith; and how can you stand unless God is by your side, and you know that He is leading and guiding you? Whenever we come to investigate Bible truth, the Master of assemblies is with us. The Lord does not leave the ship one moment to be steered by ignorant pilots. We may receive our orders from the Captain of our salvation.’

Counsels to Writers & Editors, pages 38-42

Lesson Compiler's Note

In this quarter, we will look at a number of teachings which are widely held among the various churches and religious groups. When dealing with the teachings of men, it is by no means easy to confine oneself to Bible study alone, unless those doctrines are in harmony with the Scriptures. In these lessons, it will sometimes be necessary to employ the writings of those who teach these things (as well as those who write to refute false teachings), in order to make clear what it is that men believe and teach, before examining what the Bible has to say about these doctrines. Quoting from these non-inspired writers in these lessons should **not** be taken to imply that the opinions of these men are necessarily true. In every case the Bible test must be applied: ‘If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.’

Lesson 1: 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father'

MEMORY VERSE: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' Ezekiel 18:20.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 18:1-32.

LESSON AIM: To examine the doctrine of 'Original Sin', as taught in Catholic and Reformed churches.

Note: The first part of this lesson explains what is actually meant by those who claim to believe in original sin. The second part of the lesson brings this doctrine to the judgement of the Bible.

Introduction

'There are many who in their hearts murmur against God. They say, "We inherit the fallen nature of Adam, and are not responsible for our natural imperfections." They find fault with God's requirements, and complain that He demands what they have no power to give. Satan made the same complaint in heaven, but such thoughts dishonour God. And the Lord knoweth our thoughts afar off. He speaks to His people, saying, "O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.'" *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1892.

Original sin

1. What is meant by the doctrine of 'original sin'?

NOTE: Oxford scholar, J. N. D. Kelly set out the following ideas as the essential features of the doctrine of 'Original Sin':

- a) All humanity is understood to be involved, in some manner, in the disobedience of Adam.
- b) Adam's sin is often represented as being transmitted, in some undefined manner, to his posterity.

Source: Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, page 426.

2. What additional ideas came to be associated with this doctrine?

NOTE: Augustus Hopkins gives these additional elements of the doctrine of 'Original Sin.'

- a) All men are by nature depraved, guilty and condemnable.
- b) The transgression of our first parents constituted their posterity sinners.
- c) That God imputes to every man the guilt of Adam's original sin.
- d) God holds man accountable not only for his conscious and actual transgressions but also for the moral tendencies and qualities he has in common with every other member of the race.
- e) God recognises race-responsibilities and inflicts race-penalties. [By this is meant that God holds individuals guilty and punishes individuals for the moral depravity of the human race.]
- f) All definitions of sin which mean 'a sin' are irrelevant. Man is unlike God and his purity is also sin.

Source: Augustus Hopkins: *Systematic Theology*, pages 593-596.

3. What major questions does this doctrine of 'Original Sin' raise?

NOTE: 'Two questions demand answer:

- a) First, how we can be responsible for a depraved nature which we did not personally and consciously originate;
- b) And secondly, how God can justly charge to our account the sin of the first father of the race.'

Source: Augustus Hopkins: *Systematic Theology*, page 593.

Infant baptism

4. What further doctrine had to be invented because of this doctrine of 'Original Sin'?

NOTE: 'Infant baptism remits the guilt of original sin: This position owes its origin to Cyprian of Carthage, who declared that infant baptism procured remission both of sinful acts and original sin. The final steps in the theological justification of the practice are due to Augustine of Hippo... Had not the creed laid down that there was "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins"? It therefore followed that infant baptism remitted original sin.' Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction* page 426.

'It follows that all infants who die before being baptised are lost and condemned to the never ending tortures of hell fire. This horrifying dogma was a problem even to its author. Augustine tried during one period to soften its shocking impact by proposing that the punishment of infants might be less severe than that of adults. He appealed desperately but fruitlessly to Jerome for help in solving the problem. But in the end he returned with fanatical determination to the logical consequences of his theological presuppositions, that unbaptised infants will fully experience the torturing fires of hell throughout all eternity.' Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 333.

5. What further doctrine is affected by the doctrine of 'Original Sin'?

NOTE: 'Man is unlike God and his purity is also sin.' Augustus Hopkins: *Systematic Theology*, pages 595.

'Because of this continuing moral weakness of original sin, it is not possible for Christians to stop sinning, even through the power of Christ.' Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 333, explaining what the doctrine of original sin really teaches.

6. What various new definitions of sin were invented to support the doctrine of 'Original Sin'?

NOTE: 'Sin is lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition or state.... Sin is not mere act... It is a quality of being... Sin is a mode of being. God punishes sin as a state, not as an act.' Source: Augustus Hopkins: *Systematic Theology*, pages 549ff.

7. What new definition of death resulted from this doctrine of 'Original Sin'?

NOTE: Speaking of the death that Adam was warned of as the penalty for transgression of God's commandment, Augustus Hopkins defines death as follows: 'Physical death, or the separation of the soul from the body. The seeds of death, naturally implanted in man's constitution, began to develop themselves from the moment that access to the tree of life was denied him. Man from that moment was a dying creature.... **But this death was also, and chiefly, Spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God.**' Source: Augustus Hopkins: *Systematic Theology*, pages 590-591. [Emphasis added.]

What does the Bible say?

8. Does the Bible support the view that God holds children accountable for the sins of their fathers? Ezekiel 18:20.

NOTE: "'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'" God has given the promise that those who obey His law will be rewarded, not only in the present life, but in the life to come. He declares just as decidedly that those who do not obey His requirements shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them. By lips that never lie the obedient are blessed, and the disobedient are pronounced guilty.' *Review & Herald*, May 7, 1901.

'The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words "flesh" or "fleshly" or "carnal lusts" embrace the lower, corrupt nature; **the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God.** We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled.' *The Adventist Home*, page 127. [Emphasis added.]

'It was the will of Adam that sinned, and it is the will of Adam that must carry the burden of responsibility, the guilt. **There never was any guilt in the flesh of Adam...** All voluntary actions of the flesh are controlled by the choices and decisions of the will... The flesh makes no choices and no decisions, either in voluntary or involuntary actions, hence has no responsibility, and no guilt. **There is never any guilt in the flesh of any human being.** How unprofitable, then, to endeavour to discover by what means guilt is transferred from flesh to flesh; from the flesh of Adam to the flesh of his descendants, or from the flesh of any parent to the flesh of any child. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." Ezekiel 18:20. **Flesh cannot transmit to flesh that which flesh does not and cannot possess.**' Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 341. [Emphasis in original.]

9. Does Psalm 51:5 prove that we inherit sin from our parents?

NOTE: Some Bible translations, emanating from the Lutheran tradition, translate this verse to say, I was born a sinner. That is, these versions attribute the sin, not to David's mother, but to the infant David himself. The Hebrew word translated 'shapen' rather refers to the pains experienced by his mother in childbirth, than to David himself. The verse seems to be a reference to Genesis 3:16 where God told Eve that, because of sin, childbirth would be a painful experience **for the mother**. Far from being evidence that babies are born as sinners, the verse seems to draw attention to the continuing results of sin, for example in the pains of child-bearing.

'If David were speaking of a personal sin, it was his mother's, not his.' Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 339. (We commend the study of Dr Larson's detailed exegesis of this verse on page 338 of this book.)

What did Paul teach?

10. What light is shed on the doctrine of 'Original Sin' by Paul's writings? Romans 5:12.

NOTE: 'Exhibit A [for the proponents of 'Original Sin'] has been Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men..." Let us observe that at this point we have a statement of fact with no explanation offered. The explanation comes in the next clause: "...for that all have sinned." "For that" means "because". The verse does not say because all have inherited guilt from Adam. It says because all have sinned. They therefore have guilt of their own and have no need to borrow any from Adam.' Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 337.

11. What did Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 15:22?

NOTE: "'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'" Proponents of the doctrine of original sin are required to break up the natural parallelism between "in Adam" and "in Christ" and give these two phrases altogether different meaning, "In Adam" is taken to mean an organic relationship of nature which man has of necessity and about which he has no choice at all. But the phrase "in Christ", instead of being ascribed a similar meaning as natural parallelism would require, is given an altogether different meaning. We all know that we are not "in Christ" by a natural or organic relationship without any choice or decision of our own. We are "in Christ" because we have deliberately chosen to follow Him and make Him our leader, model and guide. This is the only thing that "in Christ" can mean... The purpose of the writer is best preserved when both phrases are read alike. "In Christ" means to follow and imitate Christ. "In Adam" means to follow and imitate Adam.

There is no reason to say that “in Adam” means a natural, unchosen relationship and “in Christ” means the opposite.’ Dr Ralph Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, page 337.

What about infant baptism?

12. Does the Bible record any instance of an infant being baptised?

NOTE: The simple answer to this question is no. Acts 16:15 and Acts 18:8 are sometimes produced as ‘evidence’ that infant baptism was practised. In neither instance are we told that the household contained any infants; thus to produce these verses to justify an otherwise unknown practice means relying on a tacit and unprovable assumption.

‘The teachings of Luther found a congenial soil in the Netherlands, and earnest and faithful men arose to preach the gospel. From one of the provinces of Holland came Menno Simons. Educated a Roman Catholic and ordained to the priesthood, he was wholly ignorant of the Bible, and he would not read it for fear of being beguiled into heresy... After a time he was led to the study of the New Testament, and this, with Luther’s writings, caused him to accept the reformed faith. He soon after witnessed in a neighbouring village the beheading of a man who was put to death for having been rebaptised. This led him to study the Bible in regard to infant baptism. He could find no evidence for it in the Scriptures, but saw that repentance and faith are everywhere required as the condition of receiving baptism.’ *Great Controversy*, page 238.

13. How are we shown that baptism is for those capable of making a spiritual decision? Acts 2:38. Compare Matthew 3:5-6, Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 8:36-37.

NOTE: ‘There is need of a much more thorough preparation of the candidates for baptism than has been given them. Satan does not want any one to see the necessity of an entire surrender to God. When the soul fails to make this surrender, sin is not forsaken; appetites and passions are striving for the mastery; temptations confuse the senses, so that true conversion may not take place. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This conformity to the mind and will of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. Before baptism there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidate. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirement of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism. Christ is represented as bearing the griefs and sorrows caused by sin, and he does this, not only as our sympathising friend, but as our substitute. Therefore our sins of selfishness, of unamiable temper, of indolence, of wrong habits and practices, are to be positively and firmly put away.’ *Manuscript Releases*, volume 6, page 156.

‘Sin is the transgression of the law’

14. Does the Bible describe sin as a state or as an act? 1 John 3:4. Compare Genesis 2:16-17 & Genesis 3:1-6.

NOTE: ‘Now, we want to understand what sin is, that it is the transgression of God’s law. This is the only definition given in the Scriptures.’ *Faith & Works*, page 56.

15. Does the Bible define death as separation from God? What, according to the Bible, separates man from God, death or sin? Compare Isaiah 59:2 and Romans 8:35-39.

NOTE: It is commonly taught today that death is simply separation from God. Thus men teach that men remain alive when they ‘die’, that only the body dies. There is no Bible basis offered, or discovered, for this teaching. Nor is there any Bible basis for the view that physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. Rather the Bible teaches that sins committed in this life separate the sinner from God **while he remains alive**. Of course, unless such sins are confessed and forsaken, that separation will become eternal in death.

‘When there has been a departure from the right path, it is difficult to return. Barriers have been broken down, safeguards removed. One step in the wrong direction prepares the way for another. The least deviation from right principles will lead to separation from God, and may end in destruction.’ *Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene*, page 32.

Lesson 2: ‘Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things’

MEMORY VERSE: ‘For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.’ Romans 8:29.

STUDY HELP: *The Faith I Live By*, page 157.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:3-12.

LESSON AIM: To examine the Bible teaching about predestination.

Introduction

‘Wonderful possibilities are provided for every one who has faith in Christ. No walls are built to keep any living soul from salvation. The predestination, or election, of which God speaks, includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God’s commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar

people, chosen by God from among men. All who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world. "To as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on Him." *Gospel Herald*, June 11, 1902.

Augustine's doctrine of predestination

1. What is meant by the doctrine of predestination?

NOTE: The modern doctrine of predestination is usually associated with John Calvin. But its roots go back more than 1000 years before Calvin to Augustine of Hippo. This doctrine is a logical step from Augustine's doctrine of 'Original Sin' Here is Augustine's doctrine of predestination explained: 'All of humanity is contaminated by sin, and unable to break free from its grasp. Only grace can set humanity free. Yet grace is not bestowed universally; it is granted only to some individuals. As a result, only some will be saved – those to whom grace is given. Augustine emphasised that this does not mean that some were predestinated to damnation. It meant that God had selected some from the mass of fallen humanity. The chosen few were indeed predestinated for salvation. The remainder were not, according to Augustine, actively condemned to damnation; they were merely not elected to salvation... However, as his critics pointed out, this decision to redeem some was also a decision **not** to redeem others.' Alister McGrath: *Christian Theology*, pages 450.

2. How did Calvin express his teaching about predestination?

NOTE: 'Predestination is defined as "the eternal decree of God, by which he determined what he wished to make of every person. For he did not create everyone in the same condition, but ordains eternal life for some and eternal damnation for others.'" In writing of predestination at one point, Calvin appears to speak of it as a "horrible decree": "The decree, I admit, is horrible." Calvin's own French translation of the passage [originally written in Latin] reads: 'I confess that this decree must frighten us.'" Alister McGrath: *Christian Theology*, pages 451.

TULIP

3. What are the five points which identify the teachings of modern Calvinism?

NOTE: Calvinists describe their fundamental teachings by using the acronym 'TULIP'. This is known as 'Five Point Calvinism.' The five points are as follows:

T = Total depravity of man's nature (Fallen man is totally depraved in every thought, word and action.)

U = Unconditional election (God's decision to grant eternal life to some is not dependent on anything that man has done or can do.)

L = Limited atonement (The death of Jesus was only to save those whom God had chosen to be saved.)

I = Irresistible grace (That those whom God has chosen have no choice but to be saved; they cannot resist His grace.)

P = Perseverance of the saints. (Those who have been predestined to eternal life cannot fall from salvation; once saved, always saved.)

4. What alternative teachings were set out by Jacob Hermann (Arminius) and formed the basis of the evangelism of the Wesleys?

NOTE: The best way to explain the difference between the teachings of Arminius and Five Point Calvinism is to show Arminius's teachings on the five points:

- a) That, although fallen, every man is capable of responding to God's call.
- b) That God's decision to grant eternal life is based on man's belief, his response to Jesus Christ.
- c) That God's love in sending Jesus to die extends to the world, not merely to the elect.
- d) That those who are called can indeed either accept or resist God's grace.
- e) That those who have put their faith in Christ can indeed fall from salvation.

'God so loved the world'

5. Is God's grace only for the elect or does it extend to the whole race? John 3:16, first part.

NOTE: 'In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 157.

6. Does the Bible teach that God has decided or chosen not to redeem any of mankind? Ezekiel 33:11, Ezekiel 18:32.

NOTE: 'In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of **his own rejection of truth**. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God's government, no cause for disaffection. When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the

rebellious will unite in declaring, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? . . . for Thy judgments are made manifest." Revelation 15:3, 4.' *Desire of Ages*, page 58. [Emphasis added.]

'Whoever believeth in Him'

7. How did Jesus explain the qualification for eternal life to Nicodemus? John 3:16. Compare Mark 16:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9.

NOTE: 'Christ appealed to those stubborn hearts. "Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out." All who received Him in faith, He said, should have eternal life. Not one could be lost. No need for Pharisees and Sadducees to dispute concerning the future life. No longer need men mourn in hopeless grief over their dead. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.'" *Desire of Ages*, page 386.

8. Is man capable of responding to God's call? Revelation 22:17.

NOTE: 'Let the repenting soul repeat the promise that Jesus has made, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Let him tell the enemy, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Tell the enemy that you know your garments are stained with sin, but that by faith you claim the righteousness of Christ. Turn to Jesus, and tell Him all your trouble; Christ sees all your circumstances, knows all your temptations and sorrows. The enemy will suggest that you stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God; but do not listen to his suggestions; for if you wait till you are good enough to come to God, you will never come. You might wait until the judgment, but you would not be fit to come to Christ. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." You are to yield to the drawing power of Christ's love today, and come to Him as you are. As you come, He will continue to draw you, until every thought shall be brought into captivity to Jesus. When the enemy would keep you from your Saviour, accusing you of being a sinner, tell him that you are entitled to go to the Lord, since He has said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The accuser of the brethren told the repentant publican that he was a sinner; and he dared not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, and cried. "God, be merciful to me a sinner," and he went down to his house justified. The coming of the sinner is not unwelcome to Christ. He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'" *Bible Echo*, February 15, 1893.

'A foolish man'

9. Did Stephen suggest that it is impossible to resist divine grace? Acts 7:51. Compare 2 Chronicles 30:8.

NOTE: 'Our Saviour has been lifted up upon the cross of Calvary, and the love of Christ shining from the cross speaks constantly to the sinner of the sufferings of Jesus for fallen man. His love for the fallen race constantly draws sinners to Him. The transgressor may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus, and a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son.' *Signs of the Times*, August 11, 1890.

10. How did Jesus describe the contrast between those who respond to His grace and those who do not? Matthew 7:24-27.

NOTE: 'Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathising heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.' *Desire of Ages*, page 480.

'Should not perish'

11. Does the Bible teach 'once saved, always saved'? 2 Peter 2:20-22.

NOTE: 'There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election, once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: "Which have forsaken the right way, ... following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15. Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Peter 2:21. There is truth to be received if souls are saved. The keeping of the commandments of God is life eternal to the receiver. But the Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy, and being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God. All who seek to sustain the doctrine of election, once in grace, always in grace, do this against a plain, "Thus saith the Lord." It depends upon your course of action as to whether or not you will secure the benefits bestowed upon those who, as the elect of God, receive an eternal life-insurance policy.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 157.

12. What light did Paul shed on this subject? Hebrews 10:26-27. Compare 1 Corinthians 9:27.

NOTE: 'Paul feared lest, having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. He realised that if he did not carry out in his life the principles he believed and preached, his labours in behalf of others would avail him nothing. His conversation, his influence, his refusal to yield to self-gratification, must show that his religion was not a profession merely, but a daily, living connection with God. One goal he kept ever before him, and strove earnestly to reach "the righteousness which is of God by faith." Philippians 3:9. Paul knew that his warfare against evil would not end so long as life should last. Ever he realised the need of putting a strict guard upon himself, that earthly desires might not overcome spiritual zeal. With all his power he continued to strive against natural inclinations. Ever he kept before him the ideal to be attained, and this ideal he strove to reach by willing obedience to the law of God. His words, his practices, his passions, all were brought under the control of the Spirit of God. It was this single-hearted purpose to win the race for eternal life that Paul longed to see revealed in the lives of the Corinthian believers.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 314-315.

Lesson 3: What does the Bible say about alcohol?

MEMORY VERSE: 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' Proverbs: 20:1.

STUDY HELP: *Ministry of Healing*, pages 330-346.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 23:29-35.

LESSON AIM: To see whether the Bible approves the use of fermented drinks.

Introduction

Satan 'would take the fruit of the vine, also wheat, and other things given by God as food, and would convert them into poisons, which would ruin man's physical, mental, and moral powers, and so overcome the senses that Satan should have full control. Under the influence of liquor, men would be led to commit crimes of all kinds. Through perverted appetite the world would be made corrupt. By leading men to drink alcohol, Satan would cause them to descend lower and lower in the scale.' *Review & Herald*, April 16, 1901.

Words translated as 'wine' in the Old Testament

1. What different Hebrew words does the Bible use for 'wine' and what do they mean?

- Yayin [Hebrew] e.g. Isaiah 16:10. This word is the most commonly used Hebrew word for 'wine' in the Bible. It is a generic term and, according to context, can mean the grapes in the cluster on the vine, dried grapes, the juice contained within the grapes, the pure grape juice after it has been expressed, grape juice boiled to prevent fermentation, grape juice boiled to a syrup to keep for future use, grape juice boiled to a jam for preservation, grape syrup mixed with water or milk for drinking, grape jam spread on bread, and grape juice that has been fermented and is intoxicating.
- Tirosh [Hebrew] e.g. Joel 2:24. The word is used 38 times and always refers to the fruit of the vine. It never carries the sense of anything fermented or intoxicating.
- Shekar [Hebrew] often mistranslated as 'strong drink', e.g. Deuteronomy 14:26. It primarily refers to the sap taken from the trunk of the date palm tree, often called 'palm wine.' The word 'shekar' may be used for the sugar obtained by boiling palm sap or dates. It may even be used for juice, whether pure or fermented, from any fruit other than grapes. (It does **not** refer to distilled liquor. Distillation was unknown in Bible times and for long after.) Unless drunk or processed very quickly, palm wine will ferment in a matter of hours and will go sour within 24 hours. 'Shekar' is used for palm wine in both pure and fermented form. Our English word 'sugar' derives from this word.
- Enab [Hebrew] includes the idea of 'round' and can mean a ripe, round grape, or a round cake made of pressed raisins, i.e. dried grapes. Although four times translated as 'wine', this is not a correct translation. In the 18 other places where 'enab' occurs, it is correctly translated as 'grapes' or 'ripe grapes.' When used with 'ashishah' it is four times mistranslated as 'flagons of wine' e.g. in Hosea 3:1. The word 'ashishah' should be translated as 'cakes', and not as 'flagons'.
- Asis [Hebrew] always means fresh grape juice. In the King James Bible it is once translated as 'juice' (Song of Solomon 8:2), twice as 'sweet wine' (Isaiah 49:26, Amos 9:13) and twice as 'new wine' (Joel 1:5, Joel 3:15).
- Sobe [Hebrew] is used four times and refers to a thick syrup or paste, made by boiling grape juice to keep it fresh. When drunk, it was diluted by mixing with water or milk. The King James translators struggled with this word, translating it as 'wine' in Isaiah 1:22; 'drink' in Hosea 4:18, 'drunken' and 'drunkards' in Nahum 1:10! A comparison of translations of this last verse shows as many different meanings as translators! The Septuagint of this verse makes no mention of wine, drink, drinking, drunkenness or drunkards!
- Yegeb [Hebrew] appears 16 times and on one occasion is translated 'wine.' (Deuteronomy 16:13.) It means the lower receptacle of the winepress, and on the other 15 occasions this is the meaning used by the translators, though the synonyms 'press-fat' 'press' and 'fat' are used as well as 'winepress.' The Deuteronomy reference clearly refers to the produce of the winepress, fresh, expressed grape juice.
- Mimsak [Hebrew] appears twice, translated once as 'mixed wine' Proverbs 23:30 and once as 'drink offering' Isaiah 65:11. The word literally has the sense of 'mixture' and might refer to mixing grape juice or syrup with water or milk or by also adding spices or aromatics. Drugs might be added to create a sedative effect.

- Shemarim [Hebrew] is translated by the King James Bible as ‘dregs’ or ‘lees’, e.g. Isaiah 25:6 or Psalm 75:8. Hebrew scholars are unsure of the correct meaning. Its basic sense seems to be ‘something preserved or thickened,’ e.g. through settlement or boiling. It does not carry any sense of fermentation.
- Chemar [Hebrew] is used twice and refers to the freshly expressed grape juice, e.g. Deuteronomy 32:14 (‘the pure blood of the grape’), and Isaiah 27:2, where it is translated as ‘red wine.’
- ‘Chamar’ [Chaldean] is found only in Ezra 6:9 & 7:22 and Daniel 5. While related to the Hebrew word ‘chemar’, it seems to have been used as a generic word, rather like ‘yayin.’

Words translated as ‘wine’ in the New Testament

2. What words are found in the New Testament for ‘wine’?

- **Oinos [Greek] is used in the same way as the Hebrew ‘yayin’, a generic word meaning the grape itself, raisins, pure grape juice, grape syrup, grape jam, and fermented grape juice.**
- **Gleukos [Greek] used in Acts 2:13 only, translated ‘new wine.’ It only means fresh, newly-expressed grape juice. It is the Greek equivalent of ‘tirosh.’**
- **Sikera [Greek] means the same as the Hebrew ‘shekar.’ It appears only once in the New Testament where it is (wrongly) translated as ‘strong drink’, Luke 1:15.**

3. Why did the mockers on the Day of Pentecost say that the disciples were full of ‘gleukos’? Acts 2:13.

NOTE: ‘This was said in mockery. It was a taunt. The mockers knew that gleukos was not intoxicating. Neither were they sincere in their taunt. Had they really believed that the disciples were drunk, they would have used a word indicating fermented wine. The reason behind the use of gleukos is that the ridicule was made all the more taunting by the use of incongruous terms. People do not get intoxicated on sweet grape juice, so these incongruous terms were used for the purpose of exciting all the more laughter. The total abstinence of Jesus and His disciples was no doubt a known fact. The taunt was tantamount to accusing a present-day temperance speaker of being drunk on lemonade. They were incompatible terms used for provoking more laughter than would have been provoked by merely accusing the disciples of being drunk on fermented wine.’ Charles W. Ewing, *The Bible And Its Wines*, page 72.

‘Wine is a mocker’

4. How does the Bible express God’s condemnation for intoxicating drink? Proverbs 20:1.

NOTE: ‘No argument is needed to show the evil effects of intoxicants on the drunkard. The bleared, besotted wrecks of humanity, souls for whom Christ died, and over whom angels weep, are everywhere. They are a blot on our boasted civilization. They are the shame and curse and peril of every land. And who can picture the wretchedness, the agony, the despair, that are hidden in the drunkard’s home? Think of the wife, often delicately reared, sensitive, cultured, and refined, linked to one whom drink transforms into a sot or a demon. Think of the children, robbed of home comforts, education, and training, living in terror of him who should be their pride and protection, thrust into the world, bearing the brand of shame, often with the hereditary curse of the drunkard’s thirst. Think of the frightful accidents that are every day occurring through the influence of drink. Some official on a railway train neglects to heed a signal or misinterprets an order. On goes the train; there is a collision, and many lives are lost. Or a steamer is run aground, and passengers and crew find a watery grave. When the matter is investigated, it is found that someone at an important post was under the influence of drink. To what extent can one indulge the liquor habit and be safely trusted with the lives of human beings? He can be trusted only as he totally abstains.’ *Ministry of Healing*, page 331.

5. What vivid description does the Bible give of the effects of intoxication? Proverbs 23:29-35.

NOTE: ‘With the awful results of indulgence in intoxicating drink before us, how is it that any man or woman who claims to believe in the word of God, can venture to touch, taste, or handle wine or strong drink? Such a practice is certainly out of harmony with their professed faith. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!”’ *Review & Herald*, May 1, 1894.

‘Wine that maketh glad the heart of man’

6. Does the Bible speak of wine in positive terms? Psalm 104:15, Genesis 14:18.

NOTE: The English word ‘wine’ is today almost always used for fermented grape juice. This usage is a recent development which took place in the 19th century. Like the Hebrew and Greek words, ‘yayin’ and ‘oinos’ from which the English word ‘wine’ is derived, the word ‘wine’ was originally a generic term meaning fruit juice, whether pure or fermented. It is still occasionally used in England for other fruit juices, not necessarily fermented. But its most prevalent use today is for fermented grape juice. But we would be wrong to assume that a modern development in English usage must determine how we translate

the Bible. Bible translators today should be careful to choose words which clearly express the meaning **as written by the original Bible writers**.

7. What kind of wine does the Bible speak of as a blessing? Isaiah 65:8.

NOTE: 'Two points stand out from this text. Firstly, the 'new wine' 'found in the cluster' (of grapes) is obviously the unfermented juice of the grape. The juice has not yet been extracted, yet it is called 'wine'. Secondly, this unfermented grape juice has a 'blessing in it' – presumably because, being fresh, it would have optimum wholesome nutritional value. This 'blessing' also finds expression in Psalm 104:14-15. 'He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that He may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.' Along with grain and oil, wine was seen in ancient Israel as the most valuable natural product which the land could provide. Their abundance was a proof of prosperity. At harvest time, a part of these products were offered to God in acknowledgement of His gifts and afterwards used for the support of the priests and Levites. (Numbers 18:12) That this wine was unfermented grape juice is evident... Leviticus 10:8-10.' Hyde, *Alcohol? Questions & Answers On What the Bible Teaches About The Use Of Alcohol*, page 9.

'For thy stomach's sake'

8. What counsel did Paul give to Timothy in view of his digestive problems? 1 Timothy 5:23.

NOTE: The correct translation of this verse is as follows: 'No longer drink water alone, but use with a little stomach wine, because of your frequent infirmities.' This verse is used by many drinkers as an excuse for moderate consumption of alcohol. It is certainly clear that Timothy was a total abstainer. From Paul's advice to him to stop drinking water, it is also clear that Timothy's health problems were caused by the water that he was drinking. The water in Ephesus is strongly alkaline and this was contributing to Timothy's ill-health. Paul's prescription was both positive and negative: Stop what is causing the disorder. Take the following remedy for your disorder. And whatever Paul prescribed, it was purely for medicinal purposes, not to appease appetite! Surviving documents contemporary with Paul shed light on this question. "Stomach wine" or "wine for the stomach" was a grape juice prepared as a thick unfermented syrup for the use of dyspeptic and weak persons. Pliny writes: "The beverage is given to invalids to whom it is apprehended that wine may prove injurious." Other contemporary writers give detailed descriptions of the kinds of wine suitable for treating this and other disorders.'

9. What was drunk by Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper? Matthew 26:27-29.

NOTE: It is worth noting that none of the Gospel writers who describe this event use the word 'wine'. Matthew says: 'He took the cup' and describes its contents as 'the fruit of the vine.' Mark and Luke use identical words. John does not describe this incident. The phrase 'fruit of the vine' would more obviously describe pure unfermented grape juice. Dr Young, whose analytical concordance is widely used, is clear that nothing fermented (leavened, the words are identical in meaning) could be used for the Passover. The Hebrew word 'seor' is used for what caused fermentation in both wine and bread dough. 'The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine "in the cluster," and says, "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it." Isaiah 65:8. It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. And He Himself provided no such beverage.' *Desire of Ages*, page 149.

10. Did the Corinthians get drunk on communion wine? 1 Corinthians 11:17-22.

NOTE: The word on which this question hinges is the one Greek word 'methuo' translated 'drunken' in verse 21. The root sense of this word is 'to take enough' or 'to eat to excess.' Thus a number of translations make the contrast between 'hungry' and 'methuo,' using words like 'sufficiently fed,' 'gorged,' 'satisfied,' 'filled,' 'plentifully fed.' When this word is used elsewhere, it is sometimes used to imply eating to excess. It is worth noting that, if this verse were talking about getting drunk on communion wine, why were only some drunk? All would drink from the same cup in roughly equal amounts.

'The best wine'

11. Did Jesus turn water into fermented wine? John 2:6-10. Compare Habakkuk 2:15.

NOTE: The Greek expression 'methusthosin' translated 'well drunk' in verse 10 does not mean intoxication but satisfaction, having taken sufficiently to gratify. 'It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist should drink neither wine nor strong drink. It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah. And He pronounced a curse upon the man who should put the bottle to his neighbour's lips. Christ did not contradict His own teaching. The unfermented wine which He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. Its effect was to bring the taste into harmony with a healthful appetite.' *Desire of Ages*, page 149.

12. What did Paul set out as qualifications for positions of leadership in the Church? 1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8, Titus 1:7, Titus 2:3.

NOTE: Those who argue that the Bible teaches moderate drinking of intoxicating beverages make much of the difference between 'not given to wine' and 'not given to much wine.' If this argument were true, 'bishops' should be abstainers, but deacons and old women were allowed to drink moderately! But deacons' wives were to abstain from drinking wine! And those old women who are moderate drinkers were to teach the young women to abstain from wine! Titus 2:4. And, according to

Titus 2:2, the old men were to be abstainers! If this interpretation were true, it would set up amazing double standards for Christians. At what point would a woman be old enough to start drinking? And if deacons could be moderate drinkers, what about aged deacons? Was there an age limit at which deacons had to stop drinking? Or did the fact that they were deacons exempt them from the requirement that aged men were to be sober?

'Not given to wine' is, in fact, a poor translation of the Greek idiom, 'me paroinon.' 'Me' means 'not.' 'Para-' means 'at,' 'by' or 'near.' 'Oinon' means wine. The whole phrase means 'not near wine, not beside wine, not close to wine. Paul is saying, Don't go anywhere near it. 'Not given to much wine' translates the Greek 'me oino pollo prosechontas', meaning 'not wine much addicted to.' The phrase 'even so' in 1 Timothy 3:11 makes a comparison between deacons and their wives. Just as a deacon must not be a man addicted to wine, 'even so must their wives be... sober.' (Greek: 'nephaleous' meaning 'abstaining from wine.') To assume that 'me oino pollo prosechontas' means moderate consumption would imply that 'sober' also means moderate drinking!

Lesson 4: The unpardonable sin

MEMORY VERSE: 'And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.' Luke 12:10.

STUDY HELP: *Our High Calling*, page 83.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Matthew 12:31-32.

LESSON AIM: To examine whether the Bible teaches that there is a sin which God will not pardon.

Introduction

'God makes abundant provision for sins of ignorance, but He makes no provision for wilful sins. The unpardonable sin is the sin that refuses to be pardoned; it is the refusal to hear Him concerning a sin, and to turn from that sin; it is the sin of refusing His instruction; it is the sin of unbelief concerning His warnings; it is the stubbornness of the heart that will not turn from sin, which seals the fate of any nation or any individual.' W. W. Prescott in *Review & Herald*, May 19, 1903.

'If we confess our sins'

1. What precious promise does the Bible give concerning forgiveness? 1 John 1:9.

NOTE: 'Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of and have not confessed our sin with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit, abhorring our iniquity, we have never sought truly for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we may not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our proud hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. There is explicit instruction given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way or forced from those who have no realising sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is mingled with tears and sorrow, that is the outpouring of the inmost soul, finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Says the psalmist: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.'" *Testimonies, volume 5*, page 636.

2. How did David describe his experience of forgiveness? Psalm 32:5.

NOTE: 'True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. . . . Do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 128.

'Let the wicked forsake his way'

3. What condition for forgiveness did Isaiah explain? Isaiah 55:7.

NOTE: 'We cannot afford to dally with the tempter, to persist in one wrong habit, to cherish one darling sin. If we confess and forsake our sin; if we come to Jesus in penitence and humility of soul, acknowledging our inability to remove one spot or stain of sin, and relying wholly on the merits of a crucified Saviour, we may expect forgiveness; for His word is pledged. He has said that He will pardon our transgressions, and blot out our sins.' *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., page 436.

4. How did Solomon express this same truth? Proverbs 28:13.

NOTE: 'All who truly believe will confess and forsake their sins. They will co-operate with Christ in the work of bringing their hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong under the control of the divine will, so that sin shall not have dominion

over them. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, they will be changed into His likeness. They will grow up into the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Those who truly believe, who confess and forsake their sins, will grow more and more like Christ, until of them it can in heaven be said, "Ye are complete in Him." Colossians 2:10.' *Our High Calling*, page 117.

'It shall not be forgiven'

5. Did Jesus speak of a sin that cannot be pardoned? Luke 12:10. Compare Matthew 12:31-32.

NOTE: 'In Christ's mighty works there was sufficient evidence to convince any one. But the Jewish rulers did not want the truth. They could not but acknowledge the reality of the works of Christ, but they cast condemnation upon them all. They were forced to acknowledge that supernatural power attended His work, but this power, they declared, was derived from Satan. Did they really believe this? No; but they were so determined that the truth should not lead to their conversion that they charged the work of the Spirit of God to the devil. Thus they committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness in this world or in the world to come.' *Review & Herald*, April 30, 1901.

6. What does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? Mark 3:22, 28-30.

NOTE: 'They charged Christ with being in league with hell. Their talent of speech was used to abuse the world's Redeemer, and the recording angel wrote their words in the books of heaven. They attributed to satanic agencies the holy power of God, manifested in the works of Christ. Thus the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Stubborn, sullen, iron-hearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed the unpardonable sin.' *Review & Herald*, January 18, 1898.

"Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," said Christ, "it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." Matthew 12:32. These words were spoken by our Saviour when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of God were attributed by the Jews to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 404.

'It is impossible'

7. What did Paul mean when he spoke of those of whom it is impossible to renew them to repentance? Hebrews 6:4-8.

NOTE: 'The text speaks of an actual falling away that leads a man to renounce things that he really knows are truth, and to treat with disrespect and despite the Holy Spirit, whose influences in all their blessed realities he has felt upon his own heart and life. And having fallen away after this manner, it can be readily seen that he has broken off from all the influences that would draw him to heaven, and has purposely and with determination placed himself beyond hope, and beyond the reach of God. The text shows that he has done this wilfully – he has exercised his will to do the thing.' M. C. Wilcox, *Questions & Answers*, page 211.

8. How did Paul elaborate on this subject? Hebrews 10:26-29.

NOTE: 'Some people are troubled over these texts, thinking possibly they may have reference to the ordinary backslider, who in his heart has never rejected the Lord, and who is continually thinking that some day he will enter His service again. And oftentimes, when he begins to think seriously of taking up that service without delay, then the enemy of all souls will confront him with these texts, the same as he confronted Christ Himself with texts of Scripture, and sought to give them a wrong application. The text is speaking of individuals who have actually been enlightened. They really have tasted the heavenly gift, and know from experience what it is.... And now these individuals break away from all this, and according to the text quoted from the tenth chapter of Hebrews, they count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they had been sanctified, an unholy, a common thing. They have despised the Spirit of Grace.' M. C. Wilcox, *Questions & Answers*, page 211.

'Away with Him'

9. What example are we given of a man committing the unpardonable sin? 1 Chronicles 10:13-14.

NOTE: 'The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle! On the other hand, every ray of light cherished will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs. Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 58.

10. What supreme example of committing the unpardonable sin are we shown? John 19:15, Matthew 23:37-38.

NOTE: 'In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan,

who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.' *Desire of Ages*, page 324.

'He delighteth in mercy'

11. What are we shown of the desire of the Lord to accept those who turn to Him? Ezekiel 33:11.

NOTE: 'The only reason why a sin is unforgivable is that it is unrepentable. God has but one power to save His people, one means of cleansing. He cleanses by the blood of the Lord Jesus. He gives life and power by His Holy Spirit. Sin becomes unforgivable because it is unrepentable. If a soul is sinking on the sea and a life buoy is thrown him, and he will not grasp it when he can, what help is there for him? He chooses to die... Sin which is continued under light, blessings which are used in a selfish way contrary to the appeals of the Spirit of God, only harden the heart all the more and render it more and more unresponsive to every true appeal. This is true in the case of the wicked. How much more does it become true of one who has truly known God and yet turns away from Him and indulges in the things that are wrong! There is always hope for every soul, always repentance for every soul, who stands where the Spirit of God can convict him of his sin. There is never repentance when one identifies himself with the sin and continues on in it despite the appeals of the Spirit.' M. C. Wilcox, *Questions & Answers*, page 209.

12. What are we shown of God's desire to pardon? Micah 7:18-19.

NOTE: 'The simple story of the cross of Christ, His suffering and dying for the world, His resurrection and ascension, His mediation in the sinner's behalf before the Father, subdues and breaks the hard and sinful heart, and brings the sinner to repentance. The Holy Spirit sets the matter before him in a new light, and the sinner realises that sin must be a tremendous evil to cost such a sacrifice to atone for it. How grievous must sin be that no less a remedy than the death of the Son of God could save man from the consequences of his guilt. Why was this done in behalf of man? It was because God loved him, and was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, believe in Jesus as a personal Saviour, and have life eternal.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 228.

Lesson 5: 'To speak with other tongues'

MEMORY VERSE: 'We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.' Acts 2:11.

STUDY HELP: *Last Day Events*, page 160.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:4-11.

LESSON AIM: To examine what the Bible reveals about speaking in tongues.

N.B. The Greek word 'glossa' translated 'tongue' literally means 'the tongue'. But by extension, because we use our tongues to speak, 'glossa' means 'the language or dialect used by a particular people distinct from those of other nations.' The Greek word 'glossa' does not carry any connotation of ecstatic utterance.

Introduction

'Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the Church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good.' *Maranatha*, page 154.

'They began to speak with other tongues'

1. What prophecy did Jesus make concerning those who believe in Him? Mark 16:17.

NOTE: 'Through the gift of the Holy Spirit the disciples were to receive a marvellous power. Their testimony was to be confirmed by signs and wonders. Miracles would be wrought, not only by the apostles, but by those who received their message. Jesus said, "In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Mark 16:17, 18.' *Desire of Ages*, page 821.

2. How was Christ's prophecy fulfilled? Acts 2:4.

NOTE: 'A new endowment was now promised. The disciples were to preach among other nations, and they would receive power to speak other tongues. The apostles and their associates were unlettered men, yet through the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their speech, whether in their own or a foreign language, became pure, simple, and accurate, both in word and in accent.' *Desire of Ages*, page 821.

'We do hear them speak in our tongues'

3. How are we shown that the 'tongues' spoken by the apostles were the languages spoken by their hearers? Acts 2:11.

NOTE: 'The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labour and the power that would attend their work. "There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39. (N.B. Hebrew had been a dead language for more than 500 years by the time of Christ.)

4. What nationalities were represented on this occasion and how are we shown that the apostles spoke each of these languages? Acts 2:7-11.

NOTE: 'Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were labouring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 39.

'The like gift'

5. How did the Holy Spirit use the gift of tongues as a way of convincing the early church that the Gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews? Acts 10:44-46, first part.

NOTE: 'God used tongues as an unmistakable sign. They confirmed to Peter that he must consider Gentiles to be equal to Jews [Acts 11:15-17]. They were clear evidence to the Jews that even Gentiles could be saved and receive the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:45-46].' Nicholas Fisher, *Understanding Tongues*, page 23.

'At the moment Cornelius received the Spirit, he was listening and Peter was preaching [Acts 10:33, 44, Acts 11:15]. Peter did not pray for them that they might receive the Spirit, nor did he lay hands on them. There is no evidence that Cornelius himself prayed to gain this experience. In fact, he probably didn't know about the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.' Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, page 91.

6. How can we be sure that the experience of Cornelius was identical to that of the disciples on the day of Pentecost? Acts 11:15-17.

NOTE: 'Peter told the Jerusalem church that Cornelius' household had received the Spirit in the same way 'as on us at the beginning' [Acts 11:15]... Tongues in Acts chapter 10 were a sign to Jews that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit in the same measure as they had, and that the Gospel was open to Gentiles as well as Jews. Without this unmistakable sign they may not have accepted Gentiles as being equal to them.' Nicholas Fisher, *Understanding Tongues*, page 23.

'This tongues-speaking was in known languages, recognised and understood by the observers. How could the Jewish Christians know that Cornelius and his house were magnifying God unless they understood the language [Acts 10:46]? Also the same words are used here to describe the phenomenon as at Pentecost [Acts 10:46; Acts 2:4]. The content of tongues was also the same as that at Pentecost – magnifying God [Acts 10:46] or declaring the wonderful works of God [Acts 2:11]. This phenomenon astonished the Jewish Christians because they had not yet learned that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved too [Acts 10:45-46, Acts 11:1-3, 18]. Peter told the Jerusalem church that the Holy Spirit fell on them "as on us at the beginning" [Acts 11:15]. This no doubt is a reference to the Pentecostal experience.' Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, page 92.

'They spake with tongues and prophesied'

7. What situation did Paul encounter when he arrived in Ephesus? Acts 19:1-3.

NOTE: 'On his arrival at Ephesus, Paul found twelve brethren, who, like Apollos, had been disciples of John the Baptist, and like him had gained some knowledge of the mission of Christ. They had not the ability of Apollos, but with the same sincerity and faith they were seeking to spread abroad the knowledge they had received. These brethren knew nothing of the mission of the Holy Spirit. When asked by Paul if they had received the Holy Ghost, they answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." "Unto what then were ye baptised?" Paul inquired, and they said, "Unto John's baptism."' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 282.

8. What did Paul present to these men and what experience followed their baptism? Acts 19:4-6.

NOTE: 'Then the apostle set before them the great truths that are the foundation of the Christian's hope. He told them of Christ's life on this earth and of His cruel death of shame. He told them how the Lord of life had broken the barriers of the tomb and risen triumphant over death. He repeated the Saviour's commission to His disciples: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:18-19. He told them also of Christ's promise to send the Comforter, through whose power mighty signs and wonders would be wrought, and he described how gloriously this promise had been fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. With deep interest and grateful, wondering joy the brethren listened to Paul's words. By faith they grasped the wonderful truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice and received Him as their Redeemer. They were then baptised in the name of Jesus, and as Paul "laid his hands upon them," they received also the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to speak the

languages of other nations and to prophesy. Thus they were qualified to labour as missionaries in Ephesus and its vicinity and also to go forth to proclaim the gospel in Asia Minor.' *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 282-283.
This constitutes the third and last instance of speaking in tongues recorded in the book of Acts.

'Will they not say that ye are mad?'

9. What crisis had arisen in the Corinthian church? 1 Corinthians 14:23.

NOTE: It is important to understand that Paul was addressing a misuse of the gift of tongues in the Corinthian church. It is unwise to use this passage as the standard or normative Bible account of the gift of tongues.

'Paul's lengthy passage on speaking in tongues [1 Corinthians 14] was necessary because the Corinthians had all been uttering things that no one else could understand [1 Corinthians 14:6-13]. The fact that they all spoke in tongues and yet could not all have the genuine gift seems to show that many of the Corinthians were pretending to have it – purposely or unconsciously, or were making the same kinds of utterances used in ancient pagan religions.' Nicholas Fisher, *Understanding Tongues*, page 37.

10. What counsel did Paul give to those who persisted in wanting to speak in church in a language unknown to the congregation? 1 Corinthians 14:27-28.

NOTE: Paul did not wish to dampen the enthusiasm of these immature believers. But he laid down strict guidelines.

- Tongues, like all spiritual gifts, were to be used in love, not in selfishness.
- Prophecy was to be preferred to (untranslated) tongues, because it benefits the church.
- It was better to desire gifts greater than tongues, because these gifts would build up the church.
- No amount of tongues speaking **without translation** is of any benefit at all.
- The gift of tongues is not for free use in the church.
- If used at all in the church, tongues must only be used in a way that will strengthen the church.
- In a church meeting two, or at the maximum three, tongues speakers should be permitted to speak.
- No tongues speaking whatever was to take place in church unless translated. If no translator was present, then those with the gift of tongues should remain silent. (They could talk to themselves or God, but not the congregation.)
- The overarching principle is that church services are to be peaceful and orderly, since God is not to be found in tumult and disorder.

'Covet earnestly the best gifts'

11. In listing the gifts of the Spirit, where did Paul place the gift of tongues? 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28, 29-30. Compare Ephesians 4:11.

NOTE: 'In chapter 12 we find that Paul listed a number of gifts three times. Each time the gift of tongues, and their interpretation, was placed at the bottom of the list.' Nicholas Fisher, *Understanding Tongues*, page 37.

12. What spiritual gift did Paul especially recommend to the Corinthian believers? 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:31, first part.

NOTE: 'Those gifts which bring the most edification to fellow believers must be regarded as the best gifts. At Corinth prophesying and teaching were needed for the edification of the carnal, ignorant believers. Tongues, by itself, was regarded as a lesser gift than prophecy. It only had value when an interpretation accompanied it... The very fact that the Corinthians sought the gift of tongues reveals that their desires were prompted by their carnal natures, not by the Spirit of God. Likewise, the current emphasis upon the gift of 'tongues' at the expense of 'the best gifts' shows that the Holy Spirit did not create this desire. The Holy Spirit would not emphasise what Paul had de-emphasised. Would He give to the modern 'tongues' movement an abundance of the least gift at the expense of the best gifts?' Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, page 119. (n.b. Gromacki recognises that the modern phenomenon of tongues speaking is **not** the same as the spiritual gift in the book of Acts.)

Lesson 6: 'These three are one'

MEMORY VERSE: 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.' 1 John 5:7.

STUDY HELP: *Evangelism*, pages 613-617.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:1-12.

LESSON AIM: To examine what the Bible reveals about the nature of God.

Introduction

'The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be "the express image of His person." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is shown the personality of the Father. The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.' *Evangelism*, pages 614-615.

‘There is one God’

1. How does the Bible teach that there is only one God? Deuteronomy 6:5.

NOTE: ‘The fundamental article of the Jewish faith is that God is one. “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4), is the cry which for centuries has been recited twice each day in the Jewish liturgy. It was quoted by Jesus in His summary of the Law (Mark 12:29-30), and is echoed in the words of Paul and other writers of the early Church. Monotheism (the belief that there is only one God) had long been established in Judaism when Jesus entered the world.’ Arthur W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, page 15.

2. How did Jesus confirm this teaching? Mark 12:29, 32.

NOTE: ‘The Jews believed that there was one God, and this belief was accepted by the early Christians. Jesus Himself quoted the words of the Law that “the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” This affirmation was repeated and never questioned by Christians of New Testament times.’ Arthur W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, page 53.

‘The Word was God’

3. How did John affirm that Christ is God? John 1:1. Read John 1:14 to confirm the identity of the Word.

NOTE: ‘While God’s Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the One in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.’ *Evangelism*, page 615.

4. How did Christ himself confirm this truth? John 8:58. Note the reaction of the Jews in verse 59.

NOTE: ‘I AM means an eternal presence; the past, present, and future are alike with God. He sees the most remote events of past history and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things which are transpiring daily. We know not what is before us, and if we did, it would not contribute to our eternal welfare. God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I AM. Our Saviour says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). Fifteen hundred years before Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and left His position of honour in the heavenly courts, assumed humanity, and walked a man among the children of men, Abraham saw His day, and was glad. “Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (verses 57, 58). Christ was using the great name of God that was given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence [See Exodus 3:14.] Isaiah also saw Christ, and his prophetic words are full of significance. He says, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Speaking through him, the Lord says, “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. . . . Fear not: for I am with thee. . . . I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour. . . . Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He. . . . I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King” (Isaiah 43:3-15). When Jesus came to our world, He proclaimed Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The Lord must be believed and served as the great “I AM,” and we must trust implicitly in Him.’ *That I May Know Him*, page 12.

‘God blessed for ever’

5. How did Paul express His belief that Christ is God? Romans 9:5, Hebrews 1:8.

NOTE: ‘The humiliation of the man Christ Jesus is incomprehensible to the human mind; but His divinity and His existence before the world was formed can never be doubted by those who believe the Word of God. The apostle Paul speaks of our Mediator, the only-begotten Son of God, who in a state of glory was in the form of God, the Commander of all the heavenly hosts, and who, when He clothed His divinity with humanity, took upon Him the form of a servant. Isaiah declares: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (Isaiah 9:6, 7).’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 243.

6. How did Thomas publicly acknowledge Jesus as his Lord and his God? John 20:28.

NOTE: ‘Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers. Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon self-defence, and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”’ *Desire of Ages*, page 808.

‘Another Comforter’

7. How did Jesus introduce the Holy Spirit to His disciples? John 14:16.

NOTE: 'Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men's hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come. The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.' *Desire of Ages*, page 669.

8. What indications are we given that the Holy Spirit is a person, rather than a force? Romans 8:27, 1 Corinthians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 12:8, 1 Timothy 4:1, Ephesians 4:30.

NOTE: The Holy Spirit has a mind, He teaches, He gives gifts, He speaks, He can be grieved.

'The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine Person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."' *Evangelism*, page 617.

'The name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost'

9. How did Jesus link the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost in one Name? Matthew 28:19.

NOTE: 'As Christians submit to the solemn rite of baptism, He registers the vow that they make to be true to Him. This vow is their oath of allegiance. They are baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus they are united with the three great Powers of heaven.' *Evangelism*, page 307.

10. How did Paul link the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost in his benediction? 2 Corinthians 13:14.

NOTE: 'The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living Persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great Powers, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptised, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.' *Evangelism*, page 615.

'Three that bear record in heaven'

11. How did John link the three great Powers of heaven? 1 John 5:7.

NOTE: It is sometimes suggested that that this verse has been falsely inserted into John's epistle. The story is often told of how Erasmus in compiling his Greek New Testament was not willing to include this verse, which is missing in Greek manuscripts unless a Greek manuscript could be found that contained it. Such a manuscript was promptly supplied and Erasmus agreed to include the verse. The story goes that the manuscript proved to be a forgery. What are the facts of the case? Since that time, other Greek manuscripts have been found containing the verse. The verse appears the Old Latin Bible, the Bible commonly accepted in the Western Church, until replaced by Jerome's corrupted version, the Vulgate. The Old Latin Bible, the Itala, dates from around AD 157. The verse appears in the Waldensian Bible, based on the Old Latin Bible. Greek scholars are agreed that if this verse is omitted, the remaining Greek does not make grammatical sense. The verse is quoted in the form we have it by a 3rd century writer and more quotations are found in writers of the following century. Two possible reasons have been put forward for why the verse is missing in many Greek manuscripts. A common scribal error is to skip a line when two consecutive lines contain identical expressions. Once the mistake was made, all copies would contain the same error. It has been suggested that during the time of the Sabellian heresy in the Eastern Church (the teaching that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are identical), manuscripts containing the words 'these three are one' would be rejected. In the Latin-speaking Western Church, no such problem existed, and the correct reading was thus providentially preserved. Its meaning is, of course, not in conflict with the teaching of the rest of Scripture.

12. How does Peter explain the part the Three play in our salvation? 1 Peter 1:2.

NOTE: 'The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love? God would make it impossible for man to say that He could have done more. With Christ He gave all the resources of heaven, that nothing might be wanting in the plan for man's uplifting. Here is love, the contemplation of which should fill the soul with inexpressible gratitude! Oh, what love, what matchless love! The contemplation of this love will cleanse the soul from all selfishness. It will lead the disciple to deny self, take up the cross, and follow the Redeemer.' *Counsels on Health*, page 222.

Lesson 7: Is salvation only about justification?

MEMORY VERSE: 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' Romans 5:10.

STUDY HELP: *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 96.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:1-13.

LESSON AIM: To examine what salvation is and whether justification (i.e. forgiveness) alone is sufficient.

Introduction

"'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Justification means pardon. It means that the heart, purged from dead works, is prepared to receive the blessing of sanctification. God has told us what we must do to receive this blessing. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13).' *Ye Shall Receive Power*, page 96.

'Justified by faith'

1. What is meant by the word 'justification'? Romans 3:23-25.

NOTE: 'The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 107.

'Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favour with God and into the strong hope of life eternal.' *Faith & Works*, page 104.

2. How may we receive justification? 1 John 1:9.

NOTE: 'Come to Jesus in faith. Ask, and ye shall receive. The forgiveness of sins is promised to him who repents, justification to him who believes, and the crown of life to him who is faithful unto death.' *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7*, page 916.

'Through the righteousness of Christ we shall stand before God pardoned, and as though we had never sinned.' *Our High Calling*, page 48.

'He shall save His people from their sins'

3. What kind of salvation did Christ come to bring to His people? Matthew 1:21.

NOTE: The name 'Jesus' means 'the LORD saves'. Thus we are reminded that no one but He can save people from their sins.

'Jesus died to save His people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God and to be free from every sin; no heart that is stirred with enmity against the law of God is in harmony with Christ, who suffered on Calvary to vindicate and exalt the law before the universe... we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will He save us in disobedience to law.' *Faith & Works*, page 95.

4. Is there any other way for man to be saved? Acts 4:12. Compare John 14:6.

NOTE: 'How is God reconciled to man? By the work and merit of Jesus Christ, who put aside everything that would interpose between man and God's pardoning love. The law that man has transgressed is not changed to meet the sinner in his fallen condition, but is made manifest as the transcript of Jehovah's character, the exponent of His holy will, and is exalted and magnified in the life and character of Jesus Christ. Yet a way of salvation is provided; for the spotless Lamb of God is revealed as the One who taketh away the sin of the world. Jesus stands in the sinner's place, and takes the guilt of the transgressor upon Himself. Looking upon the sinner's Substitute and Surety, the Lord Jehovah can be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. To him who accepts Christ as his righteousness, as his only hope, pardon is pronounced; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The justice, truth, and holiness of Christ, which are approved by the law of God, form a channel through which mercy may be communicated to the repenting, believing sinner. Those who do not believe in Christ are not reconciled to God; but those who have faith in Him are hid with Christ in God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He became the sin-bearer and died on the cross to secure salvation for every sinner who repents and returns to his loyalty to God. Only through Christ can we obtain access to the Father.' *Sons & Daughters of God*, page 239.

Once saved, always saved?

5. Does the Bible teach that a person who is 'saved' can never be lost? 1 Corinthians 9:27.

NOTE: 'There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: "which have forsaken the right way, . . . following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." There is truth to be received if souls are saved. The keeping of the commandments of God is life eternal to the receiver. But the Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy, and

being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God. All who seek to sustain the doctrine of election, once in grace, always in grace, do this against a plain, "Thus saith the Lord." *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 6*, pages 1114-1115.

6. Does the Bible teach that individual acts of sin do not affect a person's salvation? Hebrews 10:26-27.

NOTE: 'It was Christ whom God gave to us, not that we might be saved in our sins, but that we might be saved from our sins, that we should return to our loyalty to God and become obedient children. As we yield our minds, our souls, our bodies, and our all to the controlling Spirit of God, it is then that the Spirit of truth is with us and we can become intelligent in regard to this great plan of redemption.' *1888 Materials*, page 74.

'In the epistle to the Hebrews is pointed out the single-hearted purpose that should characterise the Christian's race for eternal life: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:1, 2. Envy, malice, evil thinking, evil-speaking, covetousness, these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonour upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 312.

'God forbid'

7. How did Paul express his belief that the Christian must not continue to sin? Romans 6:1-2.

NOTE: 'Wherever there has been a departure from God, there must be a returning to Him, and a doing of the first works. Jesus says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." In order to repent, it is necessary to examine the life and character by the great standard of righteousness, that the peculiar sins which have dishonoured God and have been an offence to Him may be discovered. That which has quenched the first love must be forsaken, whether it has been pride, sensuality, or the turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness. Those who make a profession of being Christians, that is, Christlike, and who yet live a life of sin, cast dishonour upon the truth of God. Many of this class trample upon the law of God, and teach others that its precepts are not binding, and yet they presume to take the name of Jesus upon their lips, and talk of being saved by His grace. Such teaching tends to enfeeble the moral tone of the church, and true godliness is banished while a miserable, heartless, outward form of godliness remains.' *Review & Herald*, August 28, 1894.

8. Does the Bible teach that it is possible through the power of the Gospel for a person to be saved from his sins? Hebrews 12:1-2, Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: A 'New Theology' has arisen in recent years, which has affected nearly all churches. This 'New Theology' teaches that salvation from our sins is not possible so long as we live in 'sinful flesh.' So an alternative form of 'salvation' is offered. The following is a typical statement of the 'New Theology.'

'Not until we have holy flesh can we live absolutely sinless lives. That will happen when Christ comes and transforms our bodies of sinful flesh into the likeness of His pure, glorified body (see Philippians 3:21). Not until mortal puts on immortality will corruptible put on incorruption (see 1 Corinthians 15:52-53). And so we must content ourselves to live with the mercy of God as our assurance of salvation.' Martin Weber, *Who's Got The Truth*, page 112.

It is worth noting that sin first arose, both in heaven and on earth, in sinless beings. 'Holy flesh' is no guarantee that a person will not sin. Notice too that Weber's 'New Theology' offers forgiveness but no salvation from our sins in this life; salvation is only for the life to come when we have 'holy flesh'. The following quotation serves as a contrast to the 'New Theology'.

'The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity, and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. "The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. We need not retain one sinful propensity. As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we co-operate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. How this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the Word of God. Only by the Word could He resist temptation. "It is written," He said. And unto us are given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." Every promise in God's Word is ours. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the Word. All its strength is yours.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 23.

New definitions of sin

9. How does the Bible define sin? 1 John 3:4. Compare Genesis 2:16-17. Genesis 3:1-6.

NOTE: "'Sin is the transgression of the law.'" This is the only definition of sin. Without the law there can be no transgression. "By the law is the knowledge of sin.'" *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7*, page 951.

10. What are some of the other definitions of sin that have been proposed?

NOTE: The following definitions are taken from Jack Sequiera, *Beyond Belief*, pages 11-17.

- Self-centredness, the love of self, is the underlying principle of all sin.
- Sin is rebellion against God.

- Sin (iniquity) does not primarily refer to an act of sin but to a condition of sinfulness.
- Sin is missing the mark, failing to measure up to God's ideal. (Martin Weber interprets this to mean that even our prayers and our praise of God are sins, because they fall short of God's ideal! He believes we have to 'repudiate our righteousness' because our good deeds need to be forgiven. Thus even obedience to God is sin! He cites Martin Luther in support of this view.)

Martin Weber proposes another definition:

- Sin is neglecting any unfulfilled duty. His example is that if there is any poor or needy person in your neighbourhood and you don't help her, you are sinning. He includes what he calls 'wasting time' as an example of this type of sin.

He concludes that a person may be a sinner without ever yielding to temptation!

Morris Vendon teaches that sin is a broken relationship. Other advocates of the 'New Theology' use Romans 14:23 to advance the definition that sin is any action which is not 'of faith'. (It is hard to know how to carry this idea into all aspects of practical life.) The bottom line is that the 'New Theology' teaches that we are not to seek to obey God, by relying on the power of Jesus Christ (the Gospel, Romans 1:16) but simply to use obedience as a way of expressing our gratitude for the salvation that Jesus gave to everyone by dying on Calvary. As one prominent teacher of the New Theology put it: justification (i.e. forgiveness) is God's perfect work for man; sanctification is man's imperfect work for God.

'Able to save to the uttermost'

11. What encouraging words does the Bible address to those who have been taught that salvation from their sins in impossible in this life? Hebrews 7:25.

NOTE: 'Christ has pledged Himself to be our substitute and surety, and He neglects no one. He who could not see human beings exposed to eternal ruin without pouring out His soul unto death in their behalf, will look with pity and compassion upon every soul who realises that he cannot save himself. He will look upon no trembling suppliant without raising him up. He who through His own atonement provided for man an infinite fund of moral power, will not fail to employ this power in our behalf. We may take our sins and sorrows to His feet; for He loves us. His every look and word invites our confidence. He will shape and mould our characters according to His own will. In the whole Satanic force there is not power to overcome one soul who in simple trust casts himself on Christ. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Isaiah 40:29.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 157.

12. How did John explain the basis of Christian assurance? 1 John 3:21.

NOTE: 'There are men who profess to open the Scriptures to others, and who claim to be ministers of the gospel, who yet place stumbling-blocks in the way of those who are seeking for safe paths. But let the sincere seeker for truth look to the Author of truth, and not to the would-be instructor who knows not the way of light. Go to the Fountain of knowledge, and become acquainted with what saith the Scriptures, and take no mortal man's inferences and assertions. The fallacies of men have in them no power to sanctify the soul; and the word of God is not to be adulterated with the customs and traditions of the world. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.'" *Signs of the Times*, October 15, 1894.

Lesson 8: Clean and unclean meats

MEMORY VERSE: 'Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.' Jeremiah 33:6.

STUDY HELP: *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pages 81-85.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 7:6-15.

LESSON AIM: To examine what the Bible teaches about diet and health.

Introduction

'When we realise the requirements of God, we shall see that He requires us to be temperate in all things. The end of our creation is to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His. How can we do this when we indulge the appetite to the injury of the physical and moral powers? God requires that we present our bodies a living sacrifice. Then the duty is enjoined on us to preserve that body in the very best condition of health, that we may comply with His requirements. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'" *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 155.

'I have given you'

1. What was man's original diet when he was created? Genesis 1:29. Compare Genesis 2:16.

NOTE: 'Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigour of intellect, that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.' *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 81.

2. How did God supplement man's diet after he had sinned? Genesis 3:18, last part.

NOTE: 'Upon leaving Eden to gain his livelihood by tilling the earth under the curse of sin, man received permission to eat also "the herb of the field." Genesis 3:18...Care should be taken in the selection of food. Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow. Some foods that are adapted for use at one season or in one climate are not suited to another. So there are different foods best suited for persons in different occupations. Often food that can be used with benefit by those engaged in hard physical labour is unsuitable for persons of sedentary pursuits or intense mental application. God has given us an ample variety of healthful foods, and each person should choose from it the things that experience and sound judgment prove to be best suited to his own necessities.' *Ministry of Healing*, pages 295-296.

'Meat for you'

3. What addition to man's diet did God permit after the Flood? Genesis 9:3.

NOTE: 'In the beginning, fruit was pronounced by God as "good for food." The permission to eat flesh meat was a consequence of the fall. Not till after the Flood was man given permission to eat the flesh of animals. Why, then, need we eat flesh meat? Few who eat this know how full it is of disease. Flesh meat never was the best food, and now it is cursed by disease. The thought of killing animals to be eaten is in itself revolting. If man's natural sense had not been perverted by the indulgence of appetite, human beings would not think of eating the flesh of animals.' *Evangelism*, pages 663-664.

4. What restriction did God place on meat eating? Genesis 9:4.

NOTE: 'The Jews had been divinely instructed that when beasts were killed for food, particular care was to be taken that the blood should flow from the body; otherwise the meat would not be regarded as wholesome. God had given these injunctions to the Jews for the purpose of preserving their health. The Jews regarded it as sinful to use blood as an article of diet.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 191.

'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost'

5. How was this restriction emphasised in later times? Leviticus 7:26-27, Leviticus 17:12-14.

NOTE: 'Jesus, speaking from the cloudy pillar, gave special directions to the children of Israel, saying, "It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood" (Leviticus 3:17). "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, of sheep, or of goat" (Leviticus 7:22, 23). "For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people. Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Leviticus 7:25-27). Many Bible readers and professed Bible believers do the very thing that the Lord has told them not to do, and then they suffer the result of their disobedience. God does not work a miracle to prevent the consequences of their folly. If they introduce into their systems that which cannot make good flesh and blood, they must endure the result of their disregard of God's word. All who claim to love and serve the Lord Jesus should feel it their solemn duty to search the Scriptures, to see how they can be doers of His word. Christ gave His own life for a perishing world. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God is good to His children, and they do not begin to understand His mercy, and His gracious care for them.' *Manuscript Releases*, volume 7, page 424.

6. How did the Holy Spirit re-emphasise this restriction upon the Christian Church? Acts 15:20, 28-29, Acts 21:25.

NOTE: 'The Gentiles were accustomed to eat the flesh of animals that had been strangled; while the Jews had been divinely instructed with regard to the food they should use. They were particular, in killing beasts, that the blood should flow from the body, else it was not regarded as healthful meat. God had given these injunctions to the Jews for the purpose of preserving their health and strength. The Jews considered it sinful to use blood as an article of diet. They considered that the blood was the life; and that the shedding of blood was in consequence of sin. The Gentiles, on the contrary, practised catching the blood which flowed from the victim of sacrifice, and drinking it, or using it in the preparation of their food.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pages 65-66.

n.b. The Jews slaughter animals in such a way that the blood drains from the carcass. The Gentiles, however, by using strangulation as their method of slaughter, ensured that the blood remained in the carcass. Modern methods of animal slaughter likewise ensure that the blood largely remains within the carcass.

7. What additional limitation did God place on meat eating? Leviticus 3:17.

NOTE: 'The meat is served reeking with fat, because it suits the perverted taste. Both the blood and the fat of animals are consumed as a luxury. But the Lord gave special directions that these should not be eaten. Why? Because their use would make a diseased current of blood in the human system. The disregard for the Lord's special directions has brought a variety of difficulties and diseases upon human beings. If they introduce into their systems that which cannot make good flesh and blood, they must endure the results of their disregard of God's word.' *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 393.

‘These shall ye not eat’

8. When God brought the animals to Noah, what distinction did He make among them? Genesis 7:2.

NOTE: ‘The distinction between articles of food as clean and unclean was not a merely ceremonial and arbitrary regulation, but was based upon sanitary principles. To the observance of this distinction may be traced, in a great degree, the marvellous vitality which for thousands of years has distinguished the Jewish people. The principles of temperance must be carried further than the mere use of spirituous liquors. The use of stimulating and indigestible food is often equally injurious to health, and in many cases sows the seeds of drunkenness. True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realise as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny. The appetite should ever be in subjection to the moral and intellectual powers. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 562.

9. How did God later set out this distinction in greater detail for His people? Leviticus 11:2-3.

NOTE: ‘In choosing man’s food in Eden, the Lord showed what was the best diet; in the choice made for Israel, He taught the same lesson. He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and undertook their training, that they might be a people for His own possession. Through them He desired to bless and teach the world. He provided them with the food best adapted for this purpose, not flesh, but manna, “the bread of heaven.” It was only because of their discontent and their murmurings for the fleshpots of Egypt that animal food was granted them, and this only for a short time. Its use brought disease and death to thousands. Yet the restriction to a non-flesh diet was never heartily accepted. It continued to be the cause of discontent and murmuring, open or secret, and it was not made permanent. Upon their settlement in Canaan, the Israelites were permitted the use of animal food, but under careful restrictions, which tended to lessen the evil results. The use of swine’s flesh was prohibited, as also of other animals and of birds and fish whose flesh was pronounced unclean. Of the meats permitted, the eating of the fat and the blood was strictly forbidden. Only such animals could be used for food as were in good condition. No creature that was torn, that had died of itself or from which the blood had not been carefully drained, could be used as food.’ *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 374.

‘Fins and scales’

10. What principle did God give for distinguishing between clean and unclean water creatures? Leviticus 11:9-10.

NOTE: ‘God would have His people make use only of those foods which are best for them. Here He differentiates between the clean and unclean creatures that inhabit the waters. Those that have both fins and scales He places on one side, and those lacking either or both, on the other. By indicating those which may be eaten, He thus eliminates all others.’ *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 1*, page 754.

11. Which birds were never to be eaten? Leviticus 11:13-19.

NOTE: ‘No general rule is given between clean and unclean birds. Those prohibited, 20 in number, are simply named, the inference being that all others are permitted. Some commentators believe, however, that the list of 20 was not intended to be exhaustive, but that it refers only to those with which the Hebrews were acquainted.’ *SDA Bible Commentary, volume 1*, page 754.

Some general principles may be deduced. Birds of prey are regarded as unclean, as are scavengers. It should be added, however, that those who seek to return to God’s original plan for man’s diet need not devote time to examining the detailed instructions concerning the distinction between clean and unclean meat.

‘I will bring it health and cure’

12. What is God’s desire for His people? Jeremiah 33:6. Compare 3 John 1:2.

NOTE: ‘God calls upon those for whom Christ died to take proper care of themselves, and set a right example to others... you are not to make a test for the people of God, upon the question of diet; for they will lose confidence in teachings that are strained to the farthest point of extension. The Lord desires His people to be sound on every point in health reform, but we must not go to extremes.’ *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 205.

13. How did God express His intentions to the people of Israel? Exodus 23:25. Compare Deuteronomy 7:15 & Psalm 105:37, last part.

NOTE: ‘Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, “The Lord will take away from thee all sickness.” Deuteronomy 7:15. When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. “There was not one feeble person among their tribes.” Psalm 105:37. These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul. And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 824.

Lesson 9: 'His chosen people'

MEMORY VERSE: 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' Galatians 3:29.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, pages 375-382.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 9:7-8.

LESSON AIM: To consider whether the Bible teaches that Jewish descent is the qualification to be part of the Chosen People.

n.b. It has become a teaching widely accepted today, especially among Evangelical groups, that the Jews will always be God's chosen people, that God's promises to the Jews are unconditional.

Introduction

'With His chosen people the Lord dealt as a loving father deals with a disobedient son. For a thousand years He gave to them blessings and responsibilities, privileges and opportunities. But as a people the Jews failed of fulfilling His purpose; and to others were entrusted the privileges they had abused, the opportunities they had slighted.' *Signs of the Times*, May 7, 1902.

'A prince of God'

1. How was the name 'Israel' first used and what was its meaning? Genesis 32:38.

NOTE: 'The angel then inquired, "What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob's persevering faith prevailed. He held fast the angel until he obtained the blessing he desired, and the assurance of the pardon of his sins. His name was then changed from Jacob, the supplanter, to Israel, which signifies a prince of God. "And Jacob asked him and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." It was Christ that was with Jacob through the night, with whom he wrestled, and whom he perseveringly held until he blessed him.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1*, pages 118-119.

The name 'Israel', meaning 'a prince of God', was a spiritual name, given by God Himself as a sign of Jacob's victory over his past sin of deception.

2. How did this name come to be applied to a nation? Exodus 4:22-23. Compare Hosea 11:1.

NOTE: 'Here is an important development in biblical thought. The name "Israel" is now being expanded. It no longer refers only to Jacob, but also to his descendants. The nation is now called Israel. Thus the name "Israel" first applied to a victorious man, then to a people. It was God's desire that this new nation of Israel should also be victorious, as was Jacob, through faith in Him. God called this new nation of Israel, "My son... My firstborn.' Wohlberg, *Exploding the Israel Deception*, page 17.

3. How did Matthew apply the words of the prophet Hosea to Christ? Matthew 2:14-15.

NOTE: 'Matthew is quoting Hosea 11:1, which, in its historical context, referred to the nation of Israel being called out of Egypt in the time of Moses. Yet here the Gospel writer picks up this text and then declares it "fulfilled" in Jesus Christ! ... Remember, the first time the name "Israel" is used in the Bible, it is a spiritual name given to one man whose name was Jacob. That name had to do with Jacob's spiritual victory. It means "prince of God". Even so in the beginning of the New Testament that same name is beginning to be applied to one Man, to the Victorious One, to Jesus Christ, the Prince of God... What does this mean? It means that in Matthew's book, Jesus is repeating the history of Israel, point by point, and is overcoming where they failed. He is becoming the new Israel, the Prince of God, the one Victorious Man who overcomes all sin.' Wohlberg, *Exploding the Israel Deception*, pages 20 & 21.

'It shall be a token of the covenant'

4. When God made His covenant with Abraham, were the blessings of the covenant limited to Abraham's descendants? Genesis 17:10-13.

NOTE: The word 'stranger' found in verse 12 and in other verses in these lessons means 'foreigner', 'alien', sometimes 'immigrant'. Notice that circumcision, the token of the covenant, was not only for the children born in Abraham's household, but also for those slaves whom Abraham had bought from foreigners. Thus God, from the outset, showed that the provisions of His covenant were not limited to those who were by birth children of Abraham.

'At this time the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfil, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 138.

5. How are we shown that Abraham carried out the Lord's command? Genesis 17:26-27.

NOTE: 'The aged patriarch and the youthful son and all the men-servants, no matter how they came into the household, were thus marked as sharers in the covenant, and the patriarch's house was stamped in their very flesh as the Lord's.' Jacobus, *Notes, Critical and Explanatory, on the Book of Genesis*, page 291.

'Then let him come near and keep it'

6. When the Passover was instituted, who were excluded from partaking? Exodus 12:43 & 45.

NOTE: 'Regulations respecting the Passover, supplementary to those in verses 1-13, and intended principally to define what persons were or were not authorised to eat it. No foreigner, temporary settler or foreign hired servant is to eat of it.' Driver, *The Book of Exodus, (Cambridge Bible Series)*, page 103.

7. What did foreigners have to do to be eligible to partake in the Passover? Exodus 12:48. See also verse 44.

NOTE: 'The stranger, if he is circumcised, may keep the Passover... A foreigner, bought as a slave into an Israelitish family, may eat of it, if he is made a member of the Israelite community by circumcision. Slaves were regarded as members of the family and, as such, were circumcised so that they might join in the family religious rites. "That is bought for money" distinguishes the slave here referred to from the slave "born into the house" (see Genesis 17:12, 23, 27) i.e. born of parents who were themselves slaves in the same establishment; a slave of this kind would, as a matter of course, be circumcised and have the right to partake of the Passover.' Driver, *The Book of Exodus, (Cambridge Bible Series)*, pages 104, 103.

'Thou shalt love him as thyself'

8. How did the Lord explain the attitude that the people of Israel should have towards foreigners who came to live among them? Leviticus 19:34.

NOTE: 'God had made provision that all who would renounce heathenism, and connect themselves with Israel, should share the blessings of the covenant. They were included under the term, "the stranger that sojourneth among you," and with few exceptions this class were to enjoy equal favours and privileges with Israel. The Lord's direction was: "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Leviticus 19:33, 34).' *Conflict & Courage*, page 122.

9. In what practical ways were the Jews taught to show this love to foreigners? Leviticus 19:10, Leviticus 25:35.

NOTE: 'While God's chosen people were to stand forth distinct and holy, separate from the nations that knew Him not, they were to treat the stranger kindly. He was not to be looked down upon because he was not of Israel. The Israelites were to love the stranger because Christ died as verily to save him as He did to save Israel. At their feasts of thanksgiving, when they recounted the mercies of God, the stranger was to be made welcome. At the time of harvest they were to leave in the field a portion for the stranger and the poor. So the strangers were to share also in God's spiritual blessings. The Lord God of Israel commanded that they should be received if they chose the society of those who knew and acknowledged Him. In this way they would learn the law of Jehovah and glorify Him by their obedience.' *Testimonies, volume 6*, page 273.

'The strangers shall be joined with them'

10. What was God's plan for Israel? Isaiah 14:1.

NOTE: 'This gathering in of the Gentiles to the church of God had been traced by the pen of inspiration, but had been but faintly understood. Hosea had said, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered, and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." And again, "I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." During the life of Christ on earth He had sought to lead the Jews out of their exclusiveness. The conversion of the centurion, and of the Syrophenician woman were instances of His direct work outside of the acknowledged people of Israel. The time had now come for active and continued work among the Gentiles, of whom whole communities received the gospel gladly, and glorified God for the light of an intelligent faith. The unbelief and malice of the Jews did not turn aside the purpose of God; for a new Israel was grafted into the old olive-tree.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pages 50-51.

11. How did God show that Israel was to be international, rather than exclusive? Isaiah 56:6-7.

NOTE: 'The Jews had come more and more to regard themselves as superior by divine right to every other people upon the earth; yet they had not been careful to maintain their separate and holy character by rendering obedience to all the commandments of God. Now the prophet declares that the stranger who will love and obey God shall enjoy the privileges that have belonged exclusively to the chosen people. Hitherto, circumcision and a strict observance of the ceremonial law had been the conditions upon which Gentiles could be admitted to the congregation of Israel; but these distinctions were to be abolished by the gospel. "Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.'" *Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884.

'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you'

12. When the Jews failed to carry out God's will for them, how did Jesus show that they were no longer the chosen people? Matthew 21:43.

NOTE: 'Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him. But envy and jealousy made them implacable. They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and thenceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce passions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site ploughed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold, to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God's purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 295-296.

13. How are we shown that God's promises to the people of Israel were conditional? Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15.

NOTE: The little word 'if' is easy to overlook, yet of great importance in understanding that all God's promises and threatenings are conditional.

'It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional.' *Maranatha*, page 61.

'It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming. At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain." And of His people He said, "Behold, . . . I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8. These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterised the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated. "Execute true judgment," the Lord exhorted those who were engaged in rebuilding; "and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother." "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Zechariah 7:9, 10; 8:16.' *Prophets & Kings*, pages 703-704.

'God's promises are conditional. In order to make it possible for Him to bless us, we must do our part. We cannot expect that all His blessings will come to us naturally, if we fold our hands in inactivity. We are to be labourers together with God. It is our privilege and duty to labour for souls ready to perish.' *Sermons & Talks, volume 2*, page 195.

14. How did Paul define those who are now the heirs of the covenant promises made to Abraham? Galatians 3:28-29. Compare Romans 9:7-8.

NOTE: 'The word of God had not failed; neither did it meet its final accomplishment in the occupation of Canaan by the Jewish people. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Galatians 3:16. Abraham himself was to share the inheritance. The fulfilment of God's promise may seem to be long delayed, for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8); it may appear to tarry; but at the appointed time "it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habakkuk 2:3. 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." Romans 4:13. 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. Galatians 3:29; 1 Peter 1:4. 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;"' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 169.

Lesson 10: August 27-September 2

Music and Worship

MEMORY VERSE: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.' Colossians 3:16.

STUDY HELP: *Pastoral Ministry*, pages 178-179.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:19-20.

LESSON AIM: To examine what the Bible has to say about the use of music in the worship of God.

Introduction

'Those who make singing a part of divine worship should select hymns with music appropriate to the occasion, not funeral notes, but cheerful, yet solemn melodies. The voice can and should be modulated, softened, and subdued.' *Signs of the Times*, June 22, 1882.

The following words were written by John Wesley, introducing his 1779 hymn book: 'In these hymns there is no doggerel; no botches; nothing put in to patch up the rhyme; no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombast, on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning.... We talk common sense, both in prose and verse, and use no word but in a fixed and determinate sense. Here are, allow me to say, both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language; and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness.'

‘I will sing unto the LORD’

1. What was the first song recorded in Scripture? Exodus 15:1-19.

NOTE: ‘This song and the great deliverance which it commemorates made an impression never to be effaced from the memory of the Hebrew people. From age to age it was echoed by the prophets and singers of Israel, testifying that Jehovah is the strength and deliverance of those who trust in Him. That song does not belong to the Jewish people alone. It points forward to the destruction of all the foes of righteousness, and the final victory of the Israel of God. The prophet of Patmos beholds the white-robed multitude that “have gotten the victory,” standing on the “sea of glass mingled with fire,” having “the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Revelation 15:2, 3).’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 352.

2. How are we shown that singing is part of the worship of heaven? Revelation 5:8-10.

NOTE: ‘All the inhabitants of heaven unite in praising God. Let us learn the song of the angels now, that we may sing it when we join their shining ranks. Let us say with the psalmist, “While I live, will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being” (Psalm 146:2). “Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee” (Psalm 67:5).’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 352.

3. How are we shown that musical instruments accompany the singing in heaven? Revelation 5:8, Revelation 14:2, Revelation 15:2.

NOTE: ‘With the deepest adoration and joy, the hosts of angels bow before Him, while the glad shout rings through the courts of Heaven: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!” Songs of triumph mingle with music from angelic harps, till Heaven seems to overflow with delightful harmony, and inconceivable joy and praise. The Son of God has triumphed over the prince of darkness, and conquered death and the grave. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!”’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3*, page 253.

‘For song in the house of the LORD’

4. What kinds of instrument were used in the worship of the temple? 1 Kings 10:12, 2 Chronicles 5:12-13.

NOTE: ‘The Temple instruments were psaltery, harp and cymbals. These were to be played by the Levites. Only the priests were to employ the trumpet (including the cornet), for special purposes, but not for the normal accompaniment of singing. We must repeat, these four were only half the number of instruments in common use at the time.’ *Masters, Worship in the Melting Pot*, page 58.

5. In what way were these instruments used? 2 Chronicles 29:25-30.

NOTE: ‘We are told that the trumpets called the people to solemn assemblies and accompanied the burning of the offering. This was a serious, awe-producing, and even shame-producing activity. The Hebrew term for ‘solemnity’ appears in the description of these acts of worship, and it is therefore obvious that the trumpets were sounded so as to stir people to reverence and gravity, and that the cymbals (to hold the time of the singing) were played soberly... Of course the worship had a strongly joyful element arising from the great themes sung, but to regard the Tabernacle-Temple orchestras as beat groups is little short of absurd. We note that there were absolutely no drums or tambourines in these orchestras (as there are today on very many church platforms). We also note that the instruments only played during the burning of the offering and then the music ended, and everyone continued to worship without them.’ *Masters, Worship in the Melting Pot*, pages 58-59.

‘I will sing a new song unto thee’

6. What are we told about the way the psalms were to be sung and accompanied? Psalm 33:2, Psalm 92:3.

NOTE: Many of the superscriptions to the psalms mention the name of the tune to which it was to be sung, e.g. Psalms 5, 6, 9. The same tune was often employed for several different psalms. Other psalms contain indications about the orchestration of the accompaniment, e.g. Psalm 33:2. The phrase ‘on Neginoth’ (Psalms 4, 6, 54, 55, 67 & 76) probably means that the psalm was to be accompanied by stringed instruments. These would have been the harp (Hebrew: nebel; the King James Bible translates this word as ‘psaltery’ or ‘viol’), a 12-stringed instrument, plucked with the fingers; the lyre, an 8-stringed instrument (Hebrew: kinnor; the King James Bible translates this word as ‘harp’), played with a plectrum; and the zither (Hebrew: asor; the King James Bible translates this word as ‘an instrument of ten strings’), which was probably played with the fingers.

7. What were some of the different types of psalms? See superscriptions to: Psalm 142, Psalm 132, Psalm 60, Psalm 7.

NOTE: The terms used to describe the psalms seem to indicate the nature or type of psalm. The Hebrew word ‘mizmor’, translated psalm, appears to indicate that it is to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. The Hebrew word ‘shir’, translated ‘song’, describes 29 psalms. Psalm 45 is described as a love song. A song of degrees (Psalms 120-134) was a pilgrim psalm, sung to encourage those toiling over the hills to Jerusalem for the great feasts. The Hebrew word ‘miktam’ describes six psalms (Psalms 16, 56-60). The meaning is not clear; some have suggested that these are psalms for the Day of Atonement; others suggest that ‘michtam’ is a musical title or term. The King James Bible translates this word as ‘golden psalm’. The Hebrew word ‘maschil’ describes 13 psalms and some think that these were psalms used for teaching purposes; others think the word refers to a particular type of musical performance. The Hebrew word ‘shiggayon’ (Psalm 7) may mean ‘irregular’, perhaps with variations of rhythm or mood. The Hebrew word ‘tephillah’ means ‘prayer’ and describes five psalms

(e.g. Psalm 102). The Hebrew word 'tehillah' means 'praise' and describes Psalm 145. Psalm 60 is described with the Hebrew word 'lelammed' which means 'to teach.' The word 'selah' appears 71 times in 39 psalms. Its meaning is not definitely established but it is thought to mean a pause, perhaps for an instrumental interlude.

'With the timbrel and the dance'

8. What kind of music was used outside the temple for public rejoicing and festivity? Exodus 15:20, 1 Chronicles 13:8, 28. See also Job 21:12.

NOTE: The word translated 'organ' was probably a kind of flute. The timbrel was a small hand drum played with the hands and appears to have been used especially on occasions of public rejoicing.

9. What does Psalm 150:3-5 tell us about worship?

NOTE: This psalm has been used as the Bible justification for bringing drum kits and dancing into church. There are, however, questions about this application of the psalm. The description in these verses is not dissimilar to the rejoicings recorded in Exodus 15:20, which was clearly a time of national rejoicing and thanksgiving, not a religious service. Many commentators have queried the Hebrew word 'kodesh', here translated 'sanctuary.' The parallel phrase is 'firmament of His power' and it has been suggested that a better translation might be 'in the heavens'. Compare Psalm 148:1. The King James Bible margin offers 'pipe' as an alternative to 'dance.' It is clearly unwise to use these verses to contradict the testimony of the rest of the Old Testament, regarding the worship of God in His temple.

'Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs'

10. What are we told about music in the New Testament church? Colossians 3:16

NOTE: 'God is glorified by songs of praise from a pure heart filled with love and devotion to Him. The gratitude which they [Christians] feel and the peace of God ruling within cause them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord and by words to make mention of the debt of love and thankfulness due the dear Saviour, who so loved them as to die that they might have life. The history of the songs of the Bible is full of suggestion as to the uses and benefits of music and song. Music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation. But, rightly employed, it is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul.' *My Life Today*, page 90.

11. What principle did Paul set out for singing in public worship? 1 Corinthians 14:15, last part.

NOTE: 'Some think that the louder they sing, the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the birds, subdued and melodious. In some of our churches I have heard solos that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house. The long-drawn-out notes, and the peculiar sounds common in operatic singing, are not pleasing to the angels. They delight to hear the simple songs of praise sung in a natural tone. The songs, in which every word is uttered clearly, in a musical tone, are the songs that they join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung from the heart with the spirit and the understanding.' *Sermons & Talks, volume 2*, page 246.

'The things you have described the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of Satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working. Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles. No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship.' *Maranatha*, page 234.

'They have put no difference between the holy and profane'

12. What particular sin did God condemn in the spiritual leaders of His people? Ezekiel 22:26.

NOTE: 'The Lord himself has established a separating wall between the things of the world and the things which He has chosen out of the world and sanctified to Himself. The world will not acknowledge this distinction; they claim that it is needless. The servants of mammon make every effort to break down the barriers, and destroy the line of demarcation between the holy and the profane. Many of the professed followers of Christ are determined to break it down, and to maintain concord between Christ and Belial. But God has made this separation, and He will have it exist. In both the Old and the New Testaments the Lord has positively enjoined upon His people to be distinct from the world, in spirit, in pursuits, in practice, to be a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.' *Review & Herald*, January 8, 1884.

13. What work does God entrust to the spiritual leaders of His people? Ezekiel 44:23.

NOTE: 'When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to the sacred service of God; when they occupy the position of expositors of Bible truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and angels are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body, and spirit to God's service, then shall these men who minister in a most holy office desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes?' *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 434.

14. What two connected principles should always be foremost in public worship? Leviticus 26:2. Compare Habakkuk 2:20.

NOTE: 'From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred, things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts, and are being brought down to the level of common things. The reverence which the people had anciently for the sanctuary where they met with God in sacred service has largely passed away. Nevertheless, God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 189.

Lesson 11: The gap theory

MEMORY VERSE: 'For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.' Exodus 20:11.

STUDY HELP: *Education*, pages 128-134.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1-2:3.

LESSON AIM: To study whether Genesis 1:2 contains a gap of millions of years between the original creation and the first day.

The first part of this lesson sets out the arguments used by proponents of the Gap Theory (also known as the Ruin-Reconstruction Theory). The remaining parts of the lesson examine the Bible evidence. Because the Gap Theory has undergone an 'evolution' of its own, its defenders do not always agree among themselves as to the detail of the Theory.

Introduction

'Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos... Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature.' *Education*, pages 128-129.

Basis of the Gap Theory

1. Read Genesis 1:-2.

NOTE: The Gap Theory proposes that between verse 1 and verse 2, a gap took place of indefinite but vast length, during which the original creation was made, flourished and was then destroyed. This ruin accounts, they say, for all the sedimentary layers of rocks and the fossil record. The ruin was caused by Satan's rebellion against God.

'It was in 1814 that Dr Thomas Chalmers of Edinburgh University, founder of the Free Church of Scotland, first proposed what has become known as the Gap Theory of Genesis 1:2. By this interpretation of the Bible, Dr Chalmers felt he could make room for the vast expanse of time which the geologists of his day were demanding, and at the same time maintain a literal interpretation of the creation account. His views were further elaborated by George H. Pember (*Earth's Earliest Ages*) in 1876, and enormously popularised by a footnote in the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1917 edition).' Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, page ix.

2. How is this gap arrived at?

- Gap theorists suggest that two Hebrew words in the creation account mean entirely different things. Gap theorists hold to the belief that 'bara' (used in Genesis 1:1, 21, 27) means 'to create' (i.e. creation from nothing). 'Asah', however, does not mean 'to create', but instead means 'to recreate' or 'to reconstruct.' Therefore, we are told, the original creation was 'created'; the creation of six days was 'made' (i.e. reconstructed).
- Gap theorists suggest that the Hebrew verb 'hayetha' (translated 'was' in Genesis 1:2) should be rendered 'became' or 'had become' – a translation required in order to suggest a change of state from the original perfect creation to the chaotic conditions implied in verse 2.
- Gap theorists believe that the 'without form and void' of Genesis 1:2 (Hebrew 'tohu wabohu') can refer only to something once in a state of order, but now ruined. Pember accepted these words as expressing 'an outpouring of the wrath of God.' Gap theorists believe the cataclysm that occurred was on the earth and was the direct result of Satan's rebellion against God. This cataclysm, of course, is absolutely essential to the Gap Theory.
- Gap theorists believe that Isaiah 45:18 ('God created the earth not in vain' Hebrew 'tohu', the same word as 'without form' in Genesis 1:2) is a proof text that God did not create the earth 'tohu'. Therefore, they suggest, Genesis 1:2 can refer only to a judgement brought upon the early earth by God.

- Gap theorists generally believe that there was a pre-Adamic creation of both non-human and human forms. Allegedly Jeremiah 4:23-26 is a proof text that requires such a position, which accounts for the fossils present in the earth's strata.

'Created and made'

- 3. Does the creation account support the idea that 'bara' (created) and 'asah' (made) mean different things? Consider Genesis 1:21 ('bara') and compare Genesis 1:25 ('asah'). See also Genesis 1:26 ('asah') and compare Genesis 1:27 ('bara').**

NOTE: 'The Hebrew words for 'create' ('bara') and for 'make' ('asah') are very often used quite interchangeably in Scripture, at least when God is the One referred to as creating or making. Therefore, the fact that 'bara' is used only three times in Genesis 1 (verses 1, 21 & 27) certainly does not imply that the other creative acts, in which 'made' or some similar expression is used, were really only acts of restoration. For example, in Genesis 1:21, God 'created' the fishes and birds; in 1:25, He made the animals and creeping things. In verse 26, God speaks of 'making' man in His own image. The next verse states that God 'created' man in His own image... Finally, the summary verse (Genesis 2:3) clearly says that **all** of God's works, both of 'creating' and 'making' were completed with the six days, after which God rested.' Thompson, *Creation Compromises*, page 163.

- 4. In Genesis 1:2, does the Hebrew word 'hayetha' mean 'was' or became?**

NOTE: 'The effort to make "was" mean "became" is just as abortive. The Hebrews did not have a word for "became" but the verb "to be" did service for "to be" and "become". A check in the [Hebrew] concordance with reference to the usage of this form of the verb in Genesis reveals that in almost every case the meaning of the verb is simply "was".' Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, page 139.

'Without form and void'

- 5. What do the words 'without form and void' mean? Genesis 1:2.**

NOTE: 'Many Bible students, however, are puzzled with the statement in Genesis 1:2 that the earth was without form and void. Does God create things that have no form and are void? The answer, of course, depends on what those words mean. "Without form and void" translate the Hebrew expression "tohu wabohu", which literally means "empty and formless." In other words, the earth was not chaotic, not under a curse of judgement. It was simply empty of living things and without the features that it later possessed, such as oceans and continents, hills and valleys, features that would be essential for man's well-being... when God created the earth, this was only the first state of a series of stages leading to its completion.' Whitcomb, in *And God Created*, volume 2, pages 69-70.

- 6. Where did Satan's rebellion take place? Revelation 12:7-8.**

NOTE: 'Satan's sin and fall, however, was in heaven on the "holy mountain of God," not on earth. There is, in fact, not a word in Scripture to connect Satan with the earth prior to his rebellion. On the other hand, when he sinned, he was expelled from heaven **to** the earth... There is, therefore, no scriptural reason to connect Satan's fall in heaven with a cataclysm on earth.' Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, pages 233-234.

'He created it not in vain'

- 7. Does Isaiah 45:18 prove that God did not create the earth 'without form and void'?**

NOTE: 'There is no conflict between Isaiah 45:18 and the statement of an initial formless aspect to the created earth in Genesis 1:2. The former can properly be understood as follows: "God created it not [to be forever] without form; He formed it to be inhabited." As described in Genesis 1, He proceeded to bring beauty and structure to the formless elements and then inhabitants to the waiting lands. It should be remembered that Isaiah 45:18 was written many hundreds of years after Genesis 1:2 and that its context deals with Israel, not a pre-Adamic cataclysm.' Morris, *Scientific Creationism*, page 241. Isaiah was reminding his listeners that just as God had a purpose in creating the earth, so He had a purpose for Israel.

- 8. Does Jeremiah 4:23-26 describe a pre-Adamic cataclysm?**

NOTE: 'Concerning the condition of the earth "in the beginning," the Bible record says that it "was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." [The Hebrew word here translated "deep" is rendered in the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Old Testament by the same word rendered "bottomless pit" in Revelation 20:1-3.] Genesis 1:2. Prophecy teaches that it will be brought back, partially at least, to this condition. Looking forward to the great day of God, the prophet Jeremiah declares: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down." Jeremiah 4:23-26. Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Limited to the earth, he will not have access to other worlds to tempt and annoy those who have never fallen. It is in this sense that he is bound: there are none remaining, upon whom he can exercise his power. He is wholly cut off from the work of deception and ruin which for so many centuries has been his sole delight.' *Great Controversy*, pages 658-659.

‘Death by sin’

9. What does the Bible teach about the origin of death? Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. Compare Genesis 2:17, Genesis 3:17-19.

NOTE: ‘The Gap Theory is false because it implies death of humankind on the earth prior to Adam. Pember believed that the fossils (which he felt the Gap Theory explained) revealed death, disease, and ferocity – all tokens of sin. He suggested: “Since, then, the fossil remains are those of creatures anterior to Adam, and yet show evident token of disease, death, and mutual destruction, they must have belonged to another world and have a sin-stained history of their own.” Pember, whether he realised it not, levelled a serious charge against the Word of God in making such a statement. The idea that the death of humankind occurred **prior** to Adam’s sin contradicts New Testament teaching that indicates the death of humankind entered this world as a **result** of Adam’s sin.’ Thompson, *Creation Compromises*, page 169.

‘Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit, there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was sin, the transgression of God’s immutable and holy law, and it opened the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world. Let us not esteem sin as a trivial thing.’ *That I May Know Him*, page 14.

10. What were God’s words as He contemplated His finished creation? Genesis 1:31.

NOTE: ‘If, in accordance with the Gap Theory, the world had already been destroyed, millions of its creatures were buried in fossil formations, and Satan had already become, as it were, the god of this world, it is a little difficult to imagine how God could have placed Adam in such a wrecked world, walking over the fossils of creatures he would never see or exercise dominion over, walking in a world that Satan was already ruling. Could God possibly have declared that everything He had made was very good? In other words, the text of Scripture when carefully compared with this theory creates more problems than the theory actually solves.’ Whitcomb, in *And God Created*, volume 2, pages 68-69.

‘They willingly are ignorant’

11. Does Genesis 1:28 show that Adam and Eve were asked by God to refill the earth, thus implying that it had been full before?

NOTE: The word ‘replenish’ was used in 1596 to mean ‘to make full of, to fill, to stock or store abundantly with persons or animals. Only later did it acquire the meaning most commonly attached to the word today, ‘to fill up again, to restore to a former amount or condition. (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*.) The Hebrew word ‘male’ simply means ‘to fill.’ It does not mean ‘to fill again.’

12. What account does Peter give of the creation? 2 Peter 3:5-6.

NOTE: Effectively the Gap Theory educes Genesis 1, apart from verse 1, to a description, not of the creation, but of a reconstruction of the earth after its ruin. The creation, which is such a major Bible doctrine, is thus passed over in a single verse. While the Bible says much about Noah’s Flood and its significance for those living in the time of the end, it mentions nothing about ‘Lucifer’s flood,’ which, according to proponents of the Gap Theory, accounts for the sedimentary layers of rock and the fossil record. Indeed one might ask: If all these things were caused by Lucifer’s flood, what traces of Noah’s Flood remain?

13. According to God Himself, how much did He create in the six days of creation? Exodus 20:11.

NOTE: ‘Consider the analogy of a potter making a vase. The first thing he does is to get a ball of clay. What he has done is good, but it is unformed. Next he shapes it into a vase, using his potter’s wheel. Now it is no longer formless. He might then dry it, apply glaze and fire it. Now it is ready to be filled, with flowers and water. At no time could one of the stages be considered evil or bad. It was just not finished – unformed and unfilled. When it was finally formed and filled, it could be described as very good. God of course did not have to take six days to create everything, but He did this deliberately as a pattern for us, for our seven-day week.’ Ham, *The Answers Book*, page 60.

Lesson 12: Who is the Antichrist?

MEMORY VERSE: ‘Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 55-60.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, Daniel 7:24-25, Revelation 13:1-10.

LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible teaches about the Antichrist.

Introduction

‘It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope has been given the very titles of Deity. He has been styled “Lord God the Pope”, and has been declared infallible. He demands the homage of all men. The

same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage. But those who fear and reverence God meet this heaven-daring assumption as Christ met the solicitations of the wily foe: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Luke 4:8. God has never given a hint in His word that He has appointed any man to be the head of the church. The doctrine of papal supremacy is directly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures. The pope can have no power over Christ's church except by usurpation.' *Great Controversy*, pages 50-51.

'This is a deceiver and an antichrist'

1. Which Bible writer uses the term 'antichrist'? 1 John 2:18, 22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 1:7.

NOTE: John is the only Bible writer who actually uses the term 'antichrist' (Greek: 'antichristos'). The term 'antichristos' does not simply mean 'one opposed to Christ, In Greek, the prefix 'anti-' means in place of, substitute, even impostor. Thus when the papacy speaks of 'antipopes' in its history, it refers to those who assumed the title of 'pope' but who were judged not to be genuine in their claim, those who were impostors, counterfeit popes.

'The term 'Antichrist' means a christ instead of the true one, and hence also a christ against the true one; but in either case himself a christ, and therefore in profession not an infidel or atheist, whatever he may be in reality.' Cachemaille, quoted in Peters, *The Mystery of Antichrist*, page 26.

2. Does John's use of the term 'antichrist' suggest that it refers to a single individual who would appear in the end time? 1 John 2:18.

NOTE: The idea that 'antichrist' would be a single individual who will only appear at the end of time, although invented in post-Reformation times, appears only to have become widely accepted in the 20th century.

'A mouth that spake very great things'

3. What information was Daniel given about the antichrist? Daniel 7:24-25.

NOTE: Notice the following seven points mentioned in these verses in Daniel:

- The time of the rise of antichrist, after the Roman Empire had been divided among the ten kings.
- The fact that the kingdom of antichrist would be a different kind of kingdom from those which came before.
- The fact that the antichrist would only gain power after three kingdoms had been subdued.
- The fact that the antichrist's kingdom would be founded on blasphemous claims.
- The fact that the antichrist would be the major persecutor of God's people.
- The fact that the antichrist would make the claim that he has the right to change the law of God and God's sacred times.
- The fact that God's people would be delivered into the power of the antichrist for three and a half prophetic years.

4. How has the papacy fulfilled each of these seven identifying marks of the antichrist?.

NOTE: To date, only one power, the papacy, has been shown to fit every single one of these identifying marks of the antichrist:

- The papacy rose to political and religious supremacy after the Roman Empire ended in 476.
- The papacy is a church which also functions as a political power. The church's head is also the head of the political power. None of the previous empires in Daniel's prophecy ever functioned in this way.
- In order for the pope to seize political power, three competing powers had to be subdued. Odoacer of the Heruli and ruler of Rome was assassinated and his kingdom overthrown in 493. But Rome was still under the domination of Theodoric of the Ostrogoths and frequently under attack from the Vandals under Genseric, who was a violent persecutor of Roman Catholics. But the pope influenced Justinian to send an army which wiped out the Vandals in 534 and drove the Ostrogoths from Rome in 538. Justinian had already in 533 proclaimed the pope 'head of all the holy churches.' The victory in 538 ensured his political victory as well and the pope assumed the title of the Caesars, 'Pontifex Maximus' or Supreme Pontiff.
- Among the titles the popes have accepted are: Vicegerent of the Son of God, Our Lord God the Pope, Another God upon earth, King of the world, King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Vicar of Christ (which is identical in meaning to 'antichrist'). Truly the popes have made blasphemous claims.
- In *The Western Watchman*, an official Roman Catholic publication, these words were published: 'The church has persecuted. Only a tyro in church history will deny that... We have always defended the persecution of the Huguenots and the Spanish Inquisition... When she thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it' In his *History of Romanism*, Dr Dowling estimates that forty thousand religious murders were committed for every year of the existence of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Around 1400, the papacy made this claim: 'The pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts in the place of God on earth.' At the Council of Trent, the Archbishop of Reggio stated: 'The authority of the [Roman Catholic] church is illustrated most clearly by the Scriptures; for while on one hand she recommends them, declares them to be divine, and offers them to us to be read, on the other hand the legal precepts in the Scriptures taught by the Lord have ceased by virtue of the same authority. The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord's day. These and other similar matters have not ceased by virtue of Christ's teaching (for He says He has come to fulfil the law, not to destroy it), but they have been changed by the authority of the church.'

- The three and a half prophetic years, or 1260 literal years, run from the pope's assumption of political power in 538 to 1798 when Napoleon inflicted a 'deadly wound' on the papacy. His army under General Berthier forced the cardinals to celebrate a mass in honour of the termination of the papacy, afterwards taking the pope to prison in France where he died. It was Napoleon's intention thus to bring the rule of the papacy to an end.

'The man of sin'

5. What additional information did Paul give about the antichrist? 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

NOTE: The word 'sin' in the phrase 'man of sin' is the Greek word 'anomia' which means 'transgression of [God's] law. 'The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day. "That day shall not come," he says, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Not till after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the "man of sin," can we look for the advent of our Lord. The "man of sin," which is also styled "the mystery of iniquity," "the son of perdition," and "that wicked," represents the papacy, which, as foretold in prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798.' *Great Controversy*, page 356.

6. What did Paul reveal about the duration of the man of sin's power and influence? 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8.

NOTE: Notice that Paul said that 'the mystery of iniquity' was already at work even in his own day and would continue until destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's Second Coming.

'Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, "the mystery of iniquity" carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of "the man of sin" foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power, a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.' *Great Controversy*, pages 49-50.

'He opened his mouth in blasphemy'

7. How does John's vision confirm what Daniel was shown about the antichrist? Revelation 13:1-9.

NOTE: Notice the following resemblances to Daniel's vision:

- Verses 5-6. John was shown a blasphemous power. 'He shall speak great words against the Most High.'
- Verse 7. John was shown a persecuting power. 'And shall wear out the saints of the Most High.'
- Verse 9, last part. John was shown the duration of the antichrist's power. 'And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.'

8. What does John's vision add to our understanding of the antichrist? Revelation 13:2-4. & 10.

NOTE: Notice the following additional information:

- Verses 2, last part & 4. This power was set up by Satan and its followers not only worship antichrist but also Satan.
- Verses 3 & 10. This power was to suffer an apparently fatal wound at the end of his period of power. This 'wound' would consist of imprisonment and death, just as antichrist had treated those he persecuted. But the wound would be healed and antichrist's power will be fully restored.

'Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

9. What particular blasphemy does the Bible mention? Luke 5:21.

NOTE: 'The appointment of men to the confessional of the Roman Church is the fulfilment of the design of Satan to confer upon men power which belongs to God only. God is dishonoured by the absolution of the priest and by the confession of the soul to man. Confessions of secret sins are made to men whose own hearts may be as sinks of iniquity. There are sins which are to be confessed to God only, for He knows the whole heart and will not take advantage of the trust reposed in Him; He will not betray our confidence, and if we submit ourselves to Him, He will cleanse the heart from all iniquity.' *Signs of the Times*, April 20, 1891.

10. What other particular blasphemy does the Bible point out? John 10:33.

NOTE: 'Pope Pius X, when Archbishop of Venice, said: "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks.'" *The Catholicique Nationale*, July 13, 1895.

'Showing himself that he is God'

11. What have you learned to show that antichrist is not a single individual who is to arise in the future?

- John spoke of a number of antichrists. 1 John 2:18. So he cannot be a single person.
- John said that even in his day there were many antichrists. 1 John 2:18. So antichrist cannot be still in the future.
- Paul spoke of antichrist already being at work in his day and lasting until his destruction at the Second Coming 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8. So he cannot be a single individual yet to appear.
- Paul speaks of antichrist sitting in the temple of God, demanding to be worshipped as God. 2 Thessalonians 2:4. So he has to be an impostor, pretending to be God, not, as is taught today, an avowed atheist and infidel, setting himself openly in opposition to Christ.

12. How did the Reformers express their conviction that the papacy fulfils the Bible prophecies concerning the antichrist?

- Luther: 'Nothing can possibly be worse than the Roman See. He suppresses God's commandment, he exalts his own commandment over it; if he is not Antichrist, then let someone else tell who he can be!'
- Calvin: 'I deny him to be the Vicar of Christ who is furiously persecuting the gospel, who demonstrates by his conduct that he is Antichrist; I deny him to be the successor of Peter who is doing his utmost to demolish every edifice that Peter built... What I ask does it mean to be lifted up above all that is reckoned divine, if this is not what the pope is doing?'
- Knox: 'The Pope is the Head of the Kirk of Antichrist... The Roman Church is the synagogue of Satan and the head thereof called the Pope, the Man of Sin of whom the Apostle speaketh.'
- Cranmer: 'As for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and Antichrist with all his false doctrines.'
- Ridley: 'The seat of Rome is the seat of Satan... and the Bishop thereof is Antichrist indeed.'
- Wesley: 'The Pope is the Beast. The whole succession of Popes from Gregory VII are undoubtedly Antichrists.'

Lesson 13: What did Paul really teach about the law?

MEMORY VERSE: 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.' Romans 3:31.

STUDY HELP: *Acts of the Apostles*, page 532.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 7:9-8:4.

LESSON AIM: To examine Paul's teaching regarding the law of God.

Introduction

'Before his conversion Paul had regarded himself as blameless "touching the righteousness which is in the law." Philippians 3:6. But since his change of heart he had gained a clear conception of the mission of the Saviour as the Redeemer of the entire race, Gentile as well as Jew, and had learned the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism. In the light of the gospel the ancient rites and ceremonies committed to Israel had gained a new and deeper significance. That which they shadowed forth had come to pass, and those who were living under the gospel dispensation had been freed from their observance. God's unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, however, Paul still kept in spirit as well as in letter.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 190.

'Except ye be circumcised'

1. What was the problem which Paul and the other apostles had to face? Acts 15:1-5

NOTE: 'Certain Jews from Judea raised a general consternation among the believing Gentiles by agitating the question of circumcision. They asserted with great assurance, that none could be saved without being circumcised and keeping the entire ceremonial law. This was an important question, and one which affected the church in a very great degree. Paul and Barnabas met it with promptness, and opposed introducing the subject to the Gentiles. They were opposed in this by the believing Jews of Antioch, who favoured the position of those from Judea. The matter resulted in much discussion and want of harmony in the church, until finally the church of Antioch, apprehending that a division among them would occur from any further discussion of the question, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, together with some responsible men of Antioch, to Jerusalem, to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches, and those who had come to attend the approaching annual festivals. Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be made by the responsible men of the church. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the various churches throughout the country.' *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, page 63.

2. How did Paul explain that observance of the law of Moses will not bring justification to the sinner? Galatians 2:16.

NOTE: 'In type and shadow and symbol they had been instructed concerning spiritual things, yet many had not understood the import of what had been revealed. A veil seemed to be before their faces, and they did not discern the glory of the dispensation of types and shadows. They needed to have a spiritual teacher always with them, to instruct them in regard to the significance of their rites, to show them the spiritual import of types and shadows.' *Review & Herald*, April 3, 1894.

‘A figure for the time then present’

3. How did Paul explain the purpose of the law of Moses? Hebrews 9:9.

NOTE: ‘In patriarchal times the sacrificial offerings connected with divine worship constituted a perpetual reminder of the coming of a Saviour, and thus it was with the entire ritual of the sanctuary services throughout Israel’s history. In the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the Temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day, by means of types and shadows, the great truths relative to the advent of Christ as Redeemer, Priest, and King; and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners. The sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic ritual were ever pointing toward a better service, even a heavenly. The earthly sanctuary was “a figure for the time then present,” in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices; its two holy places were “patterns of things in the heavens”; for Christ, our great High Priest, is today “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:2).’ *Lift Him Up*, page 26.

4. How did Paul explain that the system of feasts and sacrifices were not an end in themselves? Hebrews 10:1.

NOTE: ‘Christ in His wisdom gave to His church in its infancy a system of sacrifices and offerings, of which He Himself was the foundation, and by which His death was prefigured. Every sacrifice pointed to Him as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, that all might understand that the wages of sin is death. In Him was no sin, yet He died for our sins.’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 114.

‘I had not known sin but by the law’

5. How did Paul explain the purpose of the law of God, the Ten Commandments? Romans 7:7. Compare Romans 3:20, last part.

NOTE: ‘The soul must first be convicted of sin before the sinner will feel a desire to come to Christ. “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). “I had not known sin, but by the law” (Romans 7:7). When the commandment came home to Saul’s conscience, sin revived, and he died. He saw himself condemned by the law of God. The sinner cannot be convinced of his guilt unless he understands what constitutes sin. It is impossible for an individual to experience Bible sanctification while he holds that if he believes in Christ it is immaterial whether he obeys God’s law or disobeys it...God’s law is the mirror presenting a complete reflection of the man as he is, and holding up before him the correct likeness.’ *Faith & Works*, page 31.

6. In what other way did Paul explain the purpose of the law? Galatians 3:24-25.

NOTE: ‘As the sinner looks into the great moral looking glass, he sees his defects of character. He sees himself just as he is, spotted, defiled, and condemned. But he knows that the law cannot in any way remove the guilt or pardon the transgressor. He must go farther than this. The law is but the schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. He must look to his sin-bearing Saviour. And as Christ is revealed to him upon the cross of Calvary, dying beneath the weight of the sins of the whole world, the Holy Spirit shows him the attitude of God to all who repent of their transgressions. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 213.

‘That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us’

7. Is a person exempt from obedience to God’s law once he has come to Christ? Romans 8:3-4.

NOTE: Luther taught that, once a man believed in Christ, he had no more need of God’s law. This view, known as ‘Reformation Theology’, continues to be taught today.

‘There is no safety nor repose nor justification in transgression of the law. Man cannot hope to stand innocent before God, and at peace with Him through the merits of Christ, while he continues in sin. He must cease to transgress, and become loyal and true.’ *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 213.

‘Where there is not only a belief in God’s Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith, faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, “O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).’ *God’s Amazing Grace*, page 137.

8. How did Paul speak of the commandments of God? Romans 7:12-13.

NOTE: ‘The Lord has taken infinite pains to teach men His will. He has given them His law, which is to govern the world. It demands perfect obedience from rich and poor, high and low. Its divine requirements are that we love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves. Its principles are binding upon the angels and upon all human intelligences. Without the law there could be no transgression; for “sin is the transgression of the law.” “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” The standard of righteousness, it is exceeding broad, prohibiting every evil thing. Satan sees that to call the attention of human beings to the righteousness of the law barricades the soul against his specious devices. His only hope for securing the world is to lead men to ignore the law, to make them believe that the law is null and void, that belief in Christ is all that is necessary. If Satan can so deceive the world that sin will not appear exceeding sinful, he has gained what he desires to gain.’ *Review & Herald*, April 23, 1901.

‘We know that the law is good’

9. How did Paul express his view of God’s law? 1 Timothy 1:8.

NOTE: ‘We behold in it [God’s law] the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. The law is an expression of God’s idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. “Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them”, cause them to stumble. There is no peace in unrighteousness; the wicked are at war with God. But he who receives the righteousness of the law in Christ is in harmony with heaven. As received in Christ, it [God’s law] works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 83.

10. Why did God need to give us His commandments? 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Compare Galatians 3:19.

NOTE: ‘God’s law is the mirror presenting a complete reflection of the man as he is, and holding up before him the correct likeness. Some will turn away and forget this picture, while others will employ abusive epithets against the law, as though this would cure their defects of character. Still others who are condemned by the law will repent of their transgressions and, through faith in Christ’s merits, will perfect Christian character.’ *Faith & Works*, page 31.

‘This is the love of God’

11. What problem arose in the early church regarding obedience to God’s law? Revelation 2:6 & 15.

NOTE: ‘The doctrine is now largely taught that the Gospel of Christ has made the Law of God of no effect; that by “believing” we are released from the necessity of being doers of the word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned... Those who are teaching this doctrine today have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth, and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner’s credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfils the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that He has saved them. “I am saved,” they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah? No; for the garments of Christ’s righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception... because they separate Christ and the Law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience.’ *Signs of the Times*, February 25, 1897.

12. What does John teach about obedience to God’s law? 1 John 2:4, 1 John 5:2-3.

NOTE: “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Paul asks, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” and answers, “God forbid.” Again he asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith?” and answers, “God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” God’s will is expressed in His holy law, and Jesus says, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” The law of God is the standard by which character is to be measured, and he whose life is in harmony with that law is worthy to be trusted, but of what value is the testimony of a man whose life and teaching contradict the law of Jehovah?’ *Review & Herald*, August 28, 1894.

Lesson 14: Does the Bible teach a secret Rapture?

MEMORY VERSE: ‘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.’ Matthew 24:30-31.

STUDY HELP: *Great Controversy*, pages 640-645.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3, 2 Peter 3:10-13.

LESSON AIM: To examine whether the Bible teaches a two-stage Second Coming of the ‘rapture’ and ‘glorious appearing’.
n.b. First, this lesson will examine the evidences put forward to support the teaching of the secret rapture. This will involve quoting from books supporting this teaching. We would strongly urge that you examine the Bible passages carefully to see whether they are really saying the things it is asserted that they teach. Then the lesson will consider what the Bible itself teaches.

Introduction

“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.” Matthew 24:27. This coming, there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known, witnessed by the whole world.’ *The Faith I Live By*, page 346.

The Rapture

1. What is the doctrine of the secret rapture?

NOTE: The secret rapture, now more commonly called 'the Rapture', was first taught in the 19th century, but was only widely accepted in the second half of the twentieth century. This doctrine proposes that the Second Coming of Christ takes place in two phases, seven years apart. The first phase, which is silent and secret, is for the church, and is called 'The Rapture.' The second phase, known as 'The Glorious Appearing', takes place seven years later when Christ returns to the earth to overthrow the rule of Antichrist and set up His 1000-year kingdom on earth.

'As we study the predictions of the New Testament, two themes emerge. First, Jesus will come **for** his saints in the clouds and take them to heaven. Second, he will come **with** his saints to establish a kingdom. I believe there are two stages of his coming that are separated by a seven-year period of tribulation.' Dobson, *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End*, page 37.

2. What passage is used to support the first of these two comings? 1Thessalonians 4:13-18.

NOTE: 'Note the emphasis in Christ's coming. He will descend from heaven and we will be "caught up." This is the concept of the "Rapture." Although the word "rapture" does not occur in the New Testament, the idea does occur. We will "meet the Lord in the air." There is no mention of Jesus' touching the earth – he comes down only as far as the clouds. We leave the earth – we do not establish a kingdom with Christ on the earth. So the rapture of the church will occur when believers are taken out of the world to meet the Lord and stay with him.' Dobson, *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End*, page 37.

3. What passage is used to support the second of these two comings? Revelation 19:11-16.

NOTE: 'We learn from this passage that Jesus does not come to take believers to heaven. Instead, he comes as a time when the believers are already in heaven. He does not stop in the air, but comes all the way to earth. He does not come to deliver his people, but rather, to rule with his people on the earth. The nature, purpose, and consequence of this coming are radically different from the Rapture.' Dobson, *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End*, page 38.

Parousia

4. What argument is put forward to support this idea that the coming of Christ takes place in two stages?

NOTE: 'In the New Testament, three Greek words are used to describe the second coming of Jesus Christ. First is the word "parousia", which comes from a verb meaning "to be near or alongside of." It is used twenty-four times in the New Testament and focuses on the bodily appearance of Christ. When he returns, we shall be near him. The second word is "apokalupsis," from which comes the word "apocalypse", which is the Greek title of the book of Revelation. It means "to uncover or reveal." The focus in reference to the second coming is on the revealing of Christ in his glory. The third word is "epiphaneia," which means "to bring forth into light." The word points up that Christ's coming will be unmistakable – as dramatic as light in the midst of darkness.' Dobson, *50 Remarkable Events Pointing to The End*, page 36. n.b. Other Greek words are used for the Second Coming of Christ, apart from these three, e.g. 'erchomai' in Matthew 24:30, meaning 'to appear, to come before the public.'

5. Is the word 'parousia' really only used for the secret return of Christ to snatch away His church? Matthew 24:27.

See also 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 2 Peter 3:12

NOTE: In Matthew 24:27, the word translated 'coming' is 'parousia. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul says that Antichrist will be slain by the brightness of Christ's 'parousia'. Believers in the Rapture teach that Antichrist will only appear and reign **after** the 'parousia.' In 2 Peter 3:12, the apostle speaks of the 'parousia' 'of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.'

'As a thief in the night'

6. What other verse is used to support the idea that Christ will return secretly? 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

NOTE: One of the popular books advocating the doctrine of the 'Rapture' is called *A Thief in the Night*. The argument is that a thief goes about his work silently and stealthily, so that his activities do not arouse attention. Only afterwards is it recognised that the thief has been at work. Since 'the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,' it is claimed that Christ will return silently and stealthily to snatch away His people.

7. How does Peter describe the day of the Lord? 2 Peter 3:10.

NOTE: Though Peter, like Paul, uses the term 'as a thief in the night' to describe the coming of Christ, it is obvious that Peter had no conception of a silent, stealthy event! Instead he speaks of 'a great noise' as the heavens pass away and the elements melt with fervent heat. Peter clearly did not envisage the world continuing its normal activities, after the people of God are caught up.

'Let no man deceive you'

8. How did Paul show that the antichrist emerges before the coming of the Lord? 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.

NOTE: 'Verse 1: Paul wrote about "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him." Our gathering to Jesus is the same thing as our being "caught up" to meet Him in the sky (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It's obvious that this gathering or catching up of God's church occurs at the return of Jesus Christ. Verse 2: Here Paul plainly addresses the distortion. He urged the Thessalonians not to be "soon shaken" or "troubled" by false influences which were teaching that "the Day of Christ had come," or as the King James Version puts it, that it was "at hand" in the first century. Verse 3: Paul then

clarified that “that Day [when Jesus comes to gather us] shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition... In verse 3 the Bible is amazingly clear. Contrary to popular opinion, Paul said the falling away and the rise of the Antichrist must come **first**, before the church is “caught up” or gathered to Jesus Christ (verse 1). But there is more. Paul directly and most specifically warns us **not to be deceived** about this very thing.” Wohlberg, *The Antichrist Chronicles*, page 20-21.

9. How are we warned about deceptions concerning the Antichrist? 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

NOTE: ‘Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favour with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the Scriptures with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart’s desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who wilfully reject the truth. He who looks with horror upon one deception will readily receive another. The apostle Paul, speaking of a class who “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,” declares: “For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. With such a warning before us it behoves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.’ *Great Controversy*, page 523.

‘The one shall be taken and the other left’

10. What other verses are used to support the idea that Christ will return secretly? Matthew 24:40-41.

NOTE: ‘This is probably the second most-quoted text in the Bible to support the *Left Behind* idea of a silent Rapture prior to the Tribulation. Supposedly, when this verse is fulfilled, those who are “taken” will vanish without a trace, leaving only their clothes, shoes, false teeth, and wedding rings, while those who are “left” will have to endure the Tribulation, facing the Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast.’ Wohlberg, *Truth Left Behind*, page 23.

11. When Jesus spoke these words, with what did Jesus compare His coming? Matthew 24:37-39.

NOTE: ‘Jesus basically said, “My coming will be just like Noah’s day (see verses 37-39). Now think about it. Did Noah and his family vanish before the Flood? No, they walked visibly into the ark. And what about those who were left behind after the door of the ark was shut? Did they have a second chance? Again, no. How were they left? *They were left dead; they did not escape.* After saying, “the flood came and took them all away,” Jesus made His power-packed point: “So shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be” (verse 39). And then, without a break, Christ said, “Then shall be two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left” (verse 40).’ Wohlberg, *Truth Left Behind*, page 24.

‘With a great sound of a trumpet’

12. Does Paul really describe a secret return of Christ? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Compare Matthew 24:31.

NOTE: Verse 16 speaks of ‘a shout,’ ‘the voice of the Archangel’ and ‘the trumpet of God.’ It is difficult to understand how Paul could have made it more clear that this will not be a secret and silent event! It was his wife’s drawing his attention to this fact that led Dr Bingham, one of the most prominent advocates of the ‘Rapture’, to engage in six months’ intensive study, which led him to abandon this doctrine.

13. Will there be a second chance for those ‘left behind’ when Jesus comes? 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3.

NOTE: ‘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.” Verses 42, 46. “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. Paul speaks of a class to whom the Lord’s appearing will come unawares. “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape.” But he adds, to those who have given heed to the Saviour’s warning: “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5.’ *Great Controversy*, pages 370-371.