

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division



The Life of Abraham

Vol. 93, No. 1

January–March, 2017

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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

As we look around us in the world today, we see catastrophes happening on every hand: violence, bloodshed, natural disasters, and unprecedented wickedness. All these things remind us that the second coming of our Lord Jesus must be soon. In order to meet these challenges, in order to be prepared to meet our Lord in the clouds of heaven, we must have a strong faith, the faith of Abraham.

“Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour should have Abrahamic faith, a faith that is valued because it has cost them something, a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that He is not to be trifled with. He means what He says, and He requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will He let His light shine around about us, and we shall be all light in the Lord.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875.

This quarter we will be studying about the life of Abraham. This man of God passed through many tests of faith. At each one, Abraham was given opportunity to demonstrate his trust in God and in the promise that God had given to him—that he would be a “father of many nations.” At times his faith wavered as he tried to fulfill God’s plan in his own time and way. Nevertheless, God proved his faithfulness, and at the time appointed, the first son of the promise was born to Abraham. Yet God reserved His greatest test for Abraham, not when he was young and strong, but when he was an old man.

“Abraham was sorely tested in his old age. The words of the Lord seemed terrible and uncalled-for to the stricken old man, yet he never questioned their justice or hesitated in his obedience. He might have pleaded that he was old and feeble, and could not sacrifice the son who was the joy of his life. He might have reminded the Lord that this command conflicted with the promises that had been given in regard to this son. But the obedience of Abraham was without a murmur or a reproach. His trust in God was implicit.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 253.

“God permits trials to assail His people, that by their constancy and obedience they themselves may be spiritually enriched, and that their example may be a source of strength to others. . . . The very trials that task our faith most severely and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us closer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at His feet and experience the peace which He will give us in exchange.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 129.

May God give us the faith of Abraham. May this faith lead us to live our life in such a way that it may be said of us, as of Abraham, that each one of us is “the friend of God.”

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Headquarters and Chapel in Malawi

The Republic of Malawi is a landlocked country in southeast Africa. Formerly known as Nyasaland, it is bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Tanzania to the northeast, and Mozambique to the southwest, and southeast. The country is also nicknamed “The Warm Heart of Africa.” Malawi has an estimated population of over 16 million, the majority of whom identify as Christians (82%), including Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists. A significant minority identify as Muslims (13%).



The work in Malawi started in 2008 when one missionary decided to visit this country. A couple from a Protestant church received him and helped him find accommodation. The missionary gave them Bible studies and shared also some portions from the Spirit of Prophecy. The couple became very interested in the message of Present Truth and provided a place for worship, inviting others also to attend every Sabbath.

When the missionary left Malawi, he made an appeal to our fellow believers in Zambia to see if someone would be available to go to Malawi to assist with this interest. By the grace of God one brother responded to the call, saying, “I am ready to go anywhere that God wants to send me.” Upon his arrival in Malawi in 2009, this brother encouraged those interested and went from one place to another preaching the message. Today there are many places where souls are interested in our message. There are about 60 baptized members and more than 900 Sabbath School members, many of whom are studying our Principles in preparation for baptism.

By God’s grace, this country was organized as a Mission in 2013. We still are very grateful because some of our brothers and sisters in Brazil donated money to buy land in Lilongwe, the capital city. Here the believers in Malawi plan to build the headquarters and a chapel. However, the country is very poor. Our members do not have money to fulfill this project. That is why we are now appealing to all our brothers, sisters, and friends around the world.

— GC Sabbath School Department, on behalf of the Malawi Mission

Abraham's Calling

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).

"Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. . . . But the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 125–131.

Sunday

January 1

1. GOD CALLS ABRAHAM

- a. What did God call Abraham to do, and who went with him? Genesis 12:1–4; Acts 7:4.
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"After the dispersion from Babel idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

- b. Why didn't God immediately tell Abraham the place where He was calling him to go? Hebrews 11:8. What decision did Abraham have to make in obeying God's call? Genesis 12:1; Matthew 10:34–38.
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"Abraham's unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible. . . . It was no light test that was thus brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. But he did not hesitate to obey the call. He had no question to ask concerning the land of promise. . . . God had spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be."—*Ibid.*, p. 126.

2. THE PROMISES

- a. What initial promises did God make to Abraham? Genesis 12:2, 3.
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“It was for the purpose of bringing the best gifts of Heaven to all the peoples of earth that God called Abraham out from his idolatrous kindred and bade him dwell in the land of Canaan. ‘I will make of thee a great nation,’ He said, ‘and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing’ (Genesis 12:2). It was a high honor to which Abraham was called—that of being the father of the people who for centuries were to be the guardians and preservers of the truth of God to the world, the people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah.

“Men had well-nigh lost the knowledge of the true God. Their minds were darkened by idolatry. For the divine statutes, which are ‘holy, and just, and good’ (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to substitute laws in harmony with the purposes of their own cruel, selfish hearts. Yet God in His mercy did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 15, 16.

- b. Which land did God promise to Abraham and his seed? Genesis 12:5–7; 13:14–18.
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- c. What is significant about Abraham and his children living in tents? Hebrews 11:9, 10, 13–16. What similar attitude are we called to adopt? 2 Peter 3:11–14.
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“Let us strive to be Christians (Christ-like) in every sense of the word, and let our dress, conversation and actions preach that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, and that we are looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of Jesus. Let us show to those around us that this world is not our home, that we are pilgrims and strangers here.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1852.

3. LOT'S GREAT MISTAKE

- a. **What temptation did Lot fall into as he journeyed to the Promised Land with Abraham? Genesis 13:5–11; 1 John 2:16, 17.**
-

“The most fertile region in all Palestine was the Jordan Valley, reminding the beholders of the lost Paradise and equaling the beauty and productiveness of the Nile-enriched plains they had so lately left. . . . Dazzled with visions of worldly gain, Lot overlooked the moral and spiritual evils that would be encountered [in the crowded marts of the wealthy and beautiful cities]. The inhabitants of the plain were ‘sinners before the Lord exceedingly;’ but of this he was ignorant, or, knowing, gave it but little weight. He ‘chose him all the plain of Jordan,’ and ‘pitched his tent toward Sodom’ (Genesis 13:11, 12). How little did he foresee the terrible results of that selfish choice!”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 133.

- b. **What is the devil seeking to achieve through the lust of the eyes? Mark 4:18, 19; Matthew 4:8–10.**
-

“If the claims and cares of the world are allowed to engross all our time and attention, our spiritual powers weaken and die because they are not exercised.”—*This Day With God*, p. 87.

- c. **How can the place where we choose to pitch our tent potentially destroy our spiritual life and that of our families? Genesis 13:12, 13; 19:1, 12–16.**
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“Many . . . in selecting a home . . . look more to the temporal advantages they may gain than to the moral and social influences that will surround themselves and their families. They choose a beautiful and fertile country, or remove to some flourishing city, in the hope of securing greater prosperity; but their children are surrounded by temptation, and too often they form associations that are unfavorable to the development of piety and the formation of a right character. The atmosphere of lax morality, of unbelief, of indifference to religious things, has a tendency to counteract the influence of the parents. . . . Many form attachments for infidels and unbelievers, and cast in their lot with the enemies of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 168, 169.

4. SINFUL SURROUNDINGS

- a. **What should we learn from the experience of Lot's wife? Genesis 19:26; Luke 17:28–33.**
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"[Lot's wife] rebelled against God because His judgments involved her possessions and her children in the ruin. . . .

"The invitations of mercy are addressed to all; and because our friends reject the Saviour's pleading love, shall we also turn away? The redemption of the soul is precious. Christ has paid an infinite price for our salvation, and no one who appreciates the value of this great sacrifice or the worth of the soul will despise God's offered mercy because others choose to do so."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 161, 162.

- b. **Even though the daughters of Lot escaped Sodom, how had their morals become corrupted? Genesis 19:30–38; Leviticus 18:6, 7.**
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"Lot made his way to the mountains and abode in a cave, stripped of all for which he had dared to subject his family to the influences of a wicked city. But the curse of Sodom followed him even here. The sinful conduct of his daughters was the result of the evil associations of that vile place. Its moral corruption had become so interwoven with their character that they could not distinguish between good and evil. Lot's only posterity, the Moabites and Ammonites, were vile, idolatrous tribes, rebels against God."—*Ibid.*, pp. 167, 168.

- c. **In these last days, where is the safest place to pitch our tents as we journey to the Promised Land, and why? Genesis 2:7, 8; Jude 5–7.**
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"So long as God gives me power to speak to our people, I shall continue to call upon parents to leave the cities and get homes in the country, where they can cultivate the soil and learn from the book of nature the lessons of purity and simplicity. The things of nature are the Lord's silent ministers, given to us to teach us spiritual truths. They speak to us of the love of God and declare the wisdom of the great Master Artist."—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 146, 147.

5. MAKING OUR CALLING SURE

- a. As we have been called to the Promised Land as Abraham was called, of what should we be mindful? 2 Peter 1:10, 11; Matthew 22:14.

“None need lose eternal life. Everyone who chooses daily to learn of the heavenly Teacher will make his calling and election sure. Let us humble our hearts before God and follow on to know Him whom to know aright is life eternal. . . .

“We cannot afford to allow anything to separate us from God and heaven. In this life we must be partakers of the divine nature. Brethren and sisters, you have only one life to live. O let it be a life of virtue, a life hid with Christ in God!”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 29.

- b. Who only will make it to the Promised Land? Revelation 17:14; Hebrews 3:12–14.

“The work of conquering evil is to be done through faith. Those who go into the battlefield will find that they must put on the whole armor of God. The shield of faith will be their defense and will enable them to be more than conquerors. Nothing else will avail but this—faith in the Lord of hosts, and obedience to His orders. Vast armies furnished with every other facility will avail nothing in the last great conflict. Without faith, an angel host could not help. Living faith alone will make them invincible and enable them to stand in the evil day, steadfast, unmovable, holding the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 182, 183.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to love our families more than we love Christ?
2. How can we tell if we are pilgrims and strangers today?
3. Explain how the place where we choose to live can affect our destiny.
4. What are the dangers of living in close quarters to sinful cities?
5. Why not everyone called is also chosen?

The Faith of Abraham

“[Abraham] believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

“Our souls may be trained to believe, taught to rely upon the Word of God.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 119.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 91–99.

Sunday

January 8

1. ABRAHAM’S GREATEST CONCERN

- a. **What was Abraham’s greatest concern regarding the promises of God? Genesis 12:7; 15:1–3.**
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“As Abraham had no son, he at first thought that his trusty servant, Eliezer, should become his son by adoption, and his heir. But God informed Abraham that his servant should not be his son and heir, but that he should really have a son.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 77.

- b. **How did God reassure Abraham that He had not forgotten His promise? Genesis 15:4, 5; Isaiah 55:10, 11.**
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“God desires us to receive great blessings. His promises are so clearly stated that there is no cause for uncertainty. He desires us to take Him at His word. At times we shall be in great perplexity and not know just what to do. But at such times it is our privilege to take our Bibles and read the messages He has given us; and then get down on our knees and ask Him to help us. Over and over again He has given evidence that He is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. He fulfills His promises in far greater measure than we expect to receive help. . . .

“Wherever we are, we are under obligation as disciples of our Lord and Master, to anchor our faith in the promises of God.”—*The Watchman*, May 1, 1914.

2. FULLY PERSUADED

- a. **Why did Abraham decide to believe in God's promise of a child? Genesis 15:6 (first part); Romans 4:20, 21.**
-

"That faith which works by love and purifies the soul is not a matter of impulse. It ventures out upon the promises of God, firmly believing that what He has said, He is able also to perform."—*Our High Calling*, p. 119.

"[Philippians 4:4–7 quoted.] The promise itself is of no value unless I fully believe that He that has made the promise is abundantly able to fulfill, and infinite in power to do all that He has said."—*This Day With God*, p. 156.

- b. **What was his reward for believing in God's promise? Genesis 15:6 (last part); Romans 4:22.**
-

"The moment the sinner believes in Christ, he stands in the sight of God uncondemned; for the righteousness of Christ is his: Christ's perfect obedience is imputed to him. But he must cooperate with divine power, and put forth his human effort to subdue sin, and stand complete in Christ."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 429, 430.

"We may rest upon God, not because of our own merit, but because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb of God, who did no sin; and by looking to Him in faith we shall become like Him."—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 427.

- c. **When is faith truly exercised? Hebrews 11:1; Habakkuk 2:3.**
-

"To abide in faith is to put aside feeling and selfish desires, to walk humbly with the Lord, to appropriate His promises, and apply them to all occasions, believing that God will work out His own plans and purposes in your heart and life by the sanctification of your character; it is to rely entirely, to trust implicitly, upon the faithfulness of God. If this course is followed, others will see the special fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life and character."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 341, 342.

3. GOD JUSTIFIES THE UNGODLY

- a. What shows us that Abraham was a sinner in need of justification? Romans 3:9–12, 23; Genesis 12:11–20.
-

“During his stay in Egypt, Abraham gave evidence that he was not free from human weakness and imperfection. In concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, he betrayed a distrust of the divine care, a lack of that lofty faith and courage so often and nobly exemplified in his life.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 130.

- b. What does the Bible say about the justification of Abraham before God? Romans 4:1–8; 3:28.
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“Our acceptance with God is sure only through His beloved Son, and good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love. They are no credit to us, and we have nothing accorded to us for our good works by which we may claim a part in the salvation of our souls. Salvation is God’s free gift to the believer, given to him for Christ’s sake alone. The troubled soul may find peace through faith in Christ, and his peace will be in proportion to his faith and trust. He cannot present his good works as a plea for the salvation of his soul.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1122.

“Remember that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to recommend us to God; the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition, which makes His redeeming power a necessity. Renouncing all self-dependence, we may look to the cross of Calvary.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 65.

- c. What happens to an ungodly human when he or she chooses to believe whole heartedly in God? Romans 6:17, 18; 10:9, 10; 1:17.
-

“The moment we surrender ourselves to God, believing in Jesus, we have the righteousness of Christ. We realize that we have been redeemed from sin and appreciate His sacrifice to purchase our freedom.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 34.

4. A SIGN OF CONVERSION

- a. **What outward act did Abraham perform to demonstrate his internal change? Genesis 17:10, 11; Romans 4:11.**
-

“The rite of circumcision . . . was to be observed by the patriarch [Abraham] and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations and would be seduced into idolatry.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

- b. **Why is it essential to understand that Abraham was accounted righteous before he became circumcised? Romans 4:8–12; 2:28, 29.**
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“Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner’s account. Christ’s righteousness is accepted in place of man’s failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. . . .

“Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our Sacrifice, by living our Example, by becoming our great High Priest. He declares, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true. But when we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 101, 102.

5. CIRCUMCISED WITHIN

- a. Before we are baptized with water (the New Covenant act that replaces circumcision), what must first take place within? John 3:5–8; Colossians 2:10–13.

“All who enter upon the new life should understand, prior to their baptism, that the Lord requires the undivided affections. . . . The bearing of fruit testifies to the character of the tree. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. . . . There is need of a thorough conversion to the truth.”—*Evangelism*, p. 308.

“Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 319.

- b. What happens to Christians who rely solely on the outward act of baptism in order to be saved, as the Jews relied on circumcision? Romans 10:1–3; Matthew 23:25–28.

“Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe *about* Him; you must believe *in* Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 49.

“The Lord has a work for us all to do. And if the truth is not rooted in the heart, if the natural traits of character are not transformed by the Holy Spirit, we can never be colaborers with Jesus Christ. Self will constantly appear, and the character of Christ will not be manifested in our lives.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 969.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we have confidence in God’s promises?
2. What does it mean to be persuaded in God’s word?
3. What gracious blessing is ours when we surrender to God?
4. What does circumcision symbolize?
5. What is more important, baptism within or without?

The Promised Seed

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16).

“The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan but the whole earth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 170.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 145–155.

Sunday

January 15

1. THE SEED OF PROMISE

- a. Even though Abraham asked God for one seed to be his heir, how many children did God promise to bless him with? Genesis 13:15, 16; 15:2–5.

- b. How does the apostle Paul reveal that God’s promises made to Abraham were to be realized through one very special seed, Jesus Christ? Genesis 17:1–8; Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 2:14–16.

“Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel’ (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.

“To Abraham was given the promise that of his line the Saviour of the world should come: ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ ‘He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ’ (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16).”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 222.

2. THE BIRTH OF THE PROMISED SEED

- a. How do we know that Abraham was aware that the promises were to come through a very special seed, Jesus Christ? John 8:56.
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"[Abraham] was given a view of the divine sacrifice for sin. Of this sacrifice he had an illustration in his own experience. . . . Upon the altar of sacrifice he laid the son of promise, the son in whom his hopes were centered. . . .

"Abraham learned of God the greatest lesson ever given to mortal. His prayer that he might see Christ before he should die was answered. He saw Christ; he saw all that mortal can see, and live. By making an entire surrender, he was able to understand the vision of Christ, which had been given him. He was shown that in giving His only-begotten Son to save sinners from eternal ruin, God was making a greater and more wonderful sacrifice than ever man could make."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 468, 469.

- b. Seeing that Sarah was past the age of child-bearing, what did Abraham and Sarah need before they could have a child? Genesis 17:15–19; 18:9–14; Mark 10:27.
-

"I would that all could realize what possibilities and probabilities there are for all who make Christ their sufficiency and their trust. The life hid with Christ in God ever has a refuge; he can say, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Philippians 4:13)." —*Country Living*, p. 28.

- c. In what ways did the miracle birth of Isaac symbolize the miracle birth of the promised seed, Jesus Christ? Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–23.
-

"The birth of a son to Zacharias, like the birth of the child of Abraham, and that of Mary, was to teach a great spiritual truth, a truth that we are slow to learn and ready to forget. In ourselves we are incapable of doing any good thing; but that which we cannot do will be wrought by the power of God in every submissive and believing soul. It was through faith that the child of promise was given. It is through faith that spiritual life is begotten, and we are enabled to do the works of righteousness."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 98.

3. DEATH OF THE PROMISED SEED

- a. Describe how God predicted the death of the promised seed, Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice of Isaac. Genesis 22:1–3, 9–13; Romans 8:31, 32; Isaiah 53:4–7.
-

“The ram offered in the place of Isaac represented the Son of God, who was to be sacrificed in our stead. When man was doomed to death by transgression of the law of God, the Father, looking upon His Son, said to the sinner, ‘Live: I have found a ransom.’

“It was to impress Abraham’s mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man’s redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, ‘It is enough.’ To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

- b. What was significant about the expression “thine only son” as God spoke to Abraham? Genesis 22:2; Mark 1:11; 1 John 4:9.
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“Our heavenly Father surrendered His beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. . . . God’s dear Son, the world’s Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until He bowed His head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of His divine love and pity? [Romans 8:32 quoted].”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 20.

“Let us, then, cheerfully suffer something for Jesus’ sake, crucify self daily, and be partakers of Christ’s sufferings here, that we may be made partakers with Him of His glory, and be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.”—*Early Writings*, p. 114.

4. RESURRECTION OF THE PROMISED SEED

- a. How did God show to Abraham that the promised seed, Jesus Christ, was to be the Saviour of the world? Genesis 22:7, 8, 11–13; Hebrews 11:17–19.
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“When the command was given to Abraham to offer up his son, the interest of all heavenly beings was enlisted. With intense earnestness they watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. When to Isaac’s question, ‘Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ Abraham made answer, ‘God will provide Himself a lamb’ (Genesis 22:7, 8); and when the father’s hand was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac—then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man’s salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 155.

- b. What wonderful truth was Abraham assured of as he laid hold of the promise, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Genesis 21:12)? Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:18, 19.

“[Abraham] strengthened his soul by dwelling upon the evidences of the Lord’s goodness and faithfulness. This son had been unexpectedly given; and had not He who bestowed the precious gift a right to recall His own? Then faith repeated the promise, ‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called’—a seed numberless as the grains of sand upon the shore. Isaac was the child of a miracle, and could not the power that gave him life restore it? Looking beyond that which was seen, Abraham grasped the divine word, ‘accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead’ (Hebrews 11:19).”—*Ibid.*, pp. 151, 152.

- c. How did this truth typify the true promised seed, Jesus Christ? Acts 3:25, 26; 1 Peter 1:18–21.
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“[The Son of God] rose from the grave and proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). One equal with God passed through death in our behalf. He tasted death for every man, that through Him every man might be a partaker of eternal life.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

5. INHERITANCE OF THE PROMISED SEED

- a. **What inheritance did God promise to Abraham and his seed? Genesis 17:7, 8; Psalm 105:6–11. How does this symbolize the inheritance of Christ? Daniel 7:13, 14, 18; Matthew 25:31–34.**

“Language fails to express the value of the immortal inheritance. The glory, riches, and honor offered by the Son of God are of such infinite value that it is beyond the power of men or even angels to give any just idea of their worth, their excellence, their magnificence.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 40.

- b. **How can we have the assurance that God will honor His promises and give His children the Promised Land? Hebrews 6:13–18; John 14:1–3.**

“Long have we waited for our Saviour’s return. But nonetheless sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads, and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 254.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did God reveal to Abraham the Gospel?
2. What miracle declares Christ to be of divine origin?
3. How does the experience of Abraham and Isaac reveal the depths of the sacrifice God made for humankind?
4. Why is the resurrection so important to the believer?
5. What should we never forget as we await the land of inheritance?

Abraham's Two Sons

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a freewoman” (Galatians 4:22).

“Faith is not a happy flight of feeling; it is simply taking God at His word—believing that He will fulfill His promises because He said He would.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 119.

Suggested Readings: *Our High Calling*, pp. 119–122,
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 370–373.

Sunday

January 22

1. THE SON OF PROMISE

- a. Why is Isaac called the son of promise? Genesis 15:2, 3; 17:15, 16; 18:9–14 (compare with Galatians 4:22, 23, 27, 28).

- b. How did Abraham and Sarah try to help the Lord fulfill His promise of a son? Genesis 16:1–4.

“Abraham had accepted without question the promise of a son, but he did not wait for God to fulfill His word in His own time and way. A delay was permitted to test his faith in the power of God; but he failed to endure the trial. Thinking it impossible that a child should be given her in her old age, Sarah suggested, as a plan by which the divine purpose might be fulfilled, that one of her handmaidens should be taken by Abraham as a secondary wife. Polygamy had become so widespread that it had ceased to be regarded as a sin, but it was no less a violation of the law of God, and was fatal to the sacredness and peace of the family relation. Abraham’s marriage with Hagar resulted in evil, not only to his own household, but to future generations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 145.

2. A SON OF BONDAGE

- a. How did God react as Abraham presented Ishmael as the son of promise? Genesis 17:15–21.
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“When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the promise of a son was repeated to him, with the assurance that the future heir should be the child of Sarah. But Abraham did not yet understand the promise. His mind at once turned to Ishmael, clinging to the belief that through him God’s gracious purposes were to be accomplished. In his affection for his son he exclaimed, ‘O that Ishmael might live before Thee!’ Again the promise was given, in words that could not be mistaken: ‘Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him’ (Genesis 17:18, 19).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 146.

- b. Why did God refuse to accept Ishmael as the promised seed? Galatians 4:22, 23, 30; Romans 14:23 (last part).
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“The lack of faith on the part of Abraham and Sarah had resulted in the birth of Ishmael, the mingling of the righteous seed with the ungodly. The father’s influence upon his son was counteracted by that of the mother’s idolatrous kindred and by Ishmael’s connection with heathen wives.”—*Ibid.*, p. 174.

- c. What essential truth would Abraham have missed if God had accepted Ishmael as the promised seed? Romans 4:1–5, 21, 22.
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“The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 401.

“When we individually rest upon Christ, with full assurance of faith, trusting alone to the efficacy of His blood to cleanse from all sin, we shall have peace in believing that what God has promised He is able to perform.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 181.

“[Philippians 4:4–7 quoted.] The promise itself is of no value unless I fully believe that He that has made the promise is abundantly able to fulfill, and infinite in power to do all that He has said.”—*This Day With God*, p. 156.

3. CHILDREN OF BONDAGE

- a. Explain which class of people Ishmael and his mother Hagar spiritually represent, and why. Genesis 16:4–6; Galatians 4:22, 23.
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- b. Why does the apostle Paul describe the Jews living in Jerusalem in his day as bond servants, like Hagar and Ishmael? John 8:31–36; Romans 9:6–8.
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“Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

“God has done so much to make it possible for us to be free in Christ, free from the slavery of wrong habits and evil inclinations. Dear young friends, will you not strive to be free in Christ?”—*Our High Calling*, p. 29.

- c. In whom and in what did the Jews of the flesh (the literal descendants of Abraham) place their confidence in receiving the blessing of God? John 8:37–40; Philippians 3:3–9; Galatians 6:12, 13.
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“The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham; but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not his true children. Only those who prove themselves to be spiritually in harmony with Abraham by obeying the voice of God, are reckoned as of true descent.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 268.

“Paul says that as ‘touching the righteousness which is in the law’—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was ‘blameless’ (Philippians 3:6); but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by the letter of the law as men apply it to the outward life, he had abstained from sin; but when he looked into the depths of its holy precepts, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 29, 30.

4. AN ALLEGORY

- a. **When we trust in our own works for acceptance with God, rather than in Christ, what covenant are we falling under? Galatians 4:21–25; 3:10; 2 Corinthians 3:14, 15.**

“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient’ (Exodus 24:7); . . . yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. . . .

“The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law. . . .

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

- b. **Why is it evident that a person cannot make himself or herself righteous before God by keeping the law? Galatians 2:21; 3:11, 12.**

“Were it not for Christ’s atoning sacrifice, there would be nothing in us in which God could delight. All the natural goodness of man is worthless in God’s sight. He does not take pleasure in any man who retains his old nature, and is not so renewed in knowledge and grace that he is a new man in Christ.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 66.

5. BROTHERLY PERSECUTION

- a. What event does the apostle Paul use to illustrate the Jewish persecution of the Christian church? Galatians 4:28, 29; Genesis 21:6–10.
- b. Why will the children of the spirit always be persecuted by the children of the flesh? John 15:17–22; John 3:19, 20; Galatians 5:17 (first part).

“Cain hated and killed his brother, not for any wrong that Abel had done, but ‘because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous’ (1 John 3:12). . . . Abel’s life of obedience and unswerving faith was to Cain a perpetual reproof. . . . The brighter the heavenly light that is reflected from the character of God’s faithful servants, the more clearly the sins of the ungodly are revealed, and the more determined will be their efforts to destroy those who disturb their peace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 74.

“The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner’s peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known. . . . It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Saviour—because the purity and holiness of His character was a constant rebuke to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the hatred and opposition of those who love and follow the ways of sin.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 46.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How only can God’s promises be fulfilled?
2. Why will God never accept the works of the flesh as righteousness?
3. Why can we never place trust in our heritage, our flesh, or our works?
4. Why is it impossible to be justified by the works of the law?
5. Describe the type of warfare Christians must expect because of their faith.

First Sabbath Offering for World Disaster and Welfare

"[The Lord] executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry" (Psalm 146:7).

The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). The poor are all around us, the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowing, and those who are ready to perish. There is a great need for the exercise of mercy today as there ever was. God has made us His stewards, and He is not to be charged with the sufferings, the misery, the nakedness, and the want of humanity. The Lord has made ample provision for all of us. He has given us large supplies with which to alleviate the want of these sufferers and underprivileged ones.



Every day we hear of earthquakes, war, floods, volcanoes, and other disasters and troubles all over the world resulting in destruction, great damage to properties, and loss of life. As soon as we hear about a calamity, we immediately swing into action to respond to the needs of the people. The way we respond depends deeply on the nature of the disaster, the country, the economic and geo-political situation at hand. We immediately begin to assess the situation to determine the most appropriate actions.

In addition to this, in time of peace the Welfare Department provides assistance such as funding through proposals, technical assistance, training, mentorship, and project identification and implementation. Where we have expertise, we want to assist by providing oversight and guidance as needed. Our goal is to empower the local church to meet the needs of their community; whether in the form of food, clothing, blankets, shelter, or emotional support and counseling.

Sharing God's love around the world is like an airplane which needs fuel to propel it. Your liberal offerings are the fuel that propels almost every aspect of helping these destitute. Without your involvement and this fuel, our best efforts are sure to be a disaster as well. It is hard for everyone to go to the site of calamities, but your means can go far. We appeal to you that your heart may be moved to partake in this noble task. Please give liberally for this cause.

Your brethren from the Welfare Department

Abraham's True Children

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7).

“Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the word of God with a child's simplicity, will be among the elect of God.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 77.

Suggested Readings: *Our High Calling*, pp. 75–79;
Prophets and Kings, pp. 367–372.

Sunday

January 29

1. ABRAHAM'S TRUE CHILDREN

- a. Whom does the Bible regard the true children of Abraham as true Israelites? Romans 9:6–8; Galatians 3:7–9.

“To Isaiah it was given to make very plain to Judah the truth that among the Israel of God were to be numbered many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh. This teaching was not in harmony with the theology of his age, yet he fearlessly proclaimed the messages given him of God and brought hope to many a longing heart reaching out after the spiritual blessings promised to the seed of Abraham.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 367.

- b. How can the Gentiles, who are not children by literal descent, now be regarded as Abraham's true seed? Romans 9:30; 4:11, 12, 16, 17.

“All who through Christ should become the children of faith were to be counted as Abraham's seed; they were inheritors of the covenant promises; like Abraham, they were called to guard and to make known to the world the law of God and the gospel of His Son.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 476.

2. ABRAHAM'S ADOPTED CHILDREN

- a. **Through faith in Christ as Abraham's promised seed, into what family are we adopted? Romans 8:14–16; Galatians 4:4–7.**
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“God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus. The pride of man hinders him from accepting the provisions of salvation.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 78.

- b. **How does the sacrifice of Jesus Christ make one a child of God, even a child of faith, and to whom does this apply? Galatians 3:27–29.**
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“Men may perform great deeds in the eyes of the world; their achievements may be many and of a high order in the sight of men, but all the talent, all the skill, all the ability of the world will fail to transform the character and make a degraded child of sin a child of God, an heir of heaven. Men have no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. . . . The highest gift of heaven, even the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is alone able to redeem the lost. . . . The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross is a consideration that surpasses all the overwhelming power of sin; and when a sense of sin presses upon the heart of the sinner, and the burden seems intolerable, Jesus invites him to look to Him and live.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 2, 1892.

- c. **Explain why Abraham's children are from every tribe and nation instead of just from Israel. Revelation 7:9, 10; Genesis 17:4–6; Acts 10:34, 35.**
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“Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of all the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 190.

3. ABRAHAM'S FALSE CHILDREN

- a. Why did most of Abraham's literal descendants disqualify themselves from being true Israelites in the eyes of God? Romans 10:1-4.
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"The Jews were, by their sins, separating themselves from God. They were unable to discern the deep spiritual significance of their symbolic service. In their self-righteousness they trusted to their own works, to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of relying upon the merits of Him to whom all these things pointed. Thus 'going about to establish their own righteousness' (Romans 10:3), they built themselves up in a self-sufficient formalism. Wanting the Spirit and grace of God, they tried to make up for the lack by a rigorous observance of religious ceremonies and rites. Not content with the ordinances which God Himself had appointed, they encumbered the divine commands with countless exactions of their own devising. The greater their distance from God, the more rigorous they were in the observance of these forms."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 708, 709.

- b. What is the only way we can be justified before God? Galatians 3:11,12; 2:16. What change will be evident in the life of those who have been justified by faith?
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"Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do."—*Faith and Works*, p. 20.

"The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300.

"He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."—*Ibid.*, p. 172.

4. ABRAHAM'S SERVANTS

- a. Those who do not embrace the faith of Abraham in Christ as the promised seed, are regarded as servants, instead of sons or daughters. What will happen to them? Genesis 16:3–6; Galatians 4:30, 31.
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“Noah and his household were within the ark, ‘and the Lord shut him in.’ . . . The massive door, which it was impossible for those within to close, was slowly swung to its place by unseen hands. Noah was shut in, and the rejecters of God’s mercy were shut out. The seal of Heaven was on that door; God had shut it, and God alone could open it. So when Christ shall cease His intercession for guilty men, before His coming in the clouds of heaven, the door of mercy will be shut. Then divine grace will no longer restrain the wicked, and Satan will have full control of those who have rejected mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 98.

- b. To whom and to what are they really servants? John 8:31–35, 39–44.
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“‘To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey’ (Romans 6:16). If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin. ‘No man can serve two masters’ (Matthew 6:24). If we serve sin, we cannot serve Christ.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1887.

- c. Why will the rejecters of Christ never be able to enter into the land of Canaan that was promised to Abraham and his seed? Hebrews 3:17–19; Acts 4:10–12; Galatians 3:9.
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“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Evangelism*, p. 696.

5. A WARNING TO THE CHURCH

- a. What warning was given to the church at Galatia, and why? Galatians 3:1–6; 4:7–11.

“The redemption that was wrought out for us by our Lord on the cross of Calvary was to bring us to obedience to the law of God, making it possible, through His righteousness imputed to us, to keep the law of God. . . .

“There is nothing so offensive to God as sin. Instead of making void the law of God by continuing in sin, every truly converted soul will be walking in the path of humble obedience to all of God’s commandments. They will search the Scriptures that they might know the truth. Who hath bewitched the impenitent, the transgressor, that sin is chosen rather than obedience? It is the power of Satan that came to Adam and Eve in Eden, the deceiving, bewitching power of the fallen angel.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 209.

- b. How do Abraham’s struggles with his own faith stand as a lesson to us? Genesis 15:3–6; 17:17, 18; Hebrews 4:1, 2. On the other hand, what does true faith give us? 1 John 5:4, 5.

“The Christian’s life should be one of faith, of victory, and joy in God God is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the strength they need, and to give them the wisdom that their varied necessities demand. He will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 126.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How important is faith to a Christian?
2. Why can a Christian call God his or her Father?
3. How can we avoid being cursed by God?
4. What is the difference between being Abraham’s servant and his son or daughter?
5. How can we be bewitched by the devil in corrupting our faith?

The Everlasting Covenant

“I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Genesis 17:7).

“The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

Suggested Reading: *The Faith I Live By*, pp. 76–78, 360–364.

Sunday

February 5

1. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

- a. **What shows that the covenant made to Abraham is the same as the one ratified by Christ at Calvary?** Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13–18; 9:16.

“The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham, is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God, —‘two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.’ Hebrews 6:18.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

- b. **What was promised under this covenant and how did Abraham respond?** Genesis 17:1–8; 15:6; 26:5; compare Galatians 3:8, 16; Romans 4:20–22.

“To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God’s law.”—*Ibid.*, p. 370.

“The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God’s law.”—*Ibid.*, p. 371.

2. AN EVERLASTING RELATIONSHIP

- a. In what way did God express the covenant relationship He established with Abraham and his seed? Leviticus 26:12. Compare with Genesis 17:7, 8; Deuteronomy 14:2; 29:13.
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- b. What did God give to Abraham as a seal of the covenant relationship, and why? Genesis 17:11; Romans 4:11.
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"At this time the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as 'a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised' (Romans 4:11). It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

"[Circumcision] was a sign that those who received it were devoted to the service of God—a pledge that they would remain separate from idolatry and would obey the law of God."—*Ibid.*, p. 363.

- c. What essential experience must we have today in order to enter into the same "new" covenant relationship with God? Deuteronomy 10:16; Colossians 2:11; Hebrews 8:10; 2 Corinthians 6:16, 17.
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"We are to believe that we are chosen of God, to be saved by the exercise of faith, through the grace of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit; and we are to praise and glorify God for such a marvelous manifestation of His unmerited favor. It is the love of God that draws the soul to Christ, to be graciously received, and presented to the Father. Through the work of the Spirit the divine relationship between God and the sinner is renewed. The Father says: 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. I will exercise forgiving love toward them and bestow upon them My joy. They shall be to Me a peculiar treasure; for this people whom I have formed for Myself shall show forth My praise.'"—*The Signs of the Times*, January 2, 1893.

"The condition of being received into the Lord's family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences."—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 57.

3. AN EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD

- a. Why is Christ called a priest after Melchisedec and not after Aaron? Hebrews 5:5, 6; 7:11–16; Matthew 1:1, 2.
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“The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent Christ, who was to become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. This order of priesthood was not to pass to another, or be superseded by another.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 930.

- b. In what way does Melchisedec’s priesthood relate to Christ’s everlasting priesthood, and why is it a superior priesthood to Aaron’s? Compare Hebrews 7:1–3 with Hebrews 7:20–25; 6:18–20.
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“It was Christ that spoke through Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchizedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 409.

“The name of that helpless little babe . . . was the hope of fallen humanity. The child for whom the redemption money had been paid was He who was to pay the ransom for the sins of the whole world. He was the true ‘high priest over the house of God,’ the head of ‘an unchangeable priesthood,’ the intercessor at ‘the right hand of the Majesty on high’ (Hebrews 10:21; 7:24; 1:3).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 52, 55.

- c. What parallel is there in the meal that God’s priest offered to Abraham? Compare Genesis 14:18–20 with 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23–26.
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“The bread and the wine represent the body and the blood of Christ. As the bread was broken, and the wine poured out, so on the cross Christ’s body was broken, and His blood shed to save us.

“By eating the bread and drinking the wine, we show that we believe this. We show that we repent of our sins, and that we receive Christ as our Saviour.”—*The Story of Jesus*, p. 98.

4. AN EVERLASTING POSSESSION

- a. What everlasting land, which the earthly land was but a shadow, did God promise Abraham? Genesis 17:8; Hebrews 11:8–10; Revelation 21:2.
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“The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home—that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 279.

- b. When and how will Abraham and his seed receive their eternal inheritance? Matthew 25:31, 34; John 14:1–3, Daniel 7:27.
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“The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God’s entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended. Wherever we looked, everything upon which the eye rested was beautiful and holy. And all the redeemed host, old and young, great and small, cast their glittering crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him, and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever. The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.”—*Early Writings*, p. 295.

“The full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. ‘The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,’ is to be given to ‘the people of the saints of the Most High’ (Daniel 7:27). They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them ‘from the foundation of the world’ (Matthew 25:34). And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 108.

5. EVERLASTING LIFE

- a. What is the greatest of all the promises given through the everlasting covenant? Galatians 3:29; 1 John 5:11; Revelation 21:3, 4.

“The day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ’s righteousness.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 506.

“[In heaven], there is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, ‘I am sick.’ There, there is no burial train, no mourning, no death, no parting, no broken hearts; and Jesus is there, peace is there. . . . In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore!”—*My Life Today*, p. 349.

- b. On what hope must we never give up? Titus 2:11–13; Hebrews 10:35–37.

“Be patient, Christian soldier. Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come. The night of weary waiting, and watching, and mourning is nearly over. The reward will soon be given; the eternal day will dawn. There is no time to sleep now—no time to indulge in useless regrets. He who ventures to slumber now will miss precious opportunities of doing good. . . . Every soul saved will be an additional star in the crown of Jesus, our adorable Redeemer.”—*Christian Service*, p. 275.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we have confidence in God’s Word?
2. How can we have the same covenant relationship with God that Abraham had?
3. Explain how we can have confidence in Christ’s everlasting priesthood.
4. What is the blessed hope of Abraham’s children?
5. Why is eternal life with God the Christian’s blessed hope?

Everlasting Grace

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 347.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–373;
Faith and Works, pp. 15–28.

Sunday

February 12

1. THE NEW COVENANT OF PROMISE

- a. In what way did God make the new covenant with Abraham—and what did God later do to confirm this covenant and why? Galatians 3:14–18; Hebrews 6:13–18.

- b. What had Abraham done of himself to deserve these covenant blessings—and what does that teach us about God’s attitude toward sinners? Genesis 12:1–3; 1 Corinthians 1:26–31; Romans 3:10–12.

“Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow His grace upon us, not because we are worthy, but because we are so utterly unworthy. . . .

“It is [God’s] glory to pardon the chief of sinners.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 161.

“The more unworthy the receiver, the more glorious the mercy of God.”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 28, 1893.

2. THE OLD COVENANT OF WORKS

- a. Why did God make another covenant through Moses 430 years later—and why can't it disannul the new covenant of promise? Deuteronomy 4:12, 13; Exodus 19:5–7; Galatians 3:17; 1 Peter 1:18–20.
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“In their bondage the people [of Israel] had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. . . . God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him . . . that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. . . .

“Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

“The ‘old’ covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant.”—*Ibid.*, p. 371.

- b. How did the people react to God's requirement under the old covenant? Exodus 19:8. How might we fall into the same danger?
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“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 371.

“Those who feel no need of the blood of Christ, who feel that without divine grace they can by their own works secure the approval of God, are making the same mistake as did Cain. If they do not accept the cleansing blood, they are under condemnation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 73.

“Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God's moral standard.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 96.

3. FROM OLD TO NEW

- a. What was the moral law's purpose in the old covenant and what purpose does it still serve today? Romans 7:7, 9–13, 20; 3:19–20.
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“The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 308.

- b. In the new covenant, how does God change our attitude towards His law and what transformation will be seen in our life? Hebrews 8:10; Psalm 40:8; Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Colossians 3:9, 10.
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“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

“The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 407.

- c. How does the new covenant experience perfectly fulfill the spirit and intent of the law—and what was said of Abraham in this regard? Matthew 5:20–22, 27, 28, 31–48; Romans 13:8–10; Genesis 26:5.
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“Obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, ‘I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them’ (Hebrews 10:16). And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life?”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 60.

4. BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

- a. **What free gift did God bestow on Abraham because he chose to believe? Romans 4:22; Galatians 3:6.**

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 161.

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

- b. **What did Abraham do to be declared righteous—and how alone are believers in like manner saved? Romans 4:1–5; Ephesians 2:8, 9.**

“Our acceptance with God is sure only through His beloved Son, and good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love. They are no credit to us, and we have nothing accorded to us for our good works by which we may claim a part in the salvation of our souls. Salvation is God’s free gift to the believer, given to him for Christ’s sake alone.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1122.

- c. **Even though faith itself is a gift (see Romans 12:3 (last part)), what are we to do with it? John 3:16; Luke 7:1-9; Romans 10:17.**

“Faith that enables us to receive God’s gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. It grows as exercised in appropriating the word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the word.”—*Education*, pp. 253, 254.

“Men and women will not be saved unless they themselves exercise faith, and build on the true foundation, unless they allow God to recreate them by His Holy Spirit.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900.

5. UNMERITED FAVOR

- a. What unmerited favor, promised under the new covenant, has God shown in order to save humankind? Genesis 12:3; 1 John 4:14; Ephesians 2:4–8; Romans 5:15–18.

“Although by our disobedience we have merited God’s displeasure and condemnation, He has not forsaken us.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 10.

“Those who enter heaven will not scale its walls by their own righteousness, nor will its gates be opened to them for costly offerings of gold or silver, but they will gain an entrance to the many mansions of the Father’s house through the merits of the cross of Christ.”—*Ibid*, p. 179.

- b. How does a sinner access such a free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ? John 1:12; Romans 5:17; Hebrews 11:8.

“All who believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice may come and receive pardon for their sins; for through the merit of Christ, communication has been opened between God and man. God can accept me as His child, and I can claim Him and rejoice in Him as my loving Father. We must center our hopes of heaven upon Christ alone, because He is our substitute and surety.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 363.

- c. What two things did God destroy by his marvellous grace? Romans 8:2; 1 John 3:5, 8; 2 Timothy 1:10.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the word “promise” in light of God’s inability to lie.
2. Why was the old covenant given—and why was it devoid of faith?
3. How does God write His law of love within our hearts and minds?
4. Why can’t we claim credit for our good works in salvation?
5. Why will we never be able to boast of our faith?

A Faith That Works

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” (James 2:21).

“There are many who fail to understand the relation of faith and works. They say, ‘Only believe in Christ, and you are safe. You have nothing to do with keeping the law.’ But genuine faith will be manifest in obedience.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 153, 154.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 47–54, 111–116.

Sunday

February 19

1. A WORKING FAITH

- a. **How do we know Abraham believed in God’s word? Genesis 22:1–5; James 2:21–24.**

“Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 79.

- b. **What is the relationship between faith and works? James 2:17, 18; Matthew 7:16–20. What kind of fruit does a Christian bear?**

“Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

“Just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord’s garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. . . . An entire transformation has taken place.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080.

2. GOD'S WORKS

- a. **How did Abraham show his faith in God? As he acted out his faith, what did Abraham reveal about his faith? James 2:22; Genesis 22:12.**
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“Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 398.

- b. **Where do good works come from? Compare Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:12 with Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:13, 14.**
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“Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.”—*Ibid.*, p. 397.

“If we are faithful in doing our part, in cooperating with Him, God will work through us the good pleasure of His will. But God cannot work through us if we make no effort. If we gain eternal life, we must work, and work earnestly. . . . We must follow the example Christ has left us, submitting to Him in everything. Our will must be in harmony with His will.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 11, 1901.

- c. **Before the Christian can bring forth the good works of God, what must first take place? Ephesians 2:1–5; Galatians 2:20; Jeremiah 29:13.**
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“The only way we can secure the help of God is to put ourselves wholly in His hands and trust Him to work for us. As we lay hold of Him by faith, He does the work. The believer can only trust. As God works, we can work, trusting in Him and doing His will.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1080.

3. A DEAD BELIEF

- a. **What is the difference between a living faith and a dead belief? James 2:19, 20; Mark 7:6, 7.**
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“True faith, which relies wholly upon Christ, will be manifested by obedience to all the requirements of God. . . . In all ages there have been those who claimed a right to the favor of God even while they were disregarding some of His commands. But the Scriptures declare that by works is ‘faith made perfect’; and that, without the works of obedience, faith ‘is dead’ (James 2:22, 17).”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 91.

“Many are content with lip service, and but few have a sincere, earnest, affectionate longing after God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 534.

- b. **Can someone with a dead belief produce good works? Matthew 23:27, 28; 7:21–23.**
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“The good man, from the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things. Why? Because Christ is an abiding presence in the soul. The sanctifying truth is a treasure-house of wisdom to all who practice the truth. As a living spring it is springing up unto everlasting life. The one who has not Christ abiding in his heart will indulge in cheap talk, exaggerated statements, that make mischief. The tongue that utters perverse things, common things, slang phrases, that tongue needs to be treated with the hot coals of juniper.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 577.

“No man can have the spirit and the mind of Christ without being rendered better by it in all the relations and duties of life. Murmuring, complaining, and fretful passion are not the fruit of good principles.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 347.

- c. **What will always be missing in the works of a dead believer? 1 John 4:20, 21; John 8:37–41.**
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“Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality—‘unfeigned love of the brethren’ (1 Peter 1:22). This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 520.

4. THE ROOT OR THE FRUIT?

- a. What happens when good works of obedience become the root of the Christian experience instead of the fruit of it? Matthew 23:5.**
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“The Pharisees sought distinction by their scrupulous ceremonialism and the ostentation of their worship and their charities. They proved their zeal for religion by making it the theme of discussion. Disputes between opposing sects were loud and long, and it was not unusual to hear on the streets the voice of angry controversy from learned doctors of the law.

“In marked contrast to all this was the life of Jesus. In that life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 32.

- b. What should always be at the root of the Christian's experience? Galatians 6:14.**
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“The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. . . . Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. . . . All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. . . .

“If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of His shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1132, 1133.

- c. How will the true Christian regard his or her own works in light of Christ's works? Philipians 3:4–9; Isaiah 6:5.**
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“The more [God's followers' see of the character of Christ the more humble they become, and the lower their estimate of themselves. . . . Self is lost sight of in their consciousness of their own unworthiness and of God's wonderful glory.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 122.

5. FRUITFUL CHRISTIANS

- a. Why does God want to fill the Christian's life with good works borne from a changed heart? Matthew 5:14–16; 1 Peter 2:9.

“It is [God’s] plan that all who are partakers of the great salvation shall be missionaries for Him. The piety of the Christian constitutes the standard by which worldlings judge the gospel. Trials patiently borne, blessings gratefully received, meekness, kindness, mercy, and love, habitually exhibited, are the lights that shine forth in the character before the world, revealing the contrast with the darkness that comes of the selfishness of the natural heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 134.

“When the grace of Christ is expressed in the words and works of the believers, light will shine forth to those who are in darkness; for while the lips are speaking to the praise of God, the hand will be stretched out in beneficence for the help of the perishing.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 276.

- b. Throughout history, what knowledge does Christ always have regarding His church? Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15. Why is Jesus so interested in the works of His followers? James 2:21, 22, 24; Revelation 22:12.

“The eyes of the world are upon us, and we are observed by many of whom we have no knowledge. There are those who know something of the doctrines we claim to believe, and they are noting the effect of our faith upon our characters.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 386.

“The world today is in crying need of a revelation of Christ Jesus in the person of His saints.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 313.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does true faith always work?
2. How can we ensure that our works are always from God?
3. Why can an unconverted heart never produce unselfish love?
4. Explain the difference between the root and the fruit of our experience.
5. What is God and the world waiting to see in the Christian church?

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Bengaluru India

Bengaluru (formerly known as Bangalore) is the capital city of the Karnataka State in India. It is the fifth largest metropolis, having a population of over eleven million (2016). Bengaluru is considered the “Silicon Valley of India” due to its role as the nation’s leading information technology exporter.



The work of our church was established here, when in early 2009, a brother, along with a group of souls interested in our message, expressed a desire to join our Movement. After having been guided through the present truth, they were accepted into Christ’s fold.

For the next several years, the group worshipped in a small rented place. In 2014, due to the church outgrowing the first rented place, they moved to another rented place that had ample room for all. However, the meeting room, being on the second floor of the building, was only accessible by stairs. The need to go up and down the stairs for each meeting made it difficult for the aged believers. The brethren also desired to have a permanent place of worship. Plans were then made to procure a parcel of land. Finding a plot of land to purchase proved quite difficult, as land is very expensive in a city like Bengaluru. People throng the city to find employment and do business, causing alarming escalations in the real estate market. However, by the help of the Lord, the brethren managed to find and purchase a suitable piece of land.

Now the brethren are looking forward to building a monument for the Lord in this “Silicon City,” a place from which the gospel may be proclaimed in power to the lost. We are praying that God will open the windows of heaven and pour out showers of blessings on this project.

In the meantime, we would like to appeal to you, our worldwide brotherhood, to help us accomplish this project. It is our prayer that God will open your hearts to give willingly this First Sabbath. Please know that any support you can give us will be a means of great joy to the believers in Bengaluru. We also request that you would please pray for this project so that it may be materialized.

May God richly bless you in your generous support of the project this Sabbath.

Your brethren and sisters from Bengaluru

Abraham's Saviour

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

"Through type and promise God 'preached before the gospel unto Abraham' (Galatians 3:8). And the patriarch's faith was fixed upon the Redeemer to come."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752–760, 785–787.

Sunday

February 26

1. A FIGURE OF CHRIST

a. Who was Isaac a figure of? Genesis 22:7–9; Hebrews 11:17–19.

"Isaac was a figure of the Son of God, who was offered a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God would impress upon Abraham the gospel of salvation to man. In order to do this, and make the truth a reality to him as well as to test his faith, He required him to slay his darling Isaac. All the sorrow and agony that Abraham endured through that dark and fearful trial were for the purpose of deeply impressing upon his understanding the plan of redemption for fallen man. He was made to understand in his own experience how unutterable was the self-denial of the infinite God in giving His own Son to die to rescue man from utter ruin."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 369.

b. How did God reveal to Abraham the day of Christ? Genesis 22:13; John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7.

"Abraham . . . was shown that in giving His only-begotten Son to save sinners from eternal ruin, God was making a greater and more wonderful sacrifice than ever man could make."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 469.

2. THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

- a. Describe how God tried to reveal to Abraham the depths of the great sacrifice He was making in giving His only begotten Son. Genesis 22:11, 12, 16; 1 John 4:9, 10.
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“Our heavenly Father surrendered His beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God’s dear Son, the world’s Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until He bowed His head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of His divine love and pity?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 20.

“The agony which [Abraham] endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man’s redemption.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

- b. Explain how Jesus knew, just like Isaac knew, that it was His Father that was offering Him up as the sacrifice for the whole world. Genesis 22:10; Matthew 26:38, 39; Philipians 2:8.
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“Jesus left His home in heaven and came to this dark world to reach to the very depths of human woe, that He might save those who are ready to perish.”—*The Bible Echo*, January 1, 1893.

- c. What was the greatest pain Jesus suffered during His ultimate sacrifice? Psalm 69:18–21; Isaiah 53:4, 10, 12.
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“It was the anguish of separation from His Father’s favor that made Christ’s sufferings so acute. . . . His terrible anguish, caused by the thought that in this hour of need God had forsaken Him, portrays the anguish that the sinner will feel when, too late, he realizes that God’s Spirit is withdrawn from him.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, pp. 464, 465.

3. FORSAKEN FOR SIN

- a. **Why was Christ forsaken and Isaac was not? Genesis 22:12; Matthew 27:42, 43, 46; John 3:17; 12:27; 2 Corinthians 5:21.**
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“The angels of heaven sympathized with their loved Commander. Gladly would they have broken their ranks and gone to His assistance. But this was not God’s plan.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 223.

“Voluntarily our divine Substitute bared His soul to the sword of justice, that we might not perish but have everlasting life.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 322.

- b. **What is significant about Abraham’s servants staying behind and only the father and son going to the altar together? Genesis 22:3–5, 8; John 16:32.**
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“With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour’s despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. . . .

“In that thick darkness God’s presence was hidden. . . . The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father’s presence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 753, 754.

- c. **How do we know that Christ was forsaken but not lost? Isaiah 54:7, 8; Acts 2:22–24, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:55–57.**
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“Jesus was laid in the tomb. He went into the darkness of the grave and tasted death for every man. But He did not long remain under the power of the enemy. A mighty angel came from heaven and rolled back the stone from the sepulchre. . . . Christ came forth from the tomb a triumphant conqueror and led forth from their graves a multitude of captives.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 25, 1889.

4. A RISEN SAVIOUR

- a. Describe how Abraham believed in the power of the resurrection. Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19.
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“This son [Isaac] had been unexpectedly given; and had not He who bestowed the precious gift a right to recall His own? Then faith repeated the promise, ‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called’—a seed numberless as the grains of sand upon the shore (Genesis 21:12). Isaac was the child of a miracle, and could not the power that gave him life restore it? Looking beyond that which was seen, Abraham grasped the divine word, ‘accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead’ (Hebrews 11:19).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 151.

- b. Explain what Christ’s death and resurrection mean to humanity. Hebrews 2:14, 15; 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 6:5.
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“Satan cannot hold the dead in his grasp when the Son of God bids them live. He cannot hold in spiritual death one soul who in faith receives Christ’s word of power. God is saying to all who are dead in sin, ‘Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead’ (Ephesians 5:14). That word is eternal life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 320.

- c. How important is Christ’s victory over death to the believer? 1 Corinthians 15:12–19; 1 Peter 1:3; John 11:25, 26.
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“The captives brought up from the graves at the time of the resurrection of Jesus were His trophies as a conquering Prince. Thus He attested His victory over death and the grave; thus He gave a pledge and an earnest of the resurrection of all the righteous dead.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1109.

“He alone . . . who is able . . . to raise His saints from the grave and clothe them with immortality, giving them everlasting victory over death and the grave, is able now to keep the souls of all committed to His trust against that day and to deliver them in their perplexities.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 273.

5. THE JOY OF SALVATION

- a. How did Abraham feel when God revealed Christ as the Saviour over sin and death? John 8:56; Why should Christians be the world's most joyful people? Philippians 4:4; Acts 2:25–27; 1 Thesalonians 5:16.

“When in most discouraging circumstances, which would have had a depressing influence upon halfway Christians, [Paul] is firm of heart, full of courage and hope and cheer, exclaiming, ‘Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice’ (Philippians 4:4). The same hope and cheerfulness is seen when he is upon the deck of the ship, the tempest beating about him, the ship going to pieces. He gives orders to the commander of the ship and preserves the lives of all on board. Although a prisoner, he is really the master of the ship, the freest and happiest man on board.”—*My Life Today*, p. 334.

- b. Why is singing and praising the Lord an essential part of our faith? Psalms 98:1–6; 95:1–8; Revelation 15:2–4.

“As the people [of Israel] journeyed through the wilderness, many precious lessons were fixed in their minds by means of song. . . .

“Thus their thoughts were uplifted from the trials and difficulties of the way, the restless, turbulent spirit was soothed and calmed, the principles of truth were implanted in the memory, and faith was strengthened.”—*Education*, p. 39.

“If more praising of God were engaged in now, hope and courage and faith would steadily increase.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 202.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways was Isaac a type of Christ?
2. How does Abraham's experience reveal the depths of God's sacrifice?
3. Explain why Christ had to experience the feeling of being forsaken.
4. What does the resurrection mean to the Christian?
5. What is the best cure for depression?

Abraham's Patience

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:14).

“When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, [God] is making arrangements for our deliverance.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 316.

Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 93–104;
Our High Calling, pp. 315–319.

Sunday

March 5

1. THE DESIRES OF THE HEART

- a. What was Abraham's heart's desire? Genesis 15:1–3. What does God promise to those who believe in Him? Psalm 37:4, 5; Matthew 21:21, 22.

“Every promise in the Word of God is for us. In your prayers, present the pledged word of Jehovah and by faith claim His promises. His word is the assurance that if you ask in faith, you will receive all spiritual blessings. Continue to ask, and you will receive exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. Educate yourself to have unlimited confidence in God. Cast all your care upon Him. Wait patiently for Him, and He will bring it to pass.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 71.

- b. When we pray for God to fulfill a desire of our heart, what else should we always include with our request? James 4:13–15; Matthew 26:39.

“The consistent course is to commit our desires to our all-wise heavenly Father, and then, in perfect confidence, trust all to Him. We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 230.

2. WAITING LONGER THAN EXPECTED

- a. Explain how God answered Abraham's prayer as soon as he finished his request? Genesis 15:3, 4.
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"As Abram had no son, he at first thought that his trusty servant, Eliezer, should become his son by adoption, and his heir. But God informs Abram that his servant shall not be his son and heir, but that he should really have a son."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 100, 101.

- b. Even though God immediately promised Abraham a son, why didn't He reveal at first the date when Abraham's son would be born? Acts 1:6, 7; Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 34:8.
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"The Lord intended to prove the firm faith and reliance of Abram upon the promises He had made him."—*Ibid.*, p. 101.

"We need not expect all sunshine in this world. Clouds and storms will cluster about us, and we must be prepared to keep our eyes directed where we saw the light last. Its rays may be hidden but they . . . still shine beyond the cloud. It is our work to wait, to watch, to pray, and to believe. We shall prize the light of the sun more highly after the clouds disappear. We shall see the salvation of God if we trust in God in the darkness as well as in the light."—*Our High Calling*, p. 318.

- c. When prayer is not answered when we expect it, what are we in danger of? 1 Corinthians 10:9, 10; Hebrews 3:12–14. Where will it lead? Genesis 16:1–6.
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"When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Matthew 7:7)."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 96.

3. A REWARDER OF FAITH

- a. In what two things does God want us to believe? Hebrews 11:6. What was Abraham's initial demonstration? Genesis 15:4–6.
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“We should not present our petitions to God to *prove* whether He will fulfill His word, but *because* He will fulfill it; not to prove that He loves us, but because He loves us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 126.

- b. As God rejected Ishmael as the promised seed, describe how time affected Abraham and Sarah's faith in God's fulfilling His promise. Genesis 17:15–18; 18:9–12.
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“When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the promise of a son was repeated to him, with the assurance that the future heir should be the child of Sarah. But Abraham did not yet understand the promise. His mind at once turned to Ishmael, clinging to the belief that through him God's gracious purposes were to be accomplished.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 146.

- c. What does every answered prayer have attached to it? Genesis 18:14, 21:1, 2. What should we always remember about God's timing compared to our timing? Habakkuk 2:3.
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“To every sincere prayer an answer will come. It may not come just as you desire, or at the time you look for it; but it will come in the way and at the time that will best meet your need. The prayers you offer in loneliness, in weariness, in trial, God answers, not always according to your expectations, but always for your good.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 258.

“God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless and fail to realize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 27, 1913.

4. THE NEED OF PATIENCE

- a. Why doesn't God always let the fulfillment of a prayer happen immediately? James 1:2-4; Romans 8:24, 25.
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"We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should not ask Him to concede to our will, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. These experiences that test faith are for our benefit. By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is strengthened by exercise."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 230, 231.

- b. What assurance can we have in God's promises even though they are not always fulfilled when we think they should be? Hebrews 6:13-18; Isaiah 55:8-11; Psalm 27:14.
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"Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 245.

"Wait on the Lord, and again I say, Wait on the Lord. We may ask of the human agents and not receive. We may ask of God and He says, Ye shall receive. Therefore you know to whom to look; you know in whom to trust. You must not trust in man or make flesh your arm. Lean as heavily as you please upon the Mighty One who hath said, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me' (Isaiah 27:5). Then wait and watch and pray and work, keeping your face constantly turned to the Sun of Righteousness."—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 119.

5. THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS

- a. What characteristic describes God's remnant people? Revelation 14:12. Why is love, the highest round of the Christian ladder, unmentioned? 2 Peter 1:5-7; James 5:7, 8.

"It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward. . . . All who are engaged in this warfare with Satan and his host have a close work before them. They must not be as impressible as wax, that the fire can melt into any form. They must endure hardness as faithful soldiers, stand at their post, and be true every time."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 101, 102.

- b. Explain how God is using our present trials to prepare us for the return of our Lord. Hebrews 10:35-39; Matthew 25:5; 24:13, 42-44.

"In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. . . . The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness."—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 81.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Will God give us every desire of our heart?
2. How should we react when every prayer is not answered the way we think?
3. Why can "time" be the greatest challenge to our faith?
4. In a world of instant technology, what trait do we need to cultivate?
5. Why will those who fail to develop a patient trust in God's Word fall away?

Pleading for Sinners

“He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

“Earnest, self-sacrificing men and women are needed, who will go to God and with strong crying and tears plead for the souls that are on the brink of ruin.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 26.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 156–170.

Sunday

March 12

1. SODOM AND GOMORRAH

- a. **What punishment did the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffer? Genesis 19:24, 25; Luke 17:29.**

“The Lord rained brimstone and fire out of heaven upon the cities and the fruitful plain; its palaces and temples, costly dwellings, gardens and vineyards, and the gay, pleasure-seeking throngs that only the night before had insulted the messengers of heaven—all were consumed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 162.

- b. **To whom is Sodom and Gomorrah an example? 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7.**
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“The flames that consumed the cities of the plain shed their warning light down even to our time. We are taught the fearful and solemn lesson that while God’s mercy bears long with the transgressor, there is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin. When that limit is reached, then the offers of mercy are withdrawn, and the ministration of judgment begins. . . .

“The fate of Sodom is a solemn admonition, not merely to those who are guilty of outbreking sin, but to all who are trifling with heaven-sent light and privileges.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 162, 165.

2. ABRAHAM'S PLEA

- a. Where was Abraham's nephew Lot abiding? Genesis 13:10–13; 19:1.
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“Fairest among the cities of the Jordan Valley was Sodom, set in a plain which was ‘as the garden of the Lord’ in its fertility and beauty. Here the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics flourished.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 156.

- b. As the Lord revealed to Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, how did Abraham indirectly plead for Lot's family? Genesis 18:22–32.
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“And the man of faith pleaded for the inhabitants of Sodom. Once [Abraham] had saved them by his sword, now he endeavored to save them by prayer. . . .

“With deep reverence and humility he urged his plea There was no self-confidence, no boasting of his own righteousness. He did not claim favor on the ground of his obedience, or of the sacrifices he had made in doing God's will. Himself a sinner, he pleaded in the sinner's behalf. Such a spirit all who approach God should possess. Yet Abraham manifested the confidence of a child pleading with a loved father. He came close to the heavenly Messenger and fervently urged his petition. . . . Abraham thought that in that populous city there must be other worshipers of the true God. . . . Abraham asked not once merely, but many times. Waxing bolder as his requests were granted, he continued until he gained the assurance that if even ten righteous persons could be found in it, the city would be spared.

“Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham's prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner. All around us are souls going down to ruin as hopeless, as terrible, as that which befell Sodom. Every day the probation of some is closing. Every hour some are passing beyond the reach of mercy. And where are the voices of warning and entreaty to bid the sinner flee from this fearful doom? Where are the hands stretched out to draw him back from death? Where are those who with humility and persevering faith are pleading with God for him?”—*Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140.

3. ANSWERED PRAYER

- a. Explain how God answered Abraham's prayer to spare Lot. Genesis 19:1–3, 12–16, 27–29.
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“Stupefied with sorrow, [Lot] lingered, loath to depart. But for the angels of God, they would all have perished in the ruin of Sodom. The heavenly messengers took him and his wife and daughters by the hand and led them out of the city.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 160.

- b. What ingredient do we always need to mix with our prayers to give them power? Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 17:14–20; Matthew 9:29.
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“Pray in faith. And be sure to bring your lives into harmony with your petitions, that you may receive the blessings for which you pray. Let not your faith weaken, for the blessings received are proportionate to the faith exercised. ‘According to your faith be it unto you.’ ‘All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive’ (Matthew 9:29; 21:22). Pray, believe, rejoice. Sing praises to God because He has answered your prayers. Take Him at His word. ‘He is faithful that promised’ (Hebrews 10:23). Not one sincere supplication is lost.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 274.

“We must lay hold with firmer grasp on the unfailing promises of God. We must have faith that will not be denied, faith that will take hold of the unseen, faith that is steadfast, immovable. Such faith will bring the blessing of heaven to our souls.”—*My Life Today*, p. 8.

- c. How can we have confidence that God will always deliver the righteous? 1 Peter 3:12; Psalm 145:18, 19; 55:22.
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“In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. . . . The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will give them the wisdom their varied necessities demand.”—*Ibid.*, p. 55.

4. PLEADING FOR SOULS

- a. What condition will the world be in just prior to the return of Jesus? Luke 17:28–30; 2 Timothy 3:1–6.

“I was shown the state of the world, that it is fast filling up its cup of iniquity. Violence and crime of every description are filling our world, and Satan is using every means to make crime and debasing vice popular. The youth who walk the streets are surrounded with handbills and notices of crime and sin, presented in some novel or to be acted at some theater. Their minds are educated into familiarity with sin. The course pursued by the base and vile is kept before them in the periodicals of the day, and everything which can excite curiosity and arouse the animal passions is brought before them in thrilling and exciting stories.

“The literature that proceeds from corrupted intellects poisons the minds of thousands in our world. Sin does not appear exceeding sinful. They hear and read so much of debasing crime and vileness that the once tender conscience which would have recoiled with horror becomes so blunted that it can dwell upon the low and vile sayings and actions of men with greedy interest.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 471, 472.

“The multitudes are striving to forget God, and they eagerly accept fables, that they may pursue the path of self-indulgence undisturbed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1122.

- b. Explain how we should have the same attitude of prayer as Abraham had. Ezekiel 9:4; James 5:16–20.

“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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 345, 346.

“Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 211.

5. THE PENDING JUDGMENT

- a. From what should we be trying to help souls escape? Revelation 14:7, 10, 11; 15:1.

“Wicked men will not oppose a form of godliness, nor reject a popular ministry which presents no cross for them to bear. The natural heart will raise no serious objection to a religion in which there is nothing to make the transgressor of the law tremble, or bring to bear upon the heart and conscience the terrible realities of a judgment to come. It is the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God which raises opposition, and leads the natural heart to rebel. The truth that saves the soul must not only come from God, but His Spirit must attend its communication to others, else it falls powerless before opposing influences.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 66.

- b. Like Lot’s experience, how do we know that many will just barely escape the judgments to come? Genesis 19:17; Luke 17:28–32; 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

“The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God (Genesis 19:17). Other voices are heard saying: ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety,’ while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. . . . Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 233.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What warning are we given from Sodom’s experience?
2. What should be the burden of every Christian?
3. Explain how a prayer of faith can save a soul.
4. What attitude do we need now more than ever?
5. Explain why the last warning needs to be given with urgency.

Abraham's Inheritance

"For [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

"We are only pilgrims and strangers in this world. We are seeking the city which Abraham looked for, whose builder and maker is God."—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 112.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 346–353;
The Faith I Live By, p. 304.

Sunday

March 19

1. A PROMISE OF INHERITANCE

- a. What inheritance did God promise to Abraham and his seed? Genesis 17:7, 8; 1 Chronicles 16:15–18; Romans 4:13.
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"The gift to Abraham and his seed included not merely the land of Canaan, but the whole earth. . . . And the Bible plainly teaches that the promises made to Abraham are to be fulfilled through Christ."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 170.

- b. Of what was the earthly promised land of Canaan a symbol? Hebrews 11:8–10, 13–16; Revelation 21:1–3.
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"The voice of God was heard, bidding [Abraham] not to expect immediate possession of the Promised Land, and pointing forward to the sufferings of his posterity before their establishment in Canaan. The plan of redemption was here opened to him, in the death of Christ, the great sacrifice, and His coming in glory. Abraham saw also the earth restored to its Eden beauty, to be given him for an everlasting possession, as the final and complete fulfillment of the promise."—*Ibid.*, p. 137.

2. HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

- a. **Who is the only true heir of the kingdom of promise? Matthew 21:33–39; Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 1:1, 2.**
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“Christ was the Father’s ‘appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.’ He was the ‘brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.’ And he upheld ‘all things by the word of his power’ (Hebrews 1:2, 3). He possessed divine excellency and greatness. It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell. And Christ ‘thought it not robbery to be equal with God’ (Philippians 2:6). Yet Jesus exchanged a throne of light and glory which He had with His Father, counting it not a thing to be desired to be equal with God, while man was lost in sin and misery. He came from heaven to earth, clothed His divinity with humanity, and bore the curse as surety for the fallen race. He was not compelled to do this; but He chose to bear the results of man’s transgression that man might escape eternal death.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1893.

- b. **How can we become heirs with Christ in sharing His inheritance? Romans 4:13–17; Galatians 3:26–29.**
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“Only those who have appreciated the grace of Christ, which has made them heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, will rise from the grave bearing the image of their Redeemer.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 259.

“The fulfillment of the promise that we shall be joint-heirs with Christ rests upon our willingness to deny self.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 235.

- c. **As we declare our faith in Jesus Christ in whom all the promises of God are made, what does He call us? Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 4:4–7.**
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“The treasures of eternity have been committed to the keeping of Jesus Christ, to give to whomsoever He will; but how sad it is that so many quickly lose sight of the precious grace that is proffered unto them through faith in Him. He will impart the heavenly treasures to those who will believe in Him, look to Him, and abide in Him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 138.

3. AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM

- a. As sons and daughters of God, through faith, what type of kingdom is promised us? Daniel 2:44; 7:27; 2 Peter 1:11.
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“The Lord’s purposes for His people have ever been the same. He desires to bestow on the children of men the riches of an eternal inheritance. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. When those who choose to become obedient subjects of the Most High are finally saved in the kingdom of glory, God’s purpose for mankind will have been fulfilled.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 26, 1907.

- b. How long will believers enjoy this everlasting kingdom? Titus 3:7; 1 John 5:11–13.
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“This life is a training school, where we are to be transformed, refined, and made meet for the society of saints in the kingdom of God, with whom we expect to associate throughout the ages of eternity.”—*The Bible Echo*, July 29, 1895.

- c. How do we know that God wants everyone to share in this inheritance? 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:32; John 3:16.
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“The Lord wills not that any soul should perish. His mercies are without number, and He will not leave His purchased possession that He has given His own life to ransom to become the sport of Satan’s temptations. All heaven is given to all those who believe in Jesus Christ as their present personal Saviour.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 150.

“The Light of the world is shining upon us that we might absorb the divine rays and let this light shine upon others in good works that many souls shall be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven. He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and it grieves the heart of Jesus that so many refuse the offers of His mercy and matchless love.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, pp. 237, 238.

4. HOLDING OUR CONFIDENCE

- a. **What are we admonished to hold on to?** Hebrews 3:14; 10:23, 35, 36; Revelation 3:11.
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“Decisions may be made in a moment that fix one’s condition forever. . . . But remember, it would take the work of a lifetime to recover what a moment of yielding to temptation and thoughtlessness throws away. . . .

“Those who win heaven will put forth their noblest efforts and will labor with all long-suffering, that they may reap the fruit of toil. There is a hand that will open wide the gates of Paradise to those who have stood the test of temptation and kept a good conscience by giving up the world, its honors, its applause, for the love of Christ, thus confessing Him before men and waiting with all patience for Him to confess them before His Father and the holy angels.”—*My Life Today*, p. 322.

- b. **Explain how the majority of Abraham’s literal children will be denied an inheritance.** Numbers 13:25–33; 14:1; Hebrews 3:18, 19; Jude 5.
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“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—*Evangelism*, p. 696.

- c. **What should be the number one priority in our life?** Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31–34; Colossians 3:1, 2.
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“Look away from this world to the eternal. Put forth your most earnest endeavors to obtain those things upon which God places value, and which Christ gave His precious life that you might secure. His sacrifice has thrown open wide to you the gates of heavenly commerce. Lay up your treasure beside the throne of God, by doing with His entrusted capital the work that He desires done in the winning of souls to a knowledge of the truth.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 225, 226.

5. GOD'S ONE UNITED KINGDOM

- a. How many of Abraham's children will be with him, praising God as he enters into his inheritance? Hebrews 11:39, 40; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Isaiah 66:23.

"We need not despair when we see that others have struggled through discouragements like our own, have fallen into temptations even as we have done, and yet have recovered their ground and been blessed of God. The words of inspiration comfort and cheer the erring soul. Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be overcomers in the name of Jesus."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 15.

- b. What will every saved believer do when beholding Jesus Christ face to face as Saviour? Philippians 2:9–11; Revelation 7:9, 10. What will Jesus then do? 1 Corinthians 15:24–28.

"All [the redeemed] unite in praising [the Lamb] who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 602.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What type of land was Abraham looking for?
2. How only can we be partakers of Abraham's inheritance?
3. What is God's desire for everyone in this world?
4. How can we hold our confidence steadfast to the end?
5. What types of songs will the redeemed sing together in the heavenly choir?

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First Sabbath Offerings



JANUARY 7
for Headquarters and Chapel
in Malawi
(See p. 4.)

FEBRUARY 4
World Disaster and Welfare
(See p. 25.)



MARCH 4
for a Chapel in Bangalore India
(See p. 46.)