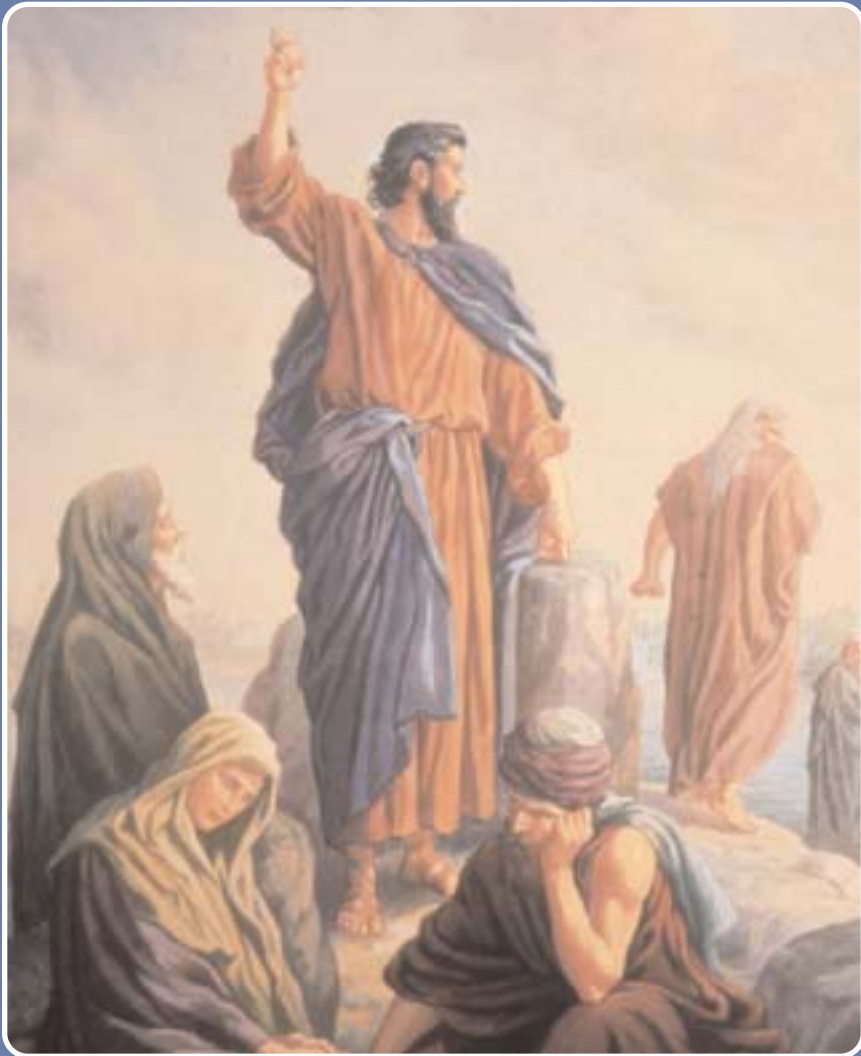


3/2000

July–September 2000

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division



Lessons From the *Book of Ezekiel*

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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FOREWORD

It is fascinating to realize how descriptive are the writings of Ezekiel for the last days of earth's history. Although this prophet wrote for his own day, the relevance of this inspired material for us today is amazing. Our modern-day prophet tells it straight, that "the book of Ezekiel is deeply instructive" (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 395).

Interestingly enough, the book depicts the final stages of missionary efforts to spread the three angels' messages, including the sealing message, the latter rain, and a frequently distorted, neglected, but essential aspect of the everlasting gospel—the medical missionary work. We are told:

"Study faithfully the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel. The work which is being done in medical missionary lines is the very work which Christ commanded His followers to do. Can you not clearly see that those who are engaged in this work are fulfilling the Saviour's commission? Can you not see that it would please your Saviour if you would lay aside all false dignity and learn in His school how to wear His yoke and carry His burdens?" —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 416.

"The thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel shows that God's government is a government of personal responsibility. Each one must stand for himself. No one can obey for his neighbor. No one is excused for neglecting his duty because of a similar neglect on the part of his neighbor." —*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1164.

"By pen and voice, by the circulation of literature, by the preaching of the word, by medical missionary work, by every other agency that can be employed in consecrated service, the work of warning the world is to be carried forward. Every church member is to do something. God's people are to be laborers together with Him." —*The Review and Herald*, May 5, 1904.

"We see multitudes sunken in vice and ignorance, without hope and without God. Yet provision has been made that these may become children of the heavenly King. His mercy is still lingering for them. He is inviting them, weary, heavy-laden with sin, to come to Him for pardon, rest, and peace. To us He has given the message of truth, the invitation of mercy, to bear to these perishing souls. Shall we not act our part in fulfilling the divine purpose, by giving light to those who are in darkness? Let us not wait for them to come to us, but let us go out and search for them. Let us devise ways and means of reaching them and of communicating to them a knowledge of the truth for this time. Let us point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." —*Ibid.*, November 19, 1914.

Brethren, sisters, and friends, let us therefore redeem the time and study to show ourselves approved unto God, as workmen "that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15)!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department



Sabbath, July 1, 2000

First Sabbath Offering

for the Ebenezer Missionary School in Brazil

Since 1954, the Ebenezer Missionary School has served as an educational institution of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement, preparing our youth who desire to dedicate their lives to carrying the threefold angel's message to the world. For more than 40 years now, our graduates have been used as instruments in God's hands for the salvation of precious souls.

The Ebenezer Missionary School is established in the state of Paraná, in a lovely rural setting at the foot of a mountain. In accordance with the Spirit of Prophecy guidelines, it is located next to the Oásis Hospital of Paraná. Here the students can contemplate nature and learn of the God of nature. "Clear light has been given that our educational institutions should be connected with our sanitariums wherever this is possible. The work of the two institutions is to blend" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 450).

The task of evangelizing the world with the solemn message for this time is a weighty one. It can only be accomplished "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). God's plan is to use human instrumentalities thoroughly imbued with His Holy Spirit, and much can be achieved through properly trained, consecrated young people.

As we thus encourage more and more of our youth to seriously pursue these lines of service, it is only right that our schools be adequately equipped to accommodate them. At the Ebenezer Missionary School, our simple facilities are currently in need of improvement, and the classrooms and cafeteria must be expanded. This project will cost around US\$25,000.00. So far we have raised US\$5,000.00, but we will still need another US\$20,000.00 to complete the job.

Therefore we are calling upon our fellow Sabbath school students around the world: when the First Sabbath Offering is gathered, please remember this educational work with generosity. Thank you, and may God bless you!

Your brethren from Brazil



Lesson 1

Sabbath, July 1, 2000

The Vision of the Wheels

"The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezekiel 1:16).

"Those who have many talents and those who have few are to work unitedly, as a wheel within a wheel. And if all feel their responsibility and accountability to God, they will do His will, acting their part according to His appointment."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 201.

□ **Sunday**
June 25

HOPE AMIDST DARKNESS

1 Under what mournful circumstances was the prophet Ezekiel given his first vision? Ezekiel 1:1–3.

"This vision [of the wheels within the wheels] was given to Ezekiel at a time when his mind was filled with gloomy forebodings. He saw the land of his fathers lying desolate. The city that was once full of people was no longer inhabited. The voice of mirth and the song of praise were no more heard within her walls. The prophet himself was a stranger in a strange land, where boundless ambition and savage cruelty reigned supreme. That which he saw and heard of human tyranny and wrong distressed his soul, and he mourned bitterly day and night." —*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 752.

2 Describe what Ezekiel saw. Ezekiel 1:4–7. What factor in Ezekiel's vision had special significance in the days of the prophet, and what does it mean in our days? Ezekiel 1:8.

"While nations have rejected God's principles, and in this rejection have wrought their own ruin, yet a divine, overruling purpose has mani-

festly been at work throughout the ages. It was this that the prophet Ezekiel saw in the wonderful representation given him during his exile in the land of the Chaldeans, when before his astonished gaze were portrayed the symbols that revealed an overruling Power that has to do with the affairs of earthly rulers.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 535.

“The wheellike complications that appeared to the prophet to be involved in such confusion were under the guidance of an infinite hand. The Spirit of God, revealed to him as moving and directing these wheels, brought harmony out of confusion; so the whole world was under His control. Myriads of glorified beings were ready at His word to overrule the power and policy of evil men, and bring good to His faithful ones.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 752.

“In Ezekiel’s vision God had His hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power that gives them success. He will work with them if they will put away iniquity and become pure in heart and life.”—*Ibid.*, p. 754.

□ **Monday**
June 26

WORDS OF COMFORT

3 What realization of the psalmist parallels Ezekiel’s vision and why should it echo in our hearts? Psalm 121:1–4.

“He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord’s hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 754.

4 What assurance does God extend to us in seeking to promote His cause on the earth? Matthew 28:20; Romans 8:31.

“We permit ourselves to feel altogether too much care, trouble, and perplexity in the Lord’s work. We need to trust Him, believe in Him, and go forward. The tireless vigilance of the heavenly messengers, their unceasing employment in their ministry in connection with the beings of earth, show us how God’s hand is guiding the wheel within a wheel. The

divine Instructor is saying to every actor in His work, as He said to Cyrus of old, ‘I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

□ **Tuesday**
June 27

DIVINE GUIDANCE AND EFFICIENCY

5 Of what should the hand beneath the wheels in Ezekiel’s vision remind us? Jeremiah 32:27.

“God is acquainted with every man. Could our eyes be opened we would see that eternal justice is at work in our world. A powerful influence, not under man’s control, is working. Man may fancy that he is directing matters, but there are higher than human influences at work. The servants of God know that He is working to counteract Satan’s plans. Those who know not God cannot comprehend His movements. There is at work a wheel within a wheel. Apparently the complication of machinery is so intricate that man can see only a complete entanglement. But the divine hand, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, is placed upon the wheels, and every part moves in complete harmony, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

6 Describe the creatures which Ezekiel saw, and explain the significance of their appearance as a flash of lightning. Ezekiel 1:9–14; Hebrews 1:7.

“The bright light going among the living creatures with the swiftness of lightning represents the speed with which this work will finally go forward to completion.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 754.

□ **Wednesday**
June 28

THE WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL

7 How is efficiency depicted in Ezekiel’s vision? Ezekiel 1:15–21.

“The striking feature of divine operations is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world by very simple means. It is God’s plan that every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.”—*Evangelism*, p. 93.

8

How else is this principle described? Zechariah 4:10.

“God often uses the simplest means to accomplish the greatest results. It is His plan that every part of His work shall depend on every other part, as a wheel within a wheel, all acting in harmony. The humblest worker, moved by the Holy Spirit, will touch invisible chords, whose vibrations will ring to the ends of the earth, and make melody through eternal ages.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 822, 823.

THE RAINBOW OF PROMISE

□ **Thursday**
June 29

9

What else did Ezekiel see and hear in this vision? Ezekiel 1:22–25. Describe the most glorious aspect of the scene, and explain how it can encourage us today. Ezekiel 1:26, 27.

“We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. . . . Those who are making an effort to change the Constitution and secure a law enforcing Sunday observance little realize what will be the result. A crisis is just upon us.

“But God’s servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.

“We permit ourselves to feel altogether too much care, trouble, and perplexity in the Lord’s work. Finite men are not left to carry the burden of responsibility. We need to trust in God, believe in Him, and go forward.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 753, 754.

10

What scene did Ezekiel finally behold, and how did he respond? Ezekiel 1:28.

“There were wheels within wheels in an arrangement so complicated that at first sight they appeared to Ezekiel to be all in confusion. But when they moved, it was with beautiful exactness and in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings were impelling these wheels, and, above all, upon the glorious sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; while round about the throne was the encircling rainbow, emblem of grace and love. Overpowered by the terrible glory of the scene, Ezekiel fell upon his face, when a voice bade him arise and hear the word of the Lord. Then there was given him a message of warning for Israel.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 751.

“A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a symbol of God’s mercy encompassing the earth. When man by his great wickedness provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man’s intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God’s great mercy and compassion for erring man; also the rainbow above the throne and upon His head, emblematical of the glory and mercy from God resting there for the benefit of repentant man.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 78.

□ **Friday**
June 30

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- How did God give hope at an especially dark hour in Israel’s history?**
- What is meant by the hand supporting the wheels?**
- How does the lightning-swift pace shown in vision apply today?**
- What is the “wheel within a wheel” to represent to us today?**
- How does Ezekiel chapter 1 close with a message of hope for us?**

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 176–184.

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 751–754.

Ezekiel's Duty — And Ours

“And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious” (Ezekiel 2:7).

“So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet [Ezekiel].”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 459.

☐ **Sunday**
July 2

LESSONS FOR TODAY

1 After Ezekiel was shown the wheels illustrating how God is in control, what was he told to do? Ezekiel 2:1–3. What lessons are contained here for us?

“The rebuke of the Lord will rest upon those who would bar the way, that clearer light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of more light, that they may unite with the messengers whom He sends to accomplish the work that He designs shall be done. The Lord has raised up messengers, and endued them with His Spirit, and has said, ‘Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins’ (Isaiah 58:1). Let no one run the risk of interposing between the people and the message of Heaven. This message will go to the people; and if there were no voice among men to give it, the very stones would cry out.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 304.

2 Under what circumstances will the Present Truth be proclaimed? Ezekiel 2:4, 5.

“A season of great trial is before us. It becomes us now to use all our capabilities and gifts in advancing the work of God. The powers the Lord

has given us are to be used to build up, not to tear down. Those who are ignorantly deceived are not to remain in this condition. The Lord says to His messengers: Go to them and declare unto them what I have said, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

“The time is right upon us when persecution will come to those who proclaim the truth. The outlook is not flattering; but, notwithstanding this, let us not give up our efforts to save those ready to perish, for whose ransom the Prince of heaven offered up His precious life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 227, 228.

☐ **Monday**
July 3

A PRESENT DUTY

3 In what respect is the responsibility of faithful Reformers today similar to that of Ezekiel? Ezekiel 2:6, 7.

“Now as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproves the sins and errors of the times will excite opposition. . . . Those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic. Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy will receive with unquestioning credulity an accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evildoer.

“In view of this, what is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God’s word, because it excites opposition, than had earlier Reformers.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 458, 459.

“We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.”—*Ibid.*, p. 460.

4 What was Ezekiel required to do before bringing God’s message to the people? Ezekiel 2:8–10; 3:1–4. What is our need today? John 6:53, 63.

“Please read carefully the third chapter of Ezekiel. We must learn to put our entire dependence upon God, and yet we must ever bear in mind that the Lord God has need of every agency that holds the truth in righteousness.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 214.

“You can reveal the truth only as you know it in Christ. You are to receive and assimilate His words; they are to become part of yourselves. This is what is meant by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 371.

COURAGE AMID DISAPPOINTMENT

□ Tuesday
July 4

5 What duty was sadly neglected in the days of Ezekiel and is often neglected even among God’s people today? Ezekiel 3: 17–21; Matthew 18:15.

“All your efforts to save the erring may be unavailing. They may repay you evil for good. They may be enraged rather than convinced. What if they hear to no good purpose, and pursue the evil course they have begun? This will frequently occur. Sometimes the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no good effect. In that case the blessing you wanted another to receive by pursuing a course of righteousness, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, will return into your own bosom. If the erring persist in sin, treat them kindly, and leave them with your heavenly Father. You have delivered your soul; their sin no longer rests upon you; you are not now partaker of their sin. But if they perish, their blood is upon their own head.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 53, 54.

6 What did God reveal to Ezekiel while He was preparing him to be His spokesman? Ezekiel 3:22–27.

“How God bore with the Jewish nation while they were murmuring and rebellious, breaking the Sabbath and every other precept of the law! He repeatedly declared them worse than the heathen. Each generation surpassed the preceding in guilt. The Lord permitted them to go into captivity, but after their deliverance His requirements were forgotten. Everything that He committed to that people to be kept sacred was perverted or displaced by the inventions of rebellious men.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 75.

JUDGED BY THE LIGHT GIVEN

□ Wednesday
July 5

7 What should each of us consider who have been entrusted with great light? Luke 12:47, 48.

“We have much to answer for, considering our superior advantages and knowing that we must be judged by the light and privileges the Lord has granted us. We cannot plead that we are less favored with light than that people who have been for ages an astonishment and a reproach to the world. We cannot expect judgment to be given in our favor because, like Capernaum, we have been exalted to heaven. The Lord has wrought for His commandment-keeping people. The light that has been reflected to us from heaven was not granted to Sodom and Gomorrah, or they might have remained unto this day; and if the mighty works and knowledge and grace which have been manifested to this people had been made known to the nations in darkness, we know not how far in advance of this people they might now be.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 624.

8 What message of hope was given to a faithful remnant and how is this message paralleled in our days? Ezekiel 6:8.

“Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. . . .

“The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 380.

“Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 10.

9

In the time of Ezekiel, what experience was reserved for those who had put their trust in mammon? Ezekiel 7:8, 9, 19. How will history be repeated? James 5:1–3.

“The day is coming when the idols of silver and gold will be cast to the moles and to the bats, and the rich men will weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 24, 1888.

“The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 152.

10

What message was Ezekiel to convey to the Jewish people? Ezekiel 7:25–27. What is soon to be seen on this earth? 2 Peter 3:10–12. What is our duty in the meantime?

“God designs that His precious word, with its messages of warning and encouragement, shall come to those who are in darkness and are ignorant of our faith. It is to be given to all, and will be to them a witness, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Do not feel that the responsibility rests upon you to convict and convert the hearers. The power of God alone can soften the hearts of the people. You are to hold forth the word of life, that all may have an opportunity of receiving the truth if they will. If they turn from the truth of heavenly origin, it will be their condemnation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 35.

□ Friday
July 7

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- What will we still be required to do even in difficult times?
- What comfort is offered those persecuted for sharing the truth?
- What too often happens when we neglect to follow Matthew 18:15?
- Explain one thing that can snare all who are entrusted with great light.
- Why is it fruitless to place our trust in earthly glory?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 53, 54.
This Day With God, p. 60.

Great Abominations

“Behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east” (Ezekiel 8:16).

“Men have honored Satan’s principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 352.

□ Sunday
July 9

GODLY JEALOUSY

1

What vision was Ezekiel given to behold? Ezekiel 8:1–5. Why is “jealousy” mentioned in the context of God’s house of worship? Exodus 20:1–6.

“The close and sacred relation of God to His people is represented under the figure of marriage. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306.

“Our God is a jealous God, and He requires that we worship Him in spirit and in truth, and in the beauty of holiness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 15, 1885.

2

In what sense do professed Christians provoke “godly jealousy” today? 2 Corinthians 11:2–4. How can we be secure against the deceptions of Satan? 2 Corinthians 13:5; John 14:6; 1 John 5:12.

“We need an abiding Christ. We need to eat His word. He is the Bread of Life. The revealed word is our photograph of Christ. The world can only be expelled from the soul by filling the soul with Christ. Just as the life of

the body is produced by the temporal food eaten, so the life of the soul is produced by the spiritual food eaten. He who would have spiritual life and vigor must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God.”—*Bible Training School*, March 1, 1903.

☐ **Monday**
July 10

VARIOUS FORMS OF IDOLATRY

3 How was God’s holy sanctuary being desecrated? Ezekiel 8: 6–11. How does man degrade himself through idolatry? Romans 1:22–27.

“How can man be elevated by adoring what is no higher than himself and may be symbolized by his own handiwork? If men could become so blinded to the power, the majesty, and the glory of the infinite God as to represent Him by a graven image, or even by a beast or reptile; if they could so forget their own divine relationship, formed in the image of their Maker as to bow down to these revolting and senseless objects—then the way was open for foul license; the evil passions of the heart would be unrestrained, and Satan would have full sway.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 335.

4 What self-deception did the ancients of the house of Israel reveal as they became bold in sin? Ezekiel 8:12. How may we be in danger of deceiving ourselves? Isaiah 29:13–15.

“The Lord has shown us His way; shall we walk in it? or shall we, finite and erring as we are, walk in our own counsel, and practice the principles which He has warned us against?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 382.

☐ **Tuesday**
July 11

GREATER ABOMINATIONS

5 What was the next step in the downward spiral of defilement in God’s sanctuary? Ezekiel 8:13, 14. How does this process of apostasy stand as a warning to us? 2 Chronicles 36:14.

“No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—

after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart. Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 177, 178.

6 What was the most serious offense shown to Ezekiel? Ezekiel 8:15, 16. Today, how has most of Christendom been deceived into adopting a form of sun worship? Daniel 7:25.

“Satan, working through unconsecrated leaders of the church, tampered with the fourth commandment . . . and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:2, 3), and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as ‘the venerable day of the sun.’”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 52.

“Through the setting up of a false sabbath, the enemy thought to change times and laws. But has he really succeeded in changing God’s law? The words of the thirty-first chapter of Exodus are the answer. He who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, has declared of the seventh-day Sabbath: ‘It is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations.’ ‘It is a sign . . . forever’ (Exodus 31:13, 17). The changed signpost is pointing the wrong way, but God has not changed. He is still the mighty God of Israel.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 184, 185.

☐ **Wednesday**
July 12

CHOOSING SCRIPTURE OVER TRADITION

7 How did Christ condemn the practice of putting tradition above the Word of God? Matthew 15:9, 13. What should all Christians realize about the Lord’s Sabbath? Mark 2:27, 28; Luke 23:56.

“Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and when holy beings of both heaven and earth were astir on the morning of the first day of the week, He rose from the grave to renew His work of teaching His disciples. But this fact does not consecrate the first day of the week, and make it a Sabbath.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1113.

“Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or His apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that ‘mystery of lawlessness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:7, R.V.) which, even in Paul’s day, had begun its work.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 54.

8 **As sincere Christian believers become aware of the facts regarding the unauthorized Sabbath-Sunday change, what does the Lord require of them? Acts 17:30.**

“The day of the sun, Sunday, was a day devoted to the most vile of the heathen worship, for it was celebrated in connection with sun-worship. This Sunday-sabbath has been accepted by many who know it to be the foundling of heathenism, which has been cherished and nourished by the Church of Rome, and by her clothed in the garments of sanctity. But while many are now aware of its origin, there are true Christians in every church who do not know the origin of the Sunday-sabbath, and believe that they are keeping the day which God sanctified and blest. This is true of worshipers even in the Catholic Church; and while this ignorance and integrity remain, God accepts of their sincerity; but when light shall fall upon their pathway, God requires them to come into harmony with His law, and to observe the Sabbath of His appointing.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 19, 1894.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

9 **How did God respond to the false worship in Ezekiel’s day? Ezekiel 8:17, 18. In our day, how will God’s people be pressured to conform to false worship? Revelation 13:11–17.**

“The enforcement of Sundaykeeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy—of the beast. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the churches would themselves form an image to the beast.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 448, 449.

“Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 976.

10 **As believers in God’s word, what is our present duty? Mark 13:34–37.**

“It is our duty, as we see the signs of approaching peril, to arouse to action. Let none sit in calm expectation of the evil, comforting themselves with the belief that this work must go on because prophecy has foretold it, and that the Lord will shelter His people. We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that this calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 713, 714.

“Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision *now* to say, *Nay*, we will not regard the institution of the beast.”—*Early Writings*, p. 67. [Author’s italics.]

□ **Friday**
July 14

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- Explain the significance of God’s jealousy towards His people.**
- Just as in Ezekiel’s time, how may we be guilty of idolatry?**
- What was the greatest abomination Ezekiel saw?**
- What will make people guilty of receiving the mark of the beast?**
- Why must we watch and warn others in view of Revelation 14:9–11?**

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 232–244.

Prophets and Kings, pp. 183–189; 448, 449.

The Seal of God

“And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezekiel 9:4).

“Although the nations are mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 221, 222.

□ **Sunday**
July 16

AN INVISIBLE MARK

1 In contrast to those entrusted as guardians of God’s temple, what was Ezekiel shown? Ezekiel 9:1–4.

“What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

2 How does the seal of God relate to faithful Sabbathkeepers today? Revelation 14:1; Exodus 31:13, 14.

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection. The names of those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and

watching for the appearing of their Saviour—more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning—will be numbered with those who are sealed.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.

□ **Monday**
July 17

THE MEANING OF THE SEALING MESSAGE

3 Discuss the seriousness of the sealing message. Ezekiel 9:10. How does this message relate to the third angel of Revelation 14:9–12?

“Those who link in sympathy with the world are eating and drinking with the drunken and will surely be destroyed with the workers of iniquity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 212.

“The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 449, 450.

4 What should cause us to think soberly about the sealing message? Jeremiah 25:33.

“Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God’s wrath have fallen upon the earth; but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 212.

□ **Tuesday**
July 18

WILLFULLY DECEIVED

5 When the destroying angel goes forth, who suffers first and why? Ezekiel 9:5–7.

“Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus ‘Peace and safety’ is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 211.

6 What is especially offensive to God? Ezekiel 9:8, 9.

“The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed. The great Searcher of hearts knoweth every sin committed in secret by the workers of iniquity. These persons come to feel secure in their deceptions and, because of His long-suffering, say that the Lord seeth not, and then act as though He had forsaken the earth. But He will detect their hypocrisy and will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 211, 212.

THE COMING DESTRUCTION

□ **Wednesday**
July 19

7 What will come upon the whole earth as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads? Revelation 16:1.

“The angel with the writer’s ink horn is to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and the destroying angel follows this angel.

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give

us warning, that we may know what is coming.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1161.

8 How did several prophets describe the destruction that is coming upon the world? Isaiah 26:21; Jeremiah 25:31; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2.

“When [Jesus] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God’s long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

“In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low.”—*Ibid.*, p. 657.

PROTECTION PROMISED

□ **Thursday**
July 20

9 What was shown to John the Revelator? Revelation 7:2–4. How must we prepare to receive the seal of God?

“Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be

placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 216.

10 What is promised to those who receive the seal of God? Malachi 3:17; Revelation 21:7.

“The day of wrath to the enemies of God is the day of final deliverance to His church. The prophet declares: ‘Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you.’ ‘He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it’ (Isaiah 35:3, 4; 25:8). And as the prophet beholds the Lord of glory descending from heaven, with all the holy angels, to gather the remnant church from among the nations of earth, he hears the waiting ones unite in the exultant cry: [Isaiah 25:9 quoted].”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 727, 728.

“Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.”—*Maranatha*, p. 241.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ **Friday**
July 21

- a. Who will not be passed by during the sealing work?
- b. Why will many professed Sabbathkeepers fail to receive the seal?
- c. How will the soon-coming destruction be inflicted?
- d. Who will suffer the most during the time of God’s destructive judgments, and why?
- e. What should inspire and motivate us to persevere in faith today?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 207–211.
The Great Controversy, pp. 653–657.

Lesson 5

Sabbath, July 29, 2000

Glorious Hope for the Remnant

“I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19).

“When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

□ **Sunday**
July 23

GOD USES SYMBOLS

1 What is the symbolic meaning of the “throne” and the “hand” in the vision of Ezekiel? Ezekiel 10:1, 8.

“The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; but they moved in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, were impelling these wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy.

“As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth.”—*Education*, p. 178.

2 What do the “wheels” represent? Ezekiel 10:9–11.

“To the prophet, the wheel within a wheel, the appearance of living creatures connected with them, all seemed intricate and unexplainable. But the hand of Infinite Wisdom is seen among the wheels, and perfect order is the result of its work. Every wheel, directed by the hand of God, works in perfect harmony with every other wheel.

“By the influence of the Spirit, the most discordant may be brought into harmony. Unselfishness is to bind God’s people together with firm, tender bonds. There is a vast power in the church when the energies of the members are under the control of the Spirit, gathering good from every source, educating, training, and disciplining self. Thus is presented to God a powerful organization, through which He can work for the conversion of sinners. Thus heaven and earth are connected, and all the divine agencies cooperate with human instrumentalities.”—*My Life Today*, p. 39.

□ **Monday**
July 24

MORE SYMBOLS

3 In the cooperation between divine and human agencies, what symbolism may be deducted from the “four faces?” Ezekiel 10:14, 15; Revelation 4:7.

- a) Man (wisdom): Colossians 1:9.
- b) Lion (courage): Proverbs 28:1.
- c) Ox/Cherub (strength): Proverbs 14:4.
- d) Eagle (swiftness): Deuteronomy 28:49.

4 What is the meaning of the “eyes” needed in every department and in every instrumentality in the work of God? Ezekiel 10:12; Ephesians 1:18.

“May the Lord bless His people with spiritual eyesight, to see that the children of God and the world can never be in copartnership.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 276.

“We need spiritual eyesight, that we may see the designs of the enemy, and as faithful watchmen proclaim the danger. We need power from above, that we may understand, as far as the human mind can, the great themes of Christianity and their far-reaching principles.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 289.

A WORK FOR GOD’S REMNANT

□ **Tuesday**
July 25

5 What lessons should we learn from the work of the angels that Ezekiel saw in vision? Ezekiel 10:16, 17; Hebrews 1:14.

“Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the cooperation of the heavenly messengers must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can cooperate with them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 649.

6 How did God reveal His care for the repentant, scattered remnant? Ezekiel 11:13–18. What is our responsibility toward the true followers of God in Babylon? John 10:16.

“Brethren who wish to change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel that individual responsibility rests upon them to do others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not his precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is little or no light and where they can be of real service and bless others with their labor and experience. Missionaries are wanted to go into towns and villages, and raise the standard of truth, that God may have His witnesses scattered all over the land, that the light of truth may penetrate where it has not yet reached, and the standard of truth be raised where it is not yet known.”—*Evangelism*, p. 52.

“We have but a little space of time left in which to work for God. Nothing should be too dear to sacrifice for the salvation of the scattered and torn flock of Jesus.”—*Early Writings*, p. 47.

STRIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY

□ Wednesday
July 26

7

What assurance did God extend to His striving remnant? Ezekiel 11:19, 20. What is the present-day application of this assurance?

“Be not discouraged because your heart seems hard. Every obstacle, every internal foe, only increases your need of Christ. He came to take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Look to Him for special grace to overcome your peculiar faults. When assailed by temptation, steadfastly resist the evil promptings; say to your soul, ‘How can I dishonor my Redeemer? I have given myself to Christ; I cannot do the works of Satan.’ Cry to the dear Saviour for help to sacrifice every idol and to put away every darling sin. Let the eye of faith see Jesus standing before the Father’s throne, presenting His wounded hands as He pleads for you. Believe that strength comes to you through your precious Saviour.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 112.

8

In seeking reformation, what should we learn about God’s glory as revealed to Moses? Exodus 33:17, 18; 34:6, 7.

“[The Lord] permitted all His goodness to pass before Moses; He proclaimed His character to him as a God full of mercy, long-suffering, and gracious—forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Moses was to represent this character to the people of Israel, and we are to do the same. We are to go forth to proclaim the goodness of God, and to make plain His real character before the people. We are to reflect His glory. Have we done this in the past? Have we revealed the character of our Lord by precept and example? Have we not joined in the work of the enemy of souls, and misrepresented our heavenly Father? Have we not been passing judgment on our brethren, criticizing their words and actions? Then the love of God has not been enthroned in our souls. Let us make a decided change. Let us declare the character of God to the people as Moses did to Israel, both in spirit and life. We are to catch the light of His countenance, full of compassion and love, and reflect it to perishing souls.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 26, 1889.

THE EARTH ENLIGHTENED

□ Thursday
July 27

9

How is God’s glory to be revealed in our day? Isaiah 60:1, 2.

“[Isaiah 60:1 quoted.] If upon your spirit the glory of the Lord is risen, if you have beheld His beauty who is ‘the chiefest among ten thousand’ and the One ‘altogether lovely,’ if your soul has become radiant in the presence of His glory, to you is this word from the Master sent. Have you stood with Christ on the mount of transfiguration? Down in the plain there are souls enslaved by Satan; they are waiting for the word of faith and prayer to set them free.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 43.

10

How does Paul describe the glory shown to John in Revelation 18:1? Colossians 1:27. How may we help in spreading this glory?

“The world is a lazar house filled with victims of both physical and spiritual disease. Everywhere people are perishing for lack of a knowledge of the truths that have been committed to us. The members of the church are in need of an awakening, that they may realize their responsibility to impart these truths. Those who have been enlightened by the truth are to be light bearers to the world. To hide our light at this time is to make a terrible mistake.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 62.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ Friday
July 28

- a. What will happen when the church is controlled by the Holy Spirit?
- b. Why do we need spiritual eyesight?
- c. How should Ezekiel’s vision of the angels inspire us today?
- d. Explain the essence of God’s glory.
- e. How can we reflect God’s glory?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pp. 250–253.
This Day With God, p. 80.



Sabbath, August 5, 2000

First Sabbath Offering

for a chapel and headquarters in Mexico

The United Mexican States (Mexico) is a Spanish-speaking country in North America bordered by the USA, Guatemala, Belize, the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. It covers an area of 756,066 square miles (1,958,201 square kilometers) and carries a vast wealth of mineral resources.

While traditional village life can still be found in the more isolated rural areas of Mexico, the national economy is currently dominated largely by petroleum and tourism, and two-thirds of the people now live in cities. In fact, Mexico City is today the most populous city in the world (although its metropolitan area ranks only third).

Among the population of over 95,830,000, Roman Catholics constitute 90.4%, Protestants 3.8%, and other religions 5.8%.

The message of reformation among Seventh-day Adventists came to Mexico in the late 1960's, and by 1970 over 100 souls had taken their stand with the SDA Reform Movement. Since then, the work has spread to different parts of the country, and one Field and two Missions have now been established.

At this time, the Western Mexico Mission is in need of a chapel and headquarters. We are currently in the process of securing a plot of land in the city of Queretaro, on which to build. The total amount needed is approximately US\$20,000.00, but so far we have only US\$3,000.00 on hand. As you may be aware, the people of Mexico are not generally wealthy. Therefore, we are looking to you, our brethren, sisters and friends from around the world, to kindly assist us in completing this project.

When the First Sabbath Offering is gathered on August 5, 2000, please remember the needs in Mexico, that the message of "that other angel" may shine forth to souls in darkness.

Your brethren from Mexico



Sabbath Bible Lessons, July–September 2000

Lesson 6

Sabbath, August 5, 2000

Warnings Paralleled Today

"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:20).

"No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves; no one else can fight our battles."—*The Ministry of Healing* p. 453.

□ **Sunday**
July 30

LIGHT UNAPPRECIATED AND UNSHARED

1 How did the Lord describe the condition of His professed people in Ezekiel's day? Ezekiel 12:1, 2. How has this problem continued even to our time? Matthew 13:14, 15; John 3:19, 20.

"It is a fearful thing to have great light and blessing, to have many opportunities and privileges, and yet make no saving use of them. Those who do not make a saving use of their opportunities, will be condemned by the privileges God has granted to them; but those who walk in the light will have increased light."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 259.

2 What was God's plan for His people entrusted with heaven-sent light? Isaiah 43:10. What similar exhortation echoes down to us today? Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:8.

"Had Israel been true to her trust, all the nations of earth would have shared in her blessings. But the hearts of those to whom had been entrusted a knowledge of saving truth, were untouched by the needs of those around them. As God's purpose was lost sight of, the heathen came to be looked upon as beyond the pale of His mercy. The light of truth was withheld, and darkness prevailed. The nations were overspread with a veil

of ignorance; the love of God was little known; error and superstition flourished.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 371.

□ **Monday**
July 31

DANGEROUS COMPROMISE

3 Describe the warning that Ezekiel was to give to the people of Judah. Ezekiel 12:21–28. What mistake did the king of Judah make in the crisis hour? Ezekiel 17:15.

“Judah’s king rebelled against the prophets, against his benefactor, and against his God. In the vanity of his own wisdom he turned for help to the ancient enemy of Israel’s prosperity, ‘sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people’ (Ezekiel 17:15).”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 450, 451.

4 How is the dangerous tendency of evil men gaining ground among the professed people of God today? Matthew 24:48–51.

“The evil servant says in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming.’ He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord’s coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind. The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635.

□ **Tuesday**
August 1

FOLLIES OF FALSE SHEPHERDS

5 How were the lying prophets reproofed? Ezekiel 13:1–3, 6. What reproof applies to the popular ministry today? Isaiah 50:11.

“Since the second angel proclaimed the fall of the churches, they have been growing more and more corrupt. They bear the name of being Christ’s followers; yet it is impossible to distinguish them from the world. Ministers take their texts from the Word of God, but preach smooth things. To this the natural heart feels no objection. It is only the spirit and power of the truth and the salvation of Christ that are hateful to the carnal heart. There is nothing in the popular ministry that stirs the wrath of Satan, makes the sinner tremble, or applies to the heart and conscience the fearful realities of a judgment soon to come. Wicked men are generally pleased with a form of piety without true godliness, and they will aid and support such a religion.”—*Early Writings*, p. 273.

6 What accusation rested upon the false prophets in the time of Ezekiel? Ezekiel 13:4, 5. How applicable is this to our day?

“Some who occupy the position of watchmen to warn the people of danger have given up their watch and recline at ease. They are unfaithful sentinels. They remain inactive, while their wily foe enters the fort and works successfully by their side to tear down what God has commanded to be built up. They see that Satan is deceiving the inexperienced and unsuspecting; yet they take it all quietly, as though they had no special interest, as though these things did not concern them. They apprehend no special danger; they see no cause to raise an alarm.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 440.

□ **Wednesday**
August 2

A SERIOUS DENUNCIATION

7 How did God denounce the actions of those who were leading His people? Ezekiel 13:10–16.

“There will be men and women who despise reproof and whose feelings will ever rise up against it. It is not pleasant to be told of our wrongs. In almost every case where reproof is necessary, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved and His cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof, because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanctified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproofed. In nine cases out of ten if the one reproofed had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them and there-

by have been reformed. But meddlesome, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives of the reprover and the nature of the reproof given, and by sympathizing with the one reproved lead him to feel that he has been really abused; and his feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God will receive His blessing.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 359.

8 What did God propose to do to the false prophetesses who went about deceiving the people? Ezekiel 13:18–23. What will happen to the ministers who have used falsehoods to deceive the people?

“The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. ‘We are lost!’ they cry, ‘and you are the cause of our ruin,’ and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 655, 656.

STANDING FOR CHRIST

□ Thursday
August 3

9 What appeal and warning from the Lord did Ezekiel direct to the people? Ezekiel 14:2–8.

“Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honor Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone

over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 315, 316.

10 What principle requires our immediate attention? Ezekiel 14:14–20.

“The ‘time of trouble, such as never was,’ is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. [Ezekiel 14:20 quoted.]”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 622.

“‘Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely’ (Revelation 22:17). But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working. ‘Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness’ (Ezekiel 14:20).”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 412.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ Friday
August 4

- What responsibilities come when we receive light from heaven?
- In view of the short time remaining, what should we consider?
- Name some ways that men walk in “sparks of their own kindling.”
- What is often a big obstacle whenever reproof must be given?
- Describe the dangerous state to which we may be prone.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 622, 623.
The Ministry of Healing, pp. 452–457.

Doom or Redemption: A Choice

“And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live” (Ezekiel 16:6).

“God’s mercy to those who sincerely repent and come to Him through Christ, knows no limit. He will pardon the most guilty, and purify the most polluted.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 341.

GOD’S MERCY TOWARDS THE JEWISH NATION

☐ Sunday
August 6

1 Through what allegory did God depict the birth of the Jewish nation and His compassion on their pitiful state? Ezekiel 16:1–7.

2 What description portrays God’s covenant with His people? Ezekiel 16:8 (cf. Ruth 3:9); 2 Corinthians 11:2.

“Christ left His heavenly home, and came to this world, to show that only by being connected with divinity can man keep the law of God. In itself humanity is tainted and corrupted; but Christ brought moral power to man, and those who live in communion with Him overcome as He overcame. We are not left in this world as orphans; Christ has united fallen man to the infinite God. He has opened a way for our prayers to ascend to God, and the fragrance of His righteousness ascends with the prayer of every repentant sinner.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 10, 1896.

“In the Bible the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church is represented by the union of marriage. The Lord has joined His people to Himself by a solemn covenant, He promising to be their God, and they pledging themselves to be His and His alone.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

☐ Monday
August 7

3 Why did God become disappointed at the behavior of His people on many occasions? Ezekiel 16:13–15, 30, 32.

“The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

4 How does Inspiration denounce the moral fall of the popular churches today? Revelation 17:1–5; 18:1–4.

“It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. . . .

“The people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God’s people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith. At the time of their rise these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. Even the unbelieving world was constrained to acknowledge the beneficent results that followed an acceptance of the principles of the gospel. . . . But they fell by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel—the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 382, 383.

MODERN MOLECH

☐ Tuesday
August 8

5 What practice had crept into Israel, provoking God’s wrath? Ezekiel 16:20, 21. How had He warned against this evil? Leviticus 18:21; 20:2, 3.

“While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage, they were surrounded by idolatry. The Egyptians had received traditions in regard to sacrificing. They did not acknowledge the existence of the God of heaven. They sacrificed to their idol gods. With great pomp and ceremony they performed their idol worship. They erected altars to the honor of their gods, and they required even their own children to pass through the fire. After they had erected their altars, they required their children to leap over the altars through the fire. If they could do this without their being burned, the idol priests and people received it as an evidence that their god accepted their offerings, and favored especially the person who passed through the fiery ordeal. He was loaded with benefits, and was ever afterward greatly esteemed by all the people. He was never allowed to be punished, however aggravating might be his crimes. If another person who leaped through the fire was so unfortunate as to be burned, then his fate was fixed; for they thought that their gods were angry, and would be appeased with nothing short of the unhappy victim’s life, and he was offered up as a sacrifice upon their idol altars.

“Even some of the children of Israel had so far degraded themselves as to practice these abominations, and God caused the fire to kindle upon their children, whom they made to pass through the fire. They did not go to all the lengths of the heathen nations; but God deprived them of their children by causing the fire to consume them in the act of passing through it.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1119.

6 In what ways may we be in danger of practicing similar abominations today? James 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17.

“Fathers and mothers who should understand the responsibility which rests upon them relax their discipline to meet the inclinations of their growing sons and daughters. The will of the child is the law recognized. Mothers who have been firm, consistent, and unbending in their adherence to principle, maintaining simplicity and fidelity, become indulgent as their children merge into manhood and womanhood. In their love of display they give their children to Satan with their own hands, like the apostate Jews making them pass through the fire to Molech.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 277.

“Children are not to be trained to be the devotees of society. They are not to be sacrificed to Molech, but they are to become members of the Lord’s family. Parents are to be filled with the compassion of Christ, that they may work for the salvation of the souls that are placed under their influence. They are not to have their minds all engrossed in the fashions

and practices of the world. They are not to educate their children to attend parties and concerts and dances, to have and attend feasts, because after this manner the Gentiles walk.”—*Ibid.*, p. 181.

□ **Wednesday**
August 9

A DOOMED NATION

7 How can we protect our children from the evils of Sodom? Ezekiel 16:49, 50. Why should we remember God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha? Jude 5–7.

“Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation which the enemy suggests, but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control. The mind, when not properly occupied, dwells upon improper things. Parents should teach their children that idleness is sin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 395.

“The reason the youth have so little strength of brain and muscle is because they do so little in the line of useful labor.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 96.

“The misuse or nonuse of the physical powers is largely responsible for the tide of corruption that is overspreading the world. ‘Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness’ (Ezekiel 16:49), are as deadly foes to human progress in this generation as when they led to the destruction of Sodom.”—*Education*, p. 209.

8 What was God constrained to declare about the rebellious nation that had betrayed His every sacred trust? Ezekiel 17:11–20.

“The day of doom for the kingdom of Judah was fast approaching. No longer could the Lord set before them the hope of averting the severest of His judgments.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 450.

□ **Thursday**
August 10

GOD’S MERCY TOWARD THE REMNANT

9 How did God reveal His mercy toward those who would humble their souls in true contrition? Ezekiel 17:22–24.

“It was still the Lord’s purpose, as it had been from the beginning, that His people should be a praise in the earth, to the glory of His name. During the long years of their exile He had given them many opportunities to return to their allegiance to Him. Some had chosen to listen and to learn; some had found salvation in the midst of affliction. Many of these were to be numbered among the remnant that should return. They were likened by Inspiration to ‘the highest branch of the high cedar,’ which was to be planted ‘upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel’ (Ezekiel 17:22, 23).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 599.

10 What future plan did God have for the faithful remnant? Ezekiel 16:60–63; Jeremiah 31:33; Galatians 3:29.

“All who became the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, he said, would give evidence of faith and repentance. Kindness, honesty, and fidelity would be seen in their lives. They would minister to the needy, and bring their offerings to God. They would shield the defenseless, and give an example of virtue and compassion. So the followers of Christ will give evidence of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. In the daily life, justice, mercy, and the love of God will be seen.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ **Friday**
August 11

- a. What symbolizes the love that exists between God and His people?
- b. How is spiritual adultery seen in the churches today?
- c. Explain the problem of “Molech” today, according to Inspiration.
- d. How are we called upon to avoid the trap of Sodom today?
- e. What are we to learn from this time in Israel’s history?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 450, 451.
Steps to Christ, pp. 23–36.

Lesson 8

Sabbath, August 19, 2000

Obedience and Sanctification

“Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12).

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that recreates the soul in His own likeness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 350.

ESSENTIALS IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION

□ **Sunday**
August 13

1 What basic truths must we understand for our soul’s salvation? Ezekiel 18:4, 20–24.

“There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election—once in grace, always in grace. . . . 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.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1114, 1115.

2 What should we realize when tempted to question God’s fairness in dealing with our individual cases? Ezekiel 18:25.

“The attitude which many assume in expressing doubts and unbelief as to whether the Lord will save them is a reflection upon the character of God. Those who complain of His severity are virtually saying: ‘The way of

the Lord is not equal.' But He distinctly throws back the imputation upon the sinner: 'Are not your ways unequal?' Can I pardon your transgressions when you do not repent and turn from your sins?" . . . The Lord will receive the sinner when he repents and forsakes his sins so that God can work with his efforts in seeking perfection of character."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 631, 632.

□ **Monday**
August 14

THE WAY OF ETERNAL LIFE

3 What warning invites sinners to turn to God without delay? Ezekiel 18:26–30.

"Let none venture into sin as [Solomon] did, in the hope that they too may recover themselves. Sin can be indulged only at the peril of infinite loss. . . . But none who have fallen need give themselves up to despair. . . . There is still hope for them if they repent, forsake sin, and turn to God."—*The Review and Herald*, February 22, 1906.

"Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 53.

4 What is needed in preparing for Heaven? Ezekiel 18:31, 32.

"Regeneration is the only path by which we can reach the holy city. It is narrow and the gate by which we enter is strait, but along it we are to lead men and women and children, teaching them that in order to be saved, they must have a new heart and a new spirit. The old hereditary traits of character are to be overcome. The natural desires of the soul must be changed. All deception, all falsifying, all evil-speaking must be put away. The new life, which makes men and women Christlike, is to be lived. We are, as it were, to swim against the current of evil."—*This Day With God*, p. 108.

□ **Tuesday**
August 15

A SERIOUS OFFENCE TO GOD

5 For what purpose did God remind the Israelites of their sojourn in Egypt? Ezekiel 20:7–11.

"Pharaoh boasted that he would like to see [the Israelites'] God deliver them from his hands. These words destroyed the hopes of many of the children of Israel. It appeared to them very much as the king and his counselors had said. They knew that they were treated as slaves, and that they must endure just that degree of oppression their taskmasters and rulers might put upon them. Their male children had been hunted and slain. Their own lives were a burden, and they were believing in, and worshipping, the God of Heaven. Then they contrasted their condition with that of the Egyptians. They did not believe at all in a living God who had power to save or to destroy. Some of them worshiped idols, images of wood and stone, while others chose to worship the sun, moon, and stars; yet they were prospered and wealthy. And some of the Hebrews thought that if God was above all gods He would not thus leave them as slaves to an idolatrous nation.

"The faithful servants of God understood that it was because of their unfaithfulness to God as a people, and their disposition to intermarry with other nations, and thus being led into idolatry, that the Lord suffered them to go into Egypt. And they firmly declared to their brethren that God would soon bring them up from Egypt, and break their oppressive yoke."—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 114, 115.

6 How serious of an offense is it to reject God's law and His holy Sabbath? Ezekiel 20:13, 14, 23, 24.

"Those who trample upon God's authority, and show open contempt to the law given in such grandeur at Sinai, virtually despise the Lawgiver, the great Jehovah. . . . By transgressing the law which God had given in such majesty, and amid glory which was unapproachable, the people showed open contempt of the great Lawgiver, and death was the penalty."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1162.

□ **Wednesday**
August 16

A SACRED DAY

7 What sign did God give to His people to set them apart as His own peculiar treasure? Ezekiel 20:12.

"The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they are His obedient subjects, that they keep holy

His law. The observance of the Sabbath is the means ordained by God of preserving a knowledge of Himself and of distinguishing between His loyal subjects and the transgressors of His law. This is the faith once delivered to the saints, who stand in moral power before the world, firmly maintaining this faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 198.

“To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 350.

8

What did the Jews reveal by polluting the Lord’s Sabbath? Ezekiel 20:15, 16.

“The Lord designed that by a faithful observance of the Sabbath command, Israel should continually be reminded of their accountability to Him as their Creator and their Redeemer.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 182.

“So long as the fact that [God] is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 438.

GOD’S PLAN FOR HIS SANCTIFIED REMNANT

□ Thursday
August 17

9

What was and still is well understood by God’s faithful remnant in connection with the Sabbath? Ezekiel 20:19, 20.

“Though sin has entered the world to mar His perfect work, God still gives to us the Sabbath as a witness that One omnipotent, infinite in goodness and mercy, created all things. Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 349.

“The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.’ So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

10

What promise was very precious to the faithful remnant in the days of Ezekiel? Ezekiel 20:36–42. What do we read about the remnant of Israel in these last days? Isaiah 10:20–22.

“From ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will ‘worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God’s mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept ‘the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus’ (Revelation 14:6, 7, 12).”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 299, 300.

□ Friday
August 18

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- How do God’s grace and justice work hand-in-hand in our behalf?**
- Why can the gospel of Christ indeed be known as “good news”?**
- How may we be going into Egypt today?**
- What does it mean to keep the Sabbath day holy?**
- What is the significance of the Sabbath to the remnant, both now and forever?**

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 629–635.
Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 349–353.

God's Judgments

“I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him” (Ezekiel 21:27).

“The final overthrow of all earthly dominions is plainly foretold in the word of truth.”—*Education*, p. 179.

☐ **Sunday**
August 20

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

1 Just as God had warned the Jews through Jeremiah, what crisis befell Jerusalem during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar? 2 Kings 25:1. How was this also revealed to Ezekiel? Ezekiel 21:1–7, 31.

“Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had been, from their first existence as a nation, the special objects of Satan’s enmity, and he had determined to cause their destruction. He could do them no harm while they were obedient to God; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to enticing them into sin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 468.

“The children of Israel were taken captive to Babylon because they separated from God, and no longer maintained the principles that had been given to keep them free from the methods and practices of the nations who dishonored God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1040.

2 Because of Judah’s impenitence, how would they be chastised? Ezekiel 21:21–24.

“This prophecy [Deuteronomy 4:26–28], fulfilled in part in the time of the judges, met a more complete and literal fulfillment in the captivity of Israel in Assyria and of Judah in Babylon.

“The apostasy of Israel had developed gradually. From generation to generation, Satan had made repeated attempts to cause the chosen nation to forget ‘the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments’ that they had promised to keep forever (Deuteronomy 6:1). He knew that if he could only lead Israel to forget God, and to ‘walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them,’ they would ‘surely perish’ (Deuteronomy 8:19).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 296.

☐ **Monday**
August 21

HOW GOD DEALS WITH REBELLION

3 How and why did God proclaim the end of Judah as a monarchy? Ezekiel 21:25, 26. When and through whom should the throne be restored to the House of David?

“To the ‘profane wicked prince’ had come the day of final reckoning. ‘Remove the diadem,’ the Lord decreed, ‘and take off the crown’ (Ezekiel 21:25, 26). Not until Christ Himself should set up His kingdom was Judah again to be permitted to have a king.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 451.

“The final overthrow of all earthly dominions is plainly foretold in the word of truth.”—*Education*, p. 179.

4 How did God proclaim the establishment of Christ’s kingdom? Ezekiel 21:27.

“The crown removed from Israel passed successively to the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God says, ‘It shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him’ (Ezekiel 21:27).

“That time is at hand. Today the signs of the times declare that we are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Everything in our world is in agitation. Before our eyes is fulfilling the Saviour’s prophecy of the events to precede His coming.”—*Education*, p. 179.

☐ **Tuesday**
August 22

REASONS FOR GOD’S WRATH

5 What reasons did God list for sending His wrath upon Judah? Ezekiel 22:6–12, 31; Ezekiel 23:37–39.

“Why did the Lord permit Jerusalem to be destroyed by fire the first time? Why did He permit His people to be overcome by their enemies and carried into heathen lands?—It was because they had failed to be His missionaries, and had built walls of division between themselves and the people round them. The Lord scattered them, that the knowledge of His truth might be carried to the world. If they were loyal and true and submissive, God would bring them again into their own land.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1040.

“In calling the attention of Judah to the sins that finally brought upon them the Babylonian Captivity, the Lord declared: ‘Thou hast . . . profaned My Sabbaths.’ ‘Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads’ (Ezekiel 22:8, 31).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 182.

6 Of what were the priests especially guilty in Ezekiel’s day? Ezekiel 22:26. What similar warnings echo down to us today?

“Can we then be surprised to hear of ministers falling under temptation and sin, disgracing the cause they were professedly advocating? Can we wonder that there are apostasies when men who urge conversion upon others are not themselves converted?”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 184.

“Some have so long sacrificed principle that they cannot see the difference between the sacred and the common. Those who refuse to give heed to the Lord’s instruction will go steadily downward in the path of ruin. The day of test and trial is just before us. Let every man put on his true colors. Do you choose loyalty or rebellion? Show your colors to men and angels. We are safe only when we are committed to the right. Then the world knows where we shall be found in the day of trial and trouble.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 96.

TWO OBJECT LESSONS

□ **Wednesday**
August 23

7 What lesson did the Lord want to teach Judah, and especially Jerusalem, through the parable of the boiling pot? Ezekiel 24:3–14.

“While Jeremiah continued to bear his testimony in the land of Judah, the prophet Ezekiel was raised up from among the captives in Babylon, to

warn and to comfort the exiles, and also to confirm the word of the Lord that was being spoken through Jeremiah. During the years that remained of Zedekiah’s reign, Ezekiel made very plain the folly of trusting to the false predictions of those who were causing the captives to hope for an early return to Jerusalem. He was also instructed to foretell, by means of a variety of symbols and solemn messages, the siege and utter destruction of Jerusalem.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 448.

8 What trying experience tested Ezekiel’s faith? Ezekiel 24:15–18. What prophecy did the death of Ezekiel’s wife contain for the rebellious nation? Ezekiel 24:19–24.

“The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his eyes. The king was led away from Jerusalem a captive, his eyes were put out, and after arriving in Babylon he perished miserably. The beautiful temple that for more than four centuries had crowned the summit of Mount Zion was not spared by the Chaldeans. ‘They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof’ (2 Chronicles 36:19).

“At the time of the final overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, many had escaped the horrors of the long siege, only to perish by the sword. Of those who still remained, some, notably the chief of the priests and officers, and the princes of the realm, were taken to Babylon and there executed as traitors.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 458–460.

A TIME OF NATIONAL RETRIBUTION

□ **Thursday**
August 24

9 What reasons did God give for punishing the Ammonites? Ezekiel 25:1–3, 7.

“God keeps a reckoning with nations, as well as with individuals. He allows to nations a certain period of probation, and gives them evidences of His requirements, of His supremacy, and makes known to them His laws which are to be the rule of His kingdom in the government of nations. All this He does that heathen nations may not be given up to destruction unwarned and without light; but after He has given them evidence and

light, and they still persist in insolence toward Him, then, when iniquity is full . . . God takes the matter in hand, and His judgments are not longer withheld.”—*The Youth Instructor*, February 1, 1894.

10 What punishment was God about to send upon Tyre? Why was this punishment necessary? Ezekiel 26:7, 8.

“To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.

“The prophecies which the great I AM has given in His word, uniting link after link in the chain of events, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tell us where we are today in the procession of the ages and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 536.

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.”—*Ibid.* p. 537.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- What does Satan attempt to make us forget?
- How does God deal with rebellion?
- What are the reasons for God’s wrath?
- How can we apply the parable of the boiling pot to our day?
- How does history repeat itself?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Prophets and Kings, pp. 452–463.
The Publishing Ministry, pp. 167–178.

□ **Friday**
August 25



Sabbath, September 2, 2000

First Sabbath Offering

for a chapel and headquarters in Spain

The Kingdom of Spain is located in the extreme southwest of the European continent, bordering France, Portugal, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea. The area totals 194,898 square miles (504,784 square kilometers). Major exports include transport equipment, agricultural products, and machinery.

Among the population of 39,371,000, Roman Catholics constitute 66.7%, Muslims 1.2%, Protestants 0.8%, and others 31.3%.

The work of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was organized in Spain in 1958. At that time our meetings had to be held behind locked doors in the health food store of one of the brethren, because there was then no religious liberty here. As soon as religious liberty was officially granted throughout Spain, our work was registered and the brethren were able to open a meeting hall in Barcelona. Over the years, the colporteur work has become a very successful means by which many new souls have been won to the Present Truth. As the Lord’s work expanded here, in 1992 the Spanish Mission was reorganized as a separate entity from the Portugal Field.

Sabbath school students around the world may recall that in December 1994, a Special Project Offering was gathered in behalf of the Spanish Mission. We are very thankful for the generosity extended to us, and would like to make a second request in behalf of our headquarters building. In our project, we really need to have space for a sanctuary, pastor’s study, colporteur department, and children’s Sabbath school classroom. This takes a considerable amount of means, since construction costs are currently quite high here.

Dear brethren, sisters and friends, when the First Sabbath Offering is gathered, please remember the goals of the Spanish Mission with your additional support. It is our prayer that through your generous gifts, this project may come to full fruition with God’s help. Thank you in advance!

Your brethren from Spain



Pride and Destruction

“Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezekiel 28:15).

“The first sinner was one whom God had greatly exalted. He is represented under the figure of the prince of Tyrus flourishing in might and magnificence.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 387.

☐ **Sunday**
August 27

GOD’S LAW IN QUESTION

1 How do the Scriptures depict the character and destiny of Lucifer? Ezekiel 28:6, 9. Why did Satan resent God’s law?

“Under the symbol of the king of Tyrus, the Scriptures give us a description of the character and destiny of the first great rebel against the law of God. He who knows the end from the beginning, had His laws and commandments before the world was created, and Satan chose to question His claims before the angels of heaven, because the law set forth the Omnipotent as the only true and living God, and forbade the worship of any other being.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 24, 1894.

2 Why have the deceptions of Satan always been so alluring? Ezekiel 28:11–14. What counsel and warning is given us concerning Ezekiel 28?

“I ask our people to study the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel. The representation here made, while it refers primarily to Lucifer, the fallen angel, has yet a broader significance. Not one being, but a general movement, is described, and one that we shall witness. A faithful study of this chapter should lead those who are seeking for truth to walk in all the light

that God has given to His people, lest they be deceived by the deceptions of these last days.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1162.

AN ATTITUDE PROBLEM

☐ **Monday**
August 28

3 How does Inspiration summarize the steps of Satan’s rebellion? Ezekiel 28:15.

“Little by little Satan came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. . . . Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1162.

4 Why was Satan’s behavior displeasing to God? Ezekiel 28:16–18 (first part). What attitude are we urged to cultivate?

“[Ezekiel 28:16, 18 quoted.] In this place ‘traffick’ is the emblem of corrupt administration. It denotes the bringing of self-seeking into spiritual offices. Nothing in spiritual service is acceptable to God except the purposes and works that are for the good of the universe. To do good to others will redound to the glory of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1163.

WAR IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

☐ **Tuesday**
August 29

5 How did God deal with Satan? Revelation 12:7–9.

“God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was

not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 759.

6

What is prophesied about Satan's influence in the last days? 2 Thessalonians 2:7–9; 1 Peter 5:8.

"[2 Thessalonians 2:7, 8; Ezekiel 28:2, 6–10 quoted.] The time is fast approaching when this scripture will be fulfilled. The world and the professedly Protestant churches are in this our day taking sides with the man of sin. . . . The great issue that is coming will be on the seventh-day Sabbath."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1163.

"Satan has originated fables with which to deceive. He commenced in heaven to war against the foundation of God's government, and since his fall he has carried on his rebellion against the law of God, and has brought the mass of professed Christians to trample under their feet the fourth commandment, which brings to view the living God. He has torn down the original Sabbath of the Decalogue, and substituted in its place one of the laboring days of the week.

"The great original lie which he told to Eve in Eden, 'Ye shall not surely die,' was the first sermon ever preached on the immortality of the soul. That sermon was crowned with success, and terrible results followed. He has brought minds to receive that sermon as truth, and ministers preach it, sing it, and pray it.

"No literal devil, and probation after the coming of Christ, are fast becoming popular fables."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 342.

□ **Wednesday**
August 30

PRIDE VS. HUMILITY

7

What did Satan declare? Isaiah 14:12–14. How can we overcome the tendency toward pride and ambition? James 4:6, 7, 10.

"Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements

seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits.

"We should seek for true goodness rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 242, 243.

8

What struggle is before us? Ephesians 6:11–13.

"Satan's aim had been to reproduce his own character in human beings. No sooner was man created than Satan resolved to efface in him the image of God, and to place his stamp where God's should be. And he has succeeded in instilling into the heart of man the spirit of envy, of hatred, of ambition. In this world he has set up a kingdom of darkness, of which he, the leader in guilt, is prince. He desired to usurp the throne of God. Failing in this, he has worked in darkness, in crookedness, in deception, to usurp his place in the hearts of men. He has set up his throne between God and man, to appropriate the adoration that belongs to God alone."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1119.

□ **Thursday**
August 31

THE END OF REBELLION

9

What will be the end of Satan? Ezekiel 28:18 (last part), 19; Revelation 20:10; Malachi 4:1–3.

"Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and His law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the

nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1162.

10 In what sense will the universe be safe after the destruction of Satan? Nahum 1:9.

“The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. . . . [Nahum 1:9 quoted.] The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 504.

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”—*Ibid.*, p. 678.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ **Friday**
September 1

- a. Why should Ezekiel 28 be of special interest to us today?
- b. What thoughts in Satan’s early stages must we be sure to avoid?
- c. How will this rebellion reach its culmination in the last days?
- d. Of what subtle temptations should we be aware?
- e. How does history reveal the justice and mercy of God?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 35–41.
The Great Controversy, pp. 493–499.

Lesson 11

Sabbath, September 9, 2000

Appeals for Salvation

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11.)

“It is in mercy and love that [God] lifts the veil from the future, and reveals to men the results of a course of sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 582.

□ **Sunday**
September 3

EGYPT AND ASSYRIA

1 What did God prophesy about Egypt—a superpower in ancient times? Ezekiel 29:3, 9, 10, 14, 15.

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

2 How does the Bible depict the rise of Assyria? Ezekiel 31:3–9. How did its rulers grieve the Most High?

“The rulers of Assyria, instead of using their unusual blessings for the benefit of mankind, became the scourge of many lands. Merciless, with no thought of God or their fellow men, they pursued the fixed policy of causing all nations to acknowledge the supremacy of the gods of Nineveh, whom they exalted above the Most High. God had sent Jonah to them with a message of warning, and for a season they humbled themselves before

the Lord of hosts and sought forgiveness. But soon they turned again to idol worship and to the conquest of the world.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 363.

JUDGMENTS METED OUT

□ **Monday**
September 4

3 How did the Lord warn Egypt through the fall of Assyria? Ezekiel 31:2, 10–18.

“The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time. Of the nations of earth today who in arrogance and pride array themselves against Him, God inquires, ‘To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth’ (Ezekiel 31:18).

“‘The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end’ of all who endeavor to exalt themselves above the Most High (Nahum 1:7, 8).”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 366.

4 What should we learn from Zechariah’s brief summary of the punishment that came upon Assyria and Egypt? Zechariah 10:11.

“[Zechariah 10:11 quoted.] This is true not only of the nations that arrayed themselves against God in ancient times, but also of nations today who fail of fulfilling the divine purpose. In the day of final awards, when the righteous Judge of all the earth shall ‘sift the nations’ (Isaiah 30:28), and those that have kept the truth shall be permitted to enter the City of God, heaven’s arches will ring with the triumphant songs of the redeemed.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 366.

WATCHMEN OF TODAY

□ **Tuesday**
September 5

5 What is our responsibility as believers entrusted with the proclamation of the three angels’ messages? Ezekiel 33:1–6.

“The responsibility of the watchmen of today is as much greater than in the days of the prophet as our light is clearer and our privileges and opportunities greater than theirs. It is the minister’s duty to warn every man, to teach every man, in all meekness and wisdom. He is not to conform to the practices of the world, but, as God’s servant, he must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. . . . The end of all things is at hand. My brethren, ministers and laymen, I have been shown you must work in a different manner from what you have been in the habit of working. Pride, envy, self-importance, and unsanctified independence have marred your labors. When men permit themselves to be flattered and exalted by Satan, the Lord can do little for them or through them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 16, 17.

6 How are we accountable for our words and influence? Ezekiel 33:7.

“The Lord is soon coming. The watchmen on the walls of Zion are called upon to awake to their God-given responsibilities. God calls for watchmen who, in the power of the Spirit, will give to the world the last warning message; who will proclaim the time of night. He calls for watchmen who will arouse men and women from their lethargy, lest they sleep the sleep of death.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 304.

“The day of woe, of wasting and destruction, is upon all who do unrighteousness. With special severity will the Lord’s hand fall upon the watchmen who have failed to place before the people in clear lines their obligation to Him who by creation and by redemption is their owner.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 195.

□ **Wednesday**
September 6

A MESSAGE OF MERCY

7 How was Ezekiel’s commission similar to ours? Ezekiel 33:8, 9.

“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. . . . The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God’s people are to be true to the trust committed to them. They are not to

engage in speculation, neither are they to enter into business enterprises with unbelievers; for this would hinder them in their God-given work.

“So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel to whom came the word: [Ezekiel 33:7–9 quoted].”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 19, 20.

8 What should we realize about the character of God in relation to sin and to ourselves as sinners? Ezekiel 33:10, 11.

“It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin and then leave him there, helpless and hopeless, fearing to seek for pardon. But God invites, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me’ (Isaiah 27:5). In Christ every provision has been made, every encouragement offered.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 326.

“God does not desire the destruction of any. [Ezekiel 33:11 quoted.] Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 123.

TRUE OR FALSE DISCIPLESHIP □ **Thursday** September 7

9 Name some principles of salvation given to Ezekiel that are vital to our understanding. Ezekiel 33:12–20.

“The whole purpose in giving His Son for the sins of the world is that man may be saved, not in transgression and unrighteousness, but in forsaking sin, washing his robes of character, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. He proposes to remove from man the offensive thing that He hates, but man must cooperate with God in the work. Sin must be given up, hated, and the righteousness of Christ must be accepted by faith. Thus will the divine cooperate with the human.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 631, 632.

10 How were the messages given in Ezekiel’s day vindicated, and how is this situation similar to ours today? Ezekiel 33:23–33.

“There are persons who believe that they are right, when they are wrong. While claiming Christ as their Lord, and professedly doing great works in His name, they are workers of iniquity. [Ezekiel 33:31, 32 quoted.]

“A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ they say, ‘and you need not keep the law.’ But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption. The apostle John says, ‘He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (1 John 2:4). Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. When persons will speak lightly of the word of God, and set their impressions, feelings, and exercises above the divine standard, we may know that they have no light in them.

“Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS □ **Friday** September 8

- a. How do the prophecies of Egypt and Assyria vindicate God’s name?
- b. What is God’s purpose for us in presenting prophecy and history?
- c. In what ways are we to become more effective watchmen for God?
- d. How does the love of God shine amidst messages of judgment?
- e. How is the attitude of Ezekiel’s day revealed in our time?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 7, pp. 254–266.

Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 19–29.

The Shepherds and the Flock

“I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing” (Ezekiel 34:26).

“Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 54.

FALSE SHEPHERDS

☐ Sunday

September 10

1

What admonition given to church leaders in Ezekiel’s time has a special application for us today? Ezekiel 34:1–3.

“Upon the ministers of God rests a solemn, serious charge. They will be called to a strict account for the manner in which they have discharged their responsibility. If they do not tell the people of the binding claims of God’s law, if they do not preach the Word with clearness, but confuse the minds of the people by their own interpretations, they are shepherds who feed themselves, but neglect to feed the flock. They make of none effect the law of Jehovah, and souls perish because of their unfaithfulness. The blood of these souls will be upon their heads. God will call them to account for their unfaithfulness. But this will in no wise excuse those who listened to the sophistry of men, discarding the Word of God. God’s law is a transcript of His character. And His word is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1164.

2

What attitude, especially when manifested by ministers and workers, is displeasing to God? Ezekiel 34:4–6.

“We are not to condemn others; this is not our work; but we should love one another and pray for one another. When we see one err from the truth, then we may weep over him as Christ wept over Jerusalem. Let us see what our heavenly Father in His word says about the erring: ‘If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted’ (Galatians 6:1). [James 5:20 quoted.] What a great missionary work is this! how much more Christlike than for poor, fallible mortals to be ever accusing and condemning those who do not exactly meet their minds. Let us remember that Jesus knows us individually and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows the wants of each of His creatures and reads the hidden, unspoken grief of every heart. If one of the little ones for whom He died is injured, He sees it and calls the offender to account. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He cares for His feeble, sickly, wandering sheep. He knows them all by name. The distress of every sheep and every lamb of His flock touches His heart of sympathizing love, and the cry for aid reaches His ear.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 345, 346.

TRUE SHEPHERDS

☐ Monday

September 11

3

What contrast is drawn between the true and false shepherd? John 10:1, 2, 7–15. What will God demand of everyone who professes His name? Jeremiah 13:20.

“To save His sheep, Christ laid down His own life; and He points His shepherds to the love thus manifested, as their example. But ‘he that is an hireling, . . . whose own the sheep are not,’ has no real interest in the flock. He is laboring merely for gain, and he cares only for himself. He studies his own profit instead of the interest of his charge; and in time of peril or danger he will flee, and leave the flock. . . .

“The shepherd who is imbued with the spirit of Christ will imitate His self-denying example, constantly laboring for the welfare of his charge; and the flock will prosper under his care.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 191, 192.

4

What example for shepherding did Christ leave for our imitation? Matthew 18:12–14; 1 Peter 5:2–4.

“The shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, ‘I have ninety

and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in.' No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When he is sure that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine within the fold, and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd's anxiety and the more earnest his search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 187, 188.

THE MASTER SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK

□ Tuesday
September 12

5 What is written about the relationship between Christ and His flock? Ezekiel 34:23–25.

"Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. 'I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore' (Revelation 1:18). I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live."—*The Desire of the Ages*, p. 483.

6 How does Christ express His great care for us? Ezekiel 34:30, 31; John 10:27, 28.

"As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine Shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. . . . Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep."—*The Desire of the Ages*, p. 479.

GOD'S SPECIAL PROPERTY

□ Wednesday
September 13

7 What does Christ declare in defense of the souls of His scattered, neglected flock? Ezekiel 34:7–15.

"These souls whom you despise, said Jesus, are the property of God. By creation and by redemption they are His, and they are of value in His sight. As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. [Ezekiel 34:12 quoted.]"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 187.

8 What assurance is given us concerning many who have strayed from the fold? Ezekiel 34:16.

"The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 187.

"When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 401.

SPECIAL POWER BESTOWED

□ Thursday
September 14

9 What wonderful event is to take place before the close of probation? Acts 3:19; Joel 2:28.

"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. . . .

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men (Revelation 13:13). Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

“The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

10 How does the Bible describe the final phase of God’s work on earth? Ezekiel 34:26; Acts 2:17, 18.

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. . . . But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

□ **Friday**

September 15

- a. In what ways can we improve our manner of dealing with souls?
- b. What are the characteristics of the true shepherd?
- c. How did the Master Shepherd seek to rescue His lost sheep?
- d. What is the value of God’s special property?
- e. What power will be given during the latter rain?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 476–484.
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 190–192.

Lesson 13

Sabbath, September 23, 2000

Revival and Reformation

“So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (Ezekiel 37:10).

“What could the might and power of man accomplish with these dead bones? The prophet could see no hope of life being imparted to them. But as he looked, the power of God began to work.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1165.

□ **Sunday**

September 17

A NEW HEART

1 What plan did God have for His people at the end of the Babylonian captivity? Ezekiel 36:24, 25. What parallel does this plan imply?

“The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration that is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth’s history.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 677.

2 What did God mean when He promised to give His remnant people a new heart? Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:5–7.

“When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 72.

A MIRACLE BY CREATIVE POWER

□ **Monday**
September 18

3 How is God's promise of a new heart to affect our lives in a practical way? 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 173.

4 What great miracle is performed in the human life? Ezekiel 36:27; Romans 8:1–4.

"Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan? Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God's heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought; so also when a man who has been under strong delusion comes to understand moral truth. Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you' (Ezekiel 36:26). The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 407.

UNDERSTANDING HOLINESS

□ **Tuesday**
September 19

5 How should God's mercy inspire us to bring forth fruits of true repentance? Ezekiel 36:29–31.

"It is to those whom the Lord has forgiven, to those whom He acknowledges as His people, that He says, 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight' (Ezekiel 36:31). . . . Then our lips will not be opened in self-glorification. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 160, 161.

6 What does the Bible teach about sanctification? John 17:17; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

"The Scriptures teach us to seek for the sanctification to God of body, soul, and spirit. In this work we are to be laborers together with God. Much may be done to restore the moral image of God in man, to improve the physical, mental, and moral capabilities. Great changes can be made in the physical system by obeying the laws of God and bringing into the body nothing that defiles. And while we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 32.

LIFE IMPARTED

□ **Wednesday**
September 20

7 What was Ezekiel shown in vision to symbolize the spiritual condition of the people of Israel? Ezekiel 37:1–3. What is the present-day application of that vision?

"The souls of those whom we desire to save are like the representation which Ezekiel saw in vision—a valley of dry bones. They are dead in trespasses and sins, but God would have us deal with them as though they were living. Were the question put to us, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' our answer would be only the confession of ignorance, 'O Lord, Thou knowest.' To all appearance there is nothing to lead us to hope for their restoration. Yet nevertheless the word of the prophecy must be spoken even to those who are like the dry bones in the valley. We are in no wise to be deterred from fulfilling our commission by the listlessness, the dullness, the lack of spiritual perception, in those upon whom the Word of God is brought to bear. We are to preach the word of life to those whom we may judge to be as hopeless subjects as though they were in their graves."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1165.

What miracle did Ezekiel witness? Ezekiel 37:5–10. How is this miracle accomplished today?

“It is not the human agent that is to inspire with life. The Lord God of Israel will do that part, quickening the lifeless spiritual nature into activity. The breath of the Lord of hosts must enter into the lifeless bodies. In the judgment, when all secrets are laid bare, it will be known that the voice of God spoke through the human agent, and aroused the torpid conscience, and stirred the lifeless faculties, and moved sinners to repentance and contrition, and forsaking of sins. It will then be clearly seen that through the human agent faith in Jesus Christ was imparted to the soul, and spiritual life from heaven was breathed upon one who was dead in trespasses and sins, and he was quickened with spiritual life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1165.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

□ **Thursday**
September 21

What does the vision of Ezekiel represent? Ezekiel 37:11, 12.

“Not only does this simile of the dry bones apply to the world, but also to those who have been blessed with great light; for they also are like the skeletons of the valley. They have the form of men, the framework of the body; but they have not spiritual life. But the parable does not leave the dry bones merely knit together into the forms of men; for it is not enough that there is symmetry of limb and feature. The breath of life must vivify the bodies, that they may stand upright, and spring into activity. These bones represent the house of Israel, the church of God, and the hope of the church is the vivifying influence of the Holy Spirit. The Lord must breathe upon the dry bones, that they may live.

“The Spirit of God, with its vivifying power, must be in every human agent, that every spiritual muscle and sinew may be in exercise. Without the Holy Spirit, without the breath of God, there is torpidity of conscience, loss of spiritual life. Many who are without spiritual life have their names on the church records, but they are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. They may be joined to the church, but they are not united to the Lord. They may be diligent in the performance of a certain set of duties, and

may be regarded as living men; but many are among those who have ‘a name that thou livest, and art dead.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, pp. 1165, 1166.

What does the Lord offer us in answer to our great need? Ezekiel 37:14.

“Unless there is genuine conversion of the soul to God; unless the vital breath of God quickens the soul to spiritual life; unless the professors of truth are actuated by heaven-born principle, they are not born of the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. Unless they trust in the righteousness of Christ as their only security; unless they copy His character, labor in His spirit, they are naked, they have not on the robe of His righteousness. The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

“This class is well represented by the valley of dry bones Ezekiel saw in vision.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1166.

□ **Friday**
September 22

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. How is the “new heart” to be revealed in our lives?
- b. What is the miracle of conversion?
- c. How can we attain perfection of character?
- d. What must be done for the dry bones in the valley?
- e. Why is the vision of dry bones so relevant to us today?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pp. 71–74.
The Review and Herald, January 17, 1893.

Rivers of Living Water

“And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine” (Ezekiel 47:12).

“Wherever the last message of warning is given, combined with medical missionary work and lessons on the right principles of living, wonderful results are seen.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 380.

☐ **Sunday**

September 24

A REFORMATORY WORK

1 What is one of the main responsibilities with which God's people are entrusted? Ezekiel 44:23.

“[God's servants] cannot be excused from the faithful discharge of their duty to reprove sins and wrongs in the people of God, although it may be a disagreeable task and may not be received by the one who is at fault. But in most cases the one reproved would accept the warning and heed reproof were it not that others stand in the way. They come in as sympathizers and pity the one reproved and feel that they must stand in his defense. They do not see that the Lord is displeased with the wrongdoer, because the cause of God has been wounded and His name reproached. Souls have been turned aside from the truth and have made shipwreck of faith as the result of the wrong course pursued by the one in fault; but the servant of God whose discernment is clouded and whose judgment is swayed by wrong influences would as soon take his position with the offender whose influence has done much harm, as with the reprover of wrong and of sin, and in so doing he virtually says to the sinner: ‘Do not be troubled, do not be cast down; you are about right after all.’ These say to the sinner: ‘It shall be well with thee.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 196.

2

What other important principle was urged upon the princes and the people? Ezekiel 45:9, 10. How can we see this principle applied in the New Testament? Matthew 7:12; Romans 12:17–21.

☐ **Monday**

September 25

THE MISSION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

3

What is the mission of the church of God on earth? Ezekiel 47:9; Isaiah 60:1, 2; Matthew 5:13–16.

“Wonderful is the work which the Lord designs to accomplish through His church, that His name may be glorified. A picture of this work is given in Ezekiel's vision of the river of healing: [Ezekiel 47:8–12 quoted].

“From the beginning God has wrought through His people to bring blessing to the world. To the ancient Egyptian nation God made Joseph a fountain of life. Through the integrity of Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved. Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances are as object lessons; they illustrate the spiritual blessings offered to the world through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped. Everyone in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 13.

4

What does Christ teach in connection with our mission as a church? Luke 10:25–27.

“In the story of the good Samaritan, Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 497.

“It is now, just now, that genuine gospel medical missionary work is to be done by men who acknowledge Christ as their Master; who realize, as did Elijah and Jeremiah, that they hold their commission from God, and that they are accountable to God for the use made of the talents entrusted

to them. God's workers are to acknowledge no earthly master. One higher than men, even He who is the way, the truth, and the life, is their Master."—*The Review and Herald*, November 5, 1903.

THE CLOSING HOURS

□ Tuesday
September 26

5 How is the final work of God's people depicted? Ezekiel 47:1–8.

"To the prophet Ezekiel was given the representation of waters issuing 'from under the threshold of the house eastward,' 'at the south side of the altar.' Read Ezekiel 47. Especially mark verse 8: [Ezekiel 47:8 quoted]. So our work was presented to me as extending to the east and to the west, to the islands of the sea, and to all parts of the world. As the work extends, there will be great interests to be managed. The work is not to be centered in any one place. Human wisdom argues that it is more convenient to build up the interests where the work has already obtained character and influence, but mistakes have been made in this line. It is burden bearing that gives strength and development. And for the workers in different localities to be largely freed from responsibility means to place them where their characters will remain undeveloped and their powers will be repressed and weakened. The work is the Lord's, and it is not His will that the strength and efficiency shall be concentrated in any one place."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 171, 172.

6 How and through whom is the blessing promised in Ezekiel 47 to reach the people? Zechariah 13:1; John 4:13, 14; Mark 16:15, 16.

"Christ came as the Great Physician to heal the wounds that sin has made in the human family; and His Spirit, working through His servants, imparts to sin-sick, suffering human beings a mighty healing power that is efficacious for the body and the soul. [Zechariah 13:1 quoted.] The waters of this fountain contain medicinal properties that will heal both physical and spiritual infirmities. From this fountain flows the mighty river seen in Ezekiel's vision."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 227.

A LAST CHANCE TO WORK FOR OTHERS

□ Wednesday
September 27

7 What should all believers realize concerning the last available chances to work for God? Psalm 67:1, 2.

"I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work. The work of a minister is to minister. Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering."—*Evangelism*, p. 523.

"The medical missionary work is to burst all barriers. All are invited to take a part in it, and help where help is needed. The wealthy are to be reached, and their sympathy and assistance solicited; for are they not the Lord's stewards? Idle children are to be instructed; they are to enlist in the army of workers to help the sick and suffering. Train the children, for they are the Lord's heritage. As the children sang in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Highest, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' so in these days children's voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world."—*Battle Creek Letters*, p. 26.

8 What is the glorious culmination of the task assigned to us all? Habakkuk 2:14.

"Troublous times are before us. He who understands the necessities of the situation arranges that advantages should be brought to the workers in various places, to enable them more effectually to arouse the attention of the people. He knows the needs and the necessities of the feeblest of His flock, and He sends His own message into the highways and byways. He loves us with an everlasting love."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 326.

"The proclamation of the gospel is the only means in which God can employ human beings as His instrumentalities for the salvation of souls. As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law. The animating Spirit of God, working through human agencies, leads the believers to be of one mind, one soul, unitedly loving God and keeping His commandments—preparing here below for translation."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 984.

SAFETY AMID CHAOS

☐ **Thursday**
September 28

9 After the spiritual shaking in the Laodicean period, what other “shaking” will come after the close of probation? Ezekiel 38:18–20; Hebrews 12:25–27; Revelation 16:18–20.

“When the laws of men are exalted above the laws of God, when the powers of this earth try to force men to keep the first day of the week, know that the time has come for God to work. He will arise in His majesty, and will shake terribly the earth. He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 980.

10 Describe the scene that will take place among the wicked and the shelter that God will offer to His people. Ezekiel 38:21–23; Psalm 46:1–3, 7; 91:1–10.

“The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 654.

REVIEW AND THOUGHT QUESTIONS

☐ **Friday**
September 29

- a. What duties and responsibilities are upon us today?
- b. How can the church bring God’s blessings to the world?
- c. What final work should be of great interest to the church?
- d. How does the Spirit of God lead human agencies?
- e. How will the power of God be revealed during the closing hours?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, pp. 38–54.
Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 219–234.