

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

Lessons From
The Book of Mark



Lars Justina

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October – December, 2020

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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

The book of Mark was written by John Mark, who traveled with Paul and Barnabas. "Barnabas himself was 'of the country of Cyprus' (Acts 4:36); and now he and Paul, accompanied by John Mark, a kinsman of Barnabas, visited this island field.

"Mark's mother was a convert to the Christian religion, and her home at Jerusalem was an asylum for the disciples. There they were always sure of a welcome and a season of rest. It was during one of these visits of the apostles to his mother's home, that Mark proposed to Paul and Barnabas that he should accompany them on their missionary tour. He felt the favor of God in his heart and longed to devote himself entirely to the work of the gospel ministry."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 166, 167.

When Mark first began traveling with Barnabas and Paul, he found that the work was too much for him, and he went back home. When he came back to try again, Paul refused to work with him. However, Paul later changed his mind about Mark, finding him to be so helpful that he told Timothy, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11).

Mark also worked very closely with Peter. 1 Peter 5:13. It is believed that Peter recounted to Mark his own experiences. Mark, not being an eyewitness himself, then recorded Peter's memories of Jesus. Mark's presentation of the gospel is much more concise than the other three. Mark starts his narrative with "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). He immediately confesses his faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

"The Saviour of mankind was born of humble parentage in a sin-cursed, wicked world. He was brought up in obscurity at Nazareth, a small town of Galilee. He began His work in poverty and without worldly rank. He sought not the admiration or the applause of the world. He dwelt among the lowly. To all appearance He was merely a humble man, with few friends. Thus God introduced the gospel in a way altogether different from the way in which many deem it wise to proclaim the same gospel in this age. . . .

"'The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show.' The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world."—*The Review and Herald*, January 18, 1906.

May the Lord help us to accept a greater measure of this gospel of grace into our hearts and lives today as we study this quarter's lessons.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the headquarters in Savigny-sur Orge, France

With a combined population of around 87 million, France, Belgium, and Switzerland form an influential part of western Europe. The SDA Reform Movement has existed in France for several decades. During World War II, our brethren here were among those who suffered as victims in the notorious internment (concentration) camp of Gurs, under horrible conditions. Yet



the message endured by God's grace, and today France, together with Switzerland and Belgium, currently form the SDARM French Field.

The buildings on the property in Savigny-sur-Orge, a Paris suburb, serve as the headquarters for the Field and are in serious need of expansion. In 1991, a chapel was built on this property purchased several years before, thanks to some generous donations. With God's help, His work has developed here despite the challenging mentality of the French population that was so heavily entrenched in the atheistic and Catholic ideas that still linger from the 1260 years of persecution. Let us recall that a few years after Luther, about half the population was Protestant. But because of the persecution, many faithful people either died for their faith (through the torture of the wheel, stake, galley, prison, etc.) or fled to countries that were more hospitable, such as Switzerland, Germany, Holland, and the New World (the USA and Canada).

Nonetheless, there are still many sincere souls that have been deceived and are eager to receive the light in order to take their stand for the Lord. Therefore, we ask for your generous financial help in order to perform this extension so greatly needed and be better prepared to reach these souls.

Many from abroad and from non-metropolitan France have already helped in this endeavor. Here we have several brethren from the French overseas territories, as well as Romania, Brazil, Portugal, Congo, Moldova and various other nationalities. This cultural diversity is a real blessing because it allows us to deepen our faith, making it more solid on the fundamental biblical principles, beyond the cultural traditions that are often hard to break and have the potential to distort the message. Shall not the Everlasting Gospel be preached "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6)? Together, let us make this a reality!

The French Field thanks you in advance.

The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14, 15).

“There was no display of arms, no rending of prison doors; but the healing of the sick, the preaching of the gospel, the uplifting of men’s souls, testified to Christ’s mission.”—*Education*, p. 157.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 109–113.

Sunday

September 27

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

a. How does Mark open his account of the life of Christ? What does he immediately acknowledge about Jesus? Mark 1:1.

b. Explain what the “gospel” is. Romans 1:16.

“[God’s] mercy and goodness is wholly undeserved. 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 SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1071.

“There is no defect in God’s plan for the salvation of men. If the gospel is not to every soul the power of God unto salvation, it is not because the gospel is at fault, but because men are not practical believers, practical receivers of the grace and righteousness of Christ. . . . The professed believers do not take Christ as their personal Saviour, but follow Jesus a great way off.”—*This Day With God*, p. 18.

2. THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST

- a. What was the work of John the Baptist? Mark 1:2; Luke 1:17.
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“In every stage of this earth’s history God has had His agencies to carry forward His work, which must be done in His appointed way. John the Baptist had a special work, for which he was born and to which he was appointed—the work of preparing the way of the Lord. . . . His wilderness ministry was a most striking, literal fulfillment of prophecy.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1115.

“In John the Baptist the Lord raised up for Himself a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord. He was to bear to the world an unflinching testimony in reproof and denouncing sin.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 147.

“Our work of heralding the second coming of Christ is similar to that of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ at His first advent. We are to proclaim to the world the message, ‘The great day of the Lord is near.’ ‘Prepare to meet thy God.’ We are to do much more than we have yet done.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 201.

- b. What was John’s message, and who came to hear him? Mark 1:3–5.
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- c. To whom did John direct the people? How was John’s work different from that of the coming Messiah? Verses 6–8.
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“John informed his disciples that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world. As his work was closing, he taught his disciples to look to Jesus, and follow Him as the Great Teacher. John’s life was sorrowful and self-denying. He heralded the first advent of Christ, but was not permitted to witness His miracles, and enjoy the power manifested by Him. When Jesus should establish Himself as a teacher, John knew that he himself must die. His voice was seldom heard, except in the wilderness. His life was lonely. He did not cling to his father’s family, to enjoy their society, but left them in order to fulfill his mission. Multitudes left the busy cities and villages and flocked to the wilderness to hear the words of the wonderful prophet. John laid the ax to the root of the tree. He reproofed sin, fearless of consequences, and prepared the way for the Lamb of God.”—*Early Writings*, p. 154.

3. THE SAVIOUR IS BAPTIZED

- a. For what reason did Jesus come to see John? Mark 1:9.
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“When Jesus came to be baptized, John recognized in Him a purity of character that he had never before perceived in any man. . . . Never had he come in contact with a human being from whom there breathed an influence so divine. All this was in harmony with what had been revealed to John regarding the Messiah. Yet he shrank from granting the request of Jesus. How could he, a sinner, baptize the Sinless One? And why should He who needed no repentance submit to a rite that was a confession of guilt to be washed away?

“As Jesus asked for baptism, John drew back, exclaiming, ‘I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?’ With firm yet gentle authority, Jesus answered, ‘Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.’ And John, yielding, led the Saviour down into the Jordan, and buried Him beneath the water.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 110, 111.

- b. How did the Holy Spirit manifest Himself at Jesus’ baptism—and God the Father as well? Verse 10.
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“The Lord had promised to give John a sign whereby he might know who was the Messiah, and now as Jesus went up out of the water, the promised sign was given; for he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, hovered over the head of Christ, and a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ . . .

“Because of sin the earth had been cut off from heaven, but with His human arm Christ encircles the fallen race, and with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite, and earth is brought into favor with heaven, and man into communion with his God. The prayer of Christ in behalf of lost humanity cleaved its way through every shadow that Satan had cast between man and God, and left a clear channel of communication to the very throne of glory. The gates were left ajar, heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God, in the form of a dove, encircled the head of Christ, and the voice of God was heard saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1078.

4. LED INTO THE WILDERNESS

- a. Where did Jesus go immediately after His baptism? Mark 1:12. Why?
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“Why was it that at the beginning of His public ministry Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted? . . . He went, not in His own behalf, but in our behalf; to overcome for us. . . . He was to be tried and tested as a representative of the race. He was to meet the foe in personal encounter, to overthrow him who claimed to be the head of the kingdoms of the world. . . .

“Our Saviour withstood on every point the test of temptation, and in this way He has made it possible for man to overcome.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 32.

“When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 114.

- b. As Jesus was in the wilderness, with what did He have to contend? How did God help Him? Verse 13.
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“Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 132.

- c. How does God promise to help us in our times of need? Psalms 91:11; 34:7.
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“[God’s] angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.”—*My Life Today*, p. 302.

5. EXPANDING ON THE MESSAGE OF JOHN

- a. After John had accomplished his mission, what message did Jesus begin to preach—and why? Mark 1:14, 15.

“The gospel message, as given by the Saviour Himself, was based on the prophecies. The ‘time’ which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. . . . ‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks’ Daniel 9:25, sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (see Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9, margin), went into effect in the autumn of B.C. 457. From this time four hundred and eighty-three years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. According to the prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A.D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed, ‘The time is fulfilled.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 233.

“Christ Himself was the originator of the Jewish system, the very foundation of the costly temple, the antitype to whom all the sacrificial services pointed. The Jews had watched with apparent anxiety for the coming of Christ. The scribes, who were learned in the law and acquainted with the declarations of the prophets regarding His coming, knew from prophetic history that the time of looking and waiting for His advent to the world had expired.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 35.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When does God pardon us? How complete is this pardon?
2. What was the special work of John the Baptist? What is our work today?
3. What happened at Jesus’ baptism? Why was this significant?
4. How did Christ overcome for us during His experience in the wilderness? What does this mean?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said that the time was fulfilled? To what time was He referring?

A Divine Teacher

“Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:2).

“Jesus, the divine Teacher . . . assumed human nature for no other purpose than to display to men the mercy, the love, and the goodness of God in providing for the salvation and happiness of His creatures. It was for this end that He died. . . . Daily He exhibited before them, in works of blessing to man, how great was His tenderness and love to the fallen race. His heart was a fountain of inexhaustible compassion, from which the longing heart could be supplied with the water of life.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 108, 109.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 342, 343, 427–431, 601–603.

Sunday

October 4

1. THE TEACHER AND HIS STUDENTS

a. How did the disciples address Jesus on numerous occasions? Mark 4:38; 9:38; 13:1.

b. How did Jesus acknowledge the use of this title? John 13:13.

c. For what purpose did Jesus do this? John 13:14, 15.

“Christ distinctly appropriated to Himself the right to authority and allegiance. ‘Ye call me Master and Lord,’ He said, ‘and ye say well; for so I am.’ ‘One is your Master, even Christ.’ Thus He maintained the dignity that belonged to His name, and the authority and power He possessed in heaven.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 37.

2. A MAN IN NEED SHOWS RESPECT

- a. **Who was Jairus, and how did he show respect to Jesus? Mark 5:22.**
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“[Jesus] remained by the seaside for a time, teaching and healing, and then repaired to the house of Levi-Matthew to meet the publicans at the feast. Here Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, found Him.

“This elder of the Jews came to Jesus in great distress, and cast himself at His feet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 342.

- b. **Why did Jairus come to see Jesus? How great was his faith? Mark 5:23.**
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“Jesus set out at once with the ruler for his home. Though the disciples had seen so many of His works of mercy, they were surprised at His compliance with the entreaty of the haughty rabbi; yet they accompanied their Master, and the people followed, eager and expectant.”—*Ibid.*

“Christ was on His way to the home of Jairus, the Jewish rabbi who had entreated Him to come and heal his daughter. The heartbroken petition, ‘My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed’ (Mark 5:23), had touched the tender, sympathetic heart of Christ, and He at once set out with the ruler for his home.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 59.

- c. **As Jesus was delayed in His journey to Jairus’ house, what occurred, and how did the messenger address Jesus? Mark 5:35.**
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“The ruler’s house was not far distant, but Jesus and His companions advanced slowly, for the crowd pressed Him on every side. The anxious father was impatient of delay; but Jesus, pitying the people, stopped now and then to relieve some suffering one, or to comfort a troubled heart.

“While they were still on the way, a messenger pressed through the crowd, bearing to Jairus the news that his daughter was dead, and it was useless to trouble the Master further. The word caught the ear of Jesus. ‘Fear not,’ He said; ‘believe only, and she shall be made whole.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 342, 343.

3. REVEALING HIS DIVINITY

- a. **Who was taken into Jairus' house when Jesus arrived? Why? Mark 5:37–40.**
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“Jairus pressed closer to the Saviour, and together they hurried to the ruler’s home. Already the hired mourners and flute players were there, filling the air with their clamor. The presence of the crowd, and the tumult jarred upon the spirit of Jesus. He tried to silence them, saying, ‘Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.’ They were indignant at the words of the Stranger. They had seen the child in the embrace of death, and they laughed Him to scorn. Requiring them all to leave the house, Jesus took with Him the father and mother of the maiden, and the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and together they entered the chamber of death.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 343.

- b. **What miracle confirmed the divinity of Christ? Verses 41, 42.**
-

“Jesus approached the bedside, and, taking the child’s hand in His own, He pronounced softly, in the familiar language of her home, the words, ‘Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.’

“Instantly a tremor passed through the unconscious form. The pulses of life beat again. The lips unclosed with a smile. The eyes opened widely as if from sleep, and the maiden gazed with wonder on the group beside her. She arose, and her parents clasped her in their arms, and wept for joy.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **What other instance do we have of Jesus performing a similar miracle? Luke 7:11–17.**
-

“The Saviour raised the dead to life. One of these was the widow’s son at Nain. The people were carrying him to the grave, when they met Jesus. He took the young man by the hand, lifted him up, and gave him alive to his mother. Then the company went back to their homes with shouts of rejoicing and praise to God.”—*The Story of Jesus*, p. 79.

4. THE CROWD ACKNOWLEDGES HIM

- a. How did one person from the crowd address Jesus? What was his great need? Mark 9:17, 18.
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- b. How did Jesus show the necessity of having faith, and what was the father's response? Verses 19–24.
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“The father told the story of long years of suffering, and then, as if he could endure no more, exclaimed, ‘If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.’ ‘If Thou canst!’ Even now the father questioned the power of Christ.

“Jesus answers, ‘If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.’ There is no lack of power on the part of Christ; the healing of the son depends upon the father’s faith.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 428.

“It is faith that connects us with heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.’ John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord, I believe; help *Thou* mine unbelief.’ You can never perish while you do this—never.”—*Ibid.*, p. 429.

- c. How did Jesus show that He truly was a divine teacher? Verses 25–27.
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“Jesus turns to the suffering one, and says, ‘Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.’ There is a cry, an agonized struggle. The demon, in passing, seems about to rend the life from his victim. Then the boy lies motionless, and apparently lifeless. The multitude whisper, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus takes him by the hand, and lifting him up, presents him, in perfect soundness of mind and body, to his father. Father and son praise the name of their Deliverer. The multitude are ‘amazed at the mighty power of God,’ while the scribes, defeated and crestfallen, turn sullenly away.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 428, 429.

5. HIS ENEMIES ARE AWED

- a. How did even Jesus' enemies address Him as they pretended to be His followers? What did they ask Him? Mark 12:13, 14.

"The Pharisees had ever chafed under the exaction of tribute by the Romans. The payment of tribute they held to be contrary to the law of God. Now they saw opportunity to lay a snare for Jesus. The spies came to Him, and with apparent sincerity, as though desiring to know their duty, said, 'Master, we know that Thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest Thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?' "—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 601.

- b. How did Jesus confound their trickery? What was their response? Verses 15–17.

"The spies had expected Jesus to answer their question directly, in one way or the other. . . . Now they felt themselves baffled and defeated. Their plans were disarranged. The summary manner in which their question had been settled left them nothing further to say.

"Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God."—*Ibid.*, p. 602.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why was it right for the people to refer to Jesus as "Master"?
2. How did a haughty rabbi show respect to Jesus? Why did he do this?
3. What did the miracle with Jairus' daughter reveal about Jesus?
4. When Jesus cast out the demons from the boy, what was the reaction of the family? What was the reaction of the scribes? Why?
5. How did Jesus baffle the spies who were sent to trap Him?

A Worker of Miracles

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” (John 6:14).

“When Jesus revealed His divinity by His mighty miracles, when He healed the sick and raised the dead, the people had inquired among themselves, ‘Is not this the Son of David?’ . . . But many who called Jesus the Son of David did not recognize His divinity. They did not understand that the Son of David was also the Son of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 608, 609.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 334–337, 364–371.

Sunday

October 11

1. MANY ARE HEALED

- a. How did the people respond to the healing work of Jesus? Mark 1:32, 33.

“For fear of the rabbis the people dared not come for healing until the sun was set. Then from the homes, the shops, the market places, the inhabitants of the city pressed toward the humble dwelling that sheltered Jesus. The sick were brought upon litters, they came leaning upon staffs, or, supported by friends, they tottered feebly into the Saviour’s presence.

“Hour after hour they came and went; for none could know whether tomorrow would find the Healer still among them. Never before had Capernaum witnessed a day like this. The air was filled with the voice of triumph and shouts of deliverance.

“Not until the last sufferer had been relieved did Jesus cease His work. It was far into the night when the multitude departed and silence settled down upon the home of Simon. The long, exciting day was past, and Jesus sought rest. But while the city was wrapped in slumber, the Saviour, ‘rising up a great while before day,’ ‘went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.’ Mark 1:35.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 29, 30.

2. THE PEOPLE FLOCK TO JESUS

- a. When, on another occasion, Jesus arrived by ship to Gennesaret, what happened? Mark 6:53–55.
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“[Jesus] had arrived at Gennesaret, after an absence of but one day. As soon as it was known that He had landed, the people ‘ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was.’ Mark 6:55.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 384.

- b. How desperate were the sick to see Jesus? How was their faith rewarded? Verse 56.
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- c. At another time, who else was healed in the same way? Mark 5:25–34. What can we learn from this example of faith?
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“When the woman reached forth her hand and touched the hem of His garment, she thought this stealthy touch would not be known by anyone; but Christ recognized that touch and responded to her faith by His healing power. She realized in a moment that she was made whole, and the Lord Jesus would not let such faith pass unnoticed.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 108.

“The Saviour could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng. Such trust should not be passed without comment. He would speak to the humble woman words of comfort that would be to her a wellspring of joy,—words that would be a blessing to His followers to the close of time.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 344.

“The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. This faith works by love and purifies the soul. It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God’s commandments; for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 334.

3. THE DISCIPLES ARE SENT TO HELP

- a. As the work of Jesus grew, what plan did He implement? Mark 6:7–11.
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“In order for the work to be carried with efficiency, the Lord sent forth His disciples forward two and two.”—*Life Sketches*, p. 302.

“There is need of two working together; for one can encourage the other, and they can counsel, pray, and search the Bible together. In this they may get a broader light upon the truth; for one will see one phase, and the other another phase of the truth. If they are erring, they can correct one another in speech and attitude, so that the truth may not be lightly esteemed because of the defects of its advocates.”—*Evangelism*, p. 74.

“The presentation of the truth, in love and simplicity, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour. By songs of praise to God, humble, heartfelt prayers, and a simple presentation of Bible truth in the family circle, many will be reached.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 202.

- b. As the disciples went out, how did they combine preaching with healing? Verses 12, 13. How are we to work in the same manner today?
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“Christ, the great Medical Missionary, is our example. . . . He healed the sick and preached the gospel. In His service, healing and teaching were linked closely together. Today they are not to be separated.”—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 395, 396.

“The life of Christ and His ministry to the afflicted are inseparably connected. From the light that has been given me, I know that an intimate relationship should ever exist between the medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. They are bound together in sacred union as one work, and are never to be divorced. The principles of heaven are to be adopted and practiced by those who claim to walk in the Saviour’s footsteps. By His example He has shown us that medical missionary work is not to take the place of the preaching of the gospel, but is to be bound up with it. Christ gave a perfect representation of true godliness by combining the work of a physician and a minister, ministering to the needs of both body and soul, healing physical disease, and then speaking words that brought peace to the troubled heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 528.

4. EVEN THE ELEMENTS OBEY

- a. What happened as the disciples went with Jesus across the sea in a small boat? Mark 4:35–37.
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“The evening had been calm and pleasant, and quiet rested upon the lake; but suddenly darkness overspread the sky, the wind swept wildly down the mountain gorges along the eastern shore, and a fierce tempest burst upon the lake.

“The sun had set, and the blackness of night settled down upon the stormy sea. The waves, lashed into fury by the howling winds, dashed fiercely over the disciples’ boat, and threatened to engulf it. Those hardy fishermen . . . were helpless in the grasp of the tempest, and hope failed them as they saw that their boat was filling.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 334.

- b. Where was Jesus in the storm, and how did He react? Verses 38–40.
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“Suddenly a flash of lightning pierces the darkness, and they see Jesus lying asleep, undisturbed by the tumult. In amazement and despair they exclaim, ‘Master, carest Thou not that we perish?’ . . .

“Their cry arouses Jesus. As the lightning’s glare reveals Him, they see the peace of heaven in His face; they read in His glance self-forgetful, tender love, and, their hearts turning to Him, cry, ‘Lord, save us: we perish.’

“Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded. As the disciples grasp their oars to make a last effort, Jesus rises. He stands in the midst of His disciples, while the tempest rages, the waves break over them, and the lightning illuminates His countenance. He lifts His hand, so often employed in deeds of mercy, and says to the angry sea, ‘Peace, be still.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 334, 335.

- c. What was the reaction of the disciples to this miracle? Verse 41.
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“The storm ceases. The billows sink to rest. The clouds roll away, and the stars shine forth. The boat rests upon a quiet sea. Then turning to His disciples, Jesus asks sorrowfully, ‘Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?’ Mark 4:40, R.V.

“A hush fell upon the disciples. Even Peter did not attempt to express the awe that filled his heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 335.

5. JESUS PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS

- a. What miracle showed the sympathy of Jesus toward our material needs? Mark 6:35–44.

“He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual need. The people were weary and faint. There were mothers with babes in their arms, and little children clinging to their skirts. Many had been standing for hours. . . .

“The simple food passed round by the hands of the disciples contained a whole treasure of lessons. It was humble fare that had been provided; the fishes and barley loaves were the daily food of the fisher folk about the Sea of Galilee . . . food prepared merely for the gratification of appetite would have conveyed no lesson for their good.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 365–367.

- b. What assurance do we have of God’s ability to provide for us today? **Philippians 4:19.**

“God knows our wants, and has provided for them. The Lord has a treasure house of supplies for His children, and can give them what they need under all circumstances. Then why do we not trust Him? He has made precious promises to His children on condition of faithful obedience to His precepts. There is not a burden but He can remove, no darkness but He can dispel, no weakness but He can change to power, no fears but He can calm, no worthy aspiration but He can guide and justify.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 224.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did Jesus cease His day’s work of healing?
2. How will healing faith manifest itself?
3. Why is it more efficient to have two working together than one alone?
4. How did Jesus show control over the elements of nature?
5. Why did Jesus provide the people only simple food?

Healing the Mind

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:2, 3).

“The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart’s action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul.”—*Education*, p. 99.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 267–271.

Sunday

October 18

1. JESUS SEES A PERSON IN NEED

- a. As Jesus went to Capernaum and the news spread, what happened? Mark 2:1, 2. Who also sought healing, and how did he approach Jesus? Verse 3.

“This paralytic had lost all hope of recovery. His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse. He had long before appealed to the Pharisees and doctors, hoping for relief from mental suffering and physical pain. But they coldly pronounced him incurable, and abandoned him to the wrath of God. The Pharisees regarded affliction as an evidence of divine displeasure, and they held themselves aloof from the sick and the needy. Yet often these very ones who exalted themselves as holy were more guilty than the sufferers they condemned.

“The palsied man was entirely helpless, and, seeing no prospect of aid from any quarter, he had sunk into despair. Then he heard of the wonderful works of Jesus. He was told that others as sinful and helpless as he had been healed; even lepers had been cleansed. And the friends who reported these things encouraged him to believe that he too might be cured if he could be carried to Jesus. But his hope fell when he remembered how the disease had been brought upon him. He feared that the pure Physician would not tolerate him in His presence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.

2. FRIENDS HELP THE SICK

- a. As the crowd surrounded Jesus, what did the sick man's friends do? Mark 2:4. What lessons can we learn from their persistence?
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“Again and again the bearers of the paralytic tried to push their way through the crowd, but in vain. The sick man looked about him in unutterable anguish. When the longed-for help was so near, how could he relinquish hope? At his suggestion his friends bore him to the top of the house and, breaking up the roof, let him down at the feet of Jesus. The discourse was interrupted. The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance, and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. He understood the case; He had drawn to Himself that perplexed and doubting spirit. While the paralytic was yet at home, the Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience. When he repented of his sins, and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the life-giving mercies of the Saviour had first blessed his longing heart. Jesus had watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a belief that He was the sinner's only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into His presence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.

“Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 149.

- b. What parable of Christ illustrates this virtue? Luke 11:5–10.
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“Sometimes answers to our prayers come immediately; sometimes we have to wait patiently and continue earnestly to plead for the things that we need, our cases being illustrated by the case of the importunate solicitor for bread. ‘Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight,’ etc. This lesson means more than we can imagine. We are to keep on asking, even if we do not realize the immediate response to our prayers. ‘I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.’ Luke 11:9, 10.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 380.

3. JESUS SPEAKS HEALING TO THE MIND

a. Upon seeing this sick man, what did Jesus say? Mark 2:5.

“Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer’s ear, the Saviour said, ‘Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.’

“The burden of despair rolls from the sick man’s soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed! the guilty sinner is pardoned!

“In simple faith he accepted the words of Jesus as the boon of new life. He urged no further request, but lay in blissful silence, too happy for words. The light of heaven irradiated his countenance, and the people looked with awe upon the scene.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.

b. How did the scribes react to these words? Verses 6, 7.

“The rabbis had waited anxiously to see what disposition Christ would make of this case. They recollected how the man had appealed to them for help, and they had refused him hope or sympathy. Not satisfied with this, they had declared that he was suffering the curse of God for his sins. . . . They marked the interest with which all were watching the scene, and they felt a terrible fear of losing their own influence over the people. . . .

“Jesus had declared that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven. The Pharisees caught at these words as blasphemy, and conceived that they could present this as a sin worthy of death. They said in their hearts, ‘He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but One, even God?’ Mark 2:7, R. V.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 268, 269.

c. How did Jesus respond to their doubts? Verses 8–11.

“Fixing His glance upon them, beneath which they cowered, and drew back, Jesus said, ‘Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,’ He said, turning to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.’ ”—*Ibid.* p. 269.

4. GOD’S HEALING, SAVING POWER

- a. **How did the paralytic respond to Jesus’ command to walk? Mark 2:12 (first part).**

“Then he who had been borne on a litter to Jesus rises to his feet with the elasticity and strength of youth. The life-giving blood bounds through his veins. Every organ of his body springs into sudden activity. The glow of health succeeds the pallor of approaching death.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 269.

- b. **What was the reaction of the people? Verse 12 (second part).**

“The effect produced upon the people by the healing of the paralytic was as if heaven had opened, and revealed the glories of the better world. As the man who had been cured passed through the multitude, blessing God at every step, and bearing his burden as if it were a feather’s weight, the people fell back to give him room, and with awe-stricken faces gazed upon him, whispering softly among themselves, ‘We have seen strange things today.’

“The Pharisees were dumb with amazement and overwhelmed with defeat. . . . They were disconcerted and abashed, recognizing, but not confessing, the presence of a superior being. The stronger the evidence that Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, the more firmly they entrenched themselves in unbelief.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 270, 271.

- c. **What method did God use in creation? Psalms 148:5; 33:6, 9; Genesis 1:3. What does He use in redemption? How does this relate to the paralytic?**

“It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic. And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart. He who at the creation ‘spake, and it was,’ who ‘commanded, and it stood fast,’ (Psalm 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart. Christ bade the paralytic arise and walk, ‘that ye may know,’ He said, ‘that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270.

5. HEALING THROUGH FORGIVENESS

- a. What effect does sin have upon us, and what do we need? Psalms 38:4; 41:4; Acts 10:38.
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- b. What accompanies physical healing? Psalm 103:2, 3. What can we learn from the story of the paralytic?
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“The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. The spiritual healing was followed by physical restoration. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body.

“Jesus came to ‘destroy the works of the devil.’ ‘In Him was life,’ and He says, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ He is ‘a quickening spirit.’ 1 John 3:8; John 1:4; 10:10; 1 Corinthians 15:45. And He still has the same life-giving power as when on earth He healed the sick, and spoke forgiveness to the sinner. He ‘forgiveth all thine iniquities,’ He ‘healeth all thy diseases.’ Psalm 103:3”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 270.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the Pharisees regard the sick and the needy? What was the reality of the situation?
2. When did the paralytic repent of his sins? What accompanied his repentance?
3. How did Jesus take away this man’s mental burden, and what was the result?
4. How is the way God heals the body similar to the way He renews the mind?
5. For what kind of healing are many people in the world today longing?

The Authority of Christ

“And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Mark 1:11).

“Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal. John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognized the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world’s Redeemer whom he had baptized.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 112.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 593–600.

Sunday

October 25

1. GOD ACKNOWLEDGES HIS SON

a. How did the Father acknowledge His Son at His baptism? Mark 1:11.

“Christ’s prayer on the banks of the Jordan includes everyone who will believe in Him. The promise that you are accepted in the Beloved comes to you. Hold it with the grip of unyielding faith. God said, ‘This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased.*’ This means that through the dark shadow which Satan has thrown athwart your pathway Christ has cleaved the way for you to the throne of the infinite God. He has laid hold of almighty power, and you are accepted in the Beloved.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 109.

“The prayer of Christ in behalf of lost humanity cleaved its way through every shadow that Satan had cast between man and God, and left a clear channel of communication to the very throne of glory. . . .

“The voice of God was heard in answer to the petition of Christ, and this tells the sinner that his prayer will find a lodgment at the throne of the Father. The Holy Spirit will be given to those who seek for its power and grace, and will help our infirmities when we would have audience with God.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 156.

2. CHRIST REVEALS HIS DIVINITY

- a. **What happened when Jesus took three of His disciples up onto a high mountain, and what was their reaction? Mark 9:1–6.**
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“While [Jesus] is bowed in lowliness upon the stony ground, suddenly the heavens open, the golden gates of the city of God are thrown wide, and holy radiance descends upon the mount, enshrouding the Saviour’s form. Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above. Arising from His prostrate position, Christ stands in godlike majesty. The soul agony is gone. His countenance now shines ‘as the sun,’ and His garments are ‘white as the light.’

“The disciples, awaking, behold the flood of glory that illuminates the mount. In fear and amazement they gaze upon the radiant form of their Master. As they become able to endure the wondrous light, they see that Jesus is not alone.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 421.

- b. **How did God make Himself known at this time? Verse 7.**
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“As they beheld the cloud of glory, brighter than that which went before the tribes of Israel in the wilderness; as they heard the voice of God speak in awful majesty that caused the mountain to tremble, the disciples fell smitten to the earth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 425.

- c. **When the disciples were again alone with Jesus, how did He caution them? Why? Verses 8, 9.**
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“The revelation made to the disciples was to be pondered in their own hearts, not to be published abroad. To relate it to the multitudes would excite only ridicule or idle wonder. And even the nine apostles would not understand the scene until after Christ had risen from the dead. How slow of comprehension even the three favored disciples were, is seen in the fact that notwithstanding all that Christ had said of what was before Him, they queried among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean. Yet they asked no explanation from Jesus.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 426, 427.

3. NO CLAIM TO DIVINE AUTHORITY

- a. **What question was put to Jesus by the priests and scribes in order to entrap Him? Mark 11:27, 28.**
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“The rulers had before them the evidences of His Messiahship. They now decided to demand no sign of His authority, but to draw out some admission or declaration by which He might be condemned. . . .

“They expected Him to claim that His authority was from God. Such an assertion they intended to deny.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 593.

- b. **Tell the response of Jesus and then the answer of the priests and scribes. Verses 29–33 (first part).**
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“The priests saw that they were in a dilemma from which no sophistry could extricate them. If they said that John’s baptism was from heaven, their inconsistency would be made apparent. Christ would say, Why have ye not then believed on him? John had testified of Christ, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. If the priests believed John’s testimony, how could they deny the Messiahship of Christ? If they declared their real belief, that John’s ministry was of men, they would bring upon themselves a storm of indignation; for the people believed John to be a prophet.

“With intense interest the multitude awaited the decision. They knew that the priests had professed to accept the ministry of John, and they expected them to acknowledge without a question that he was sent from God. But after conferring secretly together, the priests decided not to commit themselves. Hypocritically professing ignorance, they said, ‘We cannot tell.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 593, 594.

- c. **Did Jesus tell them by whose authority He worked? Verse 33 (last part). Why or why not?**
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“Scribes, priests, and rulers were all silenced. Baffled and disappointed, they stood with lowering brows, not daring to press further questions upon Christ. By their cowardice and indecision they had in a great measure forfeited the respect of the people, who now stood by, amused to see these proud, self-righteous men defeated.”—*Ibid.*, p. 594.

4. THE BASIS OF AUTHORITY

- a. As the Pharisees were displeased with Jesus, what did they command certain officers to do, and what was the result? John 7:44.
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- b. Why did the officers not follow their orders? Verses 45, 46.
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“The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this man. But the reason of this was that never man lived like this man; for if he had not so lived, he could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure and holy, full of love and sympathy, beneficence and truth. There is eloquence beyond that of words, in the quiet, consistent life of a pure, true Christian.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 244.

- c. How did Jesus’ teaching compare with that of other teachers of His time? Mark 1:22. Why? Matthew 23:1–3.
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“What He taught, He lived. ‘I have given you an example,’ He said to His disciples; ‘that ye should do as I have done.’ ‘I have kept My Father’s commandments.’ John 13:15; 15:10. This in His life, Christ’s words had perfect illustration and support. And more than this; what He taught, He was. His words were the expression, not only of His own life experience, but of His own character. Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth. It was this that gave His teaching, power.”—*Education*, pp. 78, 79.

“[Christ] did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character; that which will enlarge man’s capacity for knowing God, and increase his power to do good. He spoke of those truths that relate to the conduct of life and that unite man with eternity.

“Instead of directing the people to study men’s theories about God, His Word, or His works, He taught them to behold Him, as manifested in His works, in His Word, and by His providences. He brought their minds in contact with the mind of the Infinite. . . . Never before spoke one who had such power to awaken thought, to kindle aspiration, to arouse every capability of body, mind, and soul.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 177.

5. JESUS, THE CORNERSTONE

- a. What words of David were quoted by Christ? How does Jesus show His authority as the Cornerstone? Psalm 118:22, 23; Mark 12:10, 11.
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“Christ was the cornerstone of the Jewish economy, and of the whole plan of salvation. This foundation stone the Jewish builders, the priests and rulers of Israel, were now rejecting. The Saviour called their attention to the prophecies that would show them their danger. By every means in His power He sought to make plain to them the nature of the deed they were about to do.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 597.

- b. How is Jesus confirmed as the Cornerstone? Isaiah 28:16; Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 2:2.
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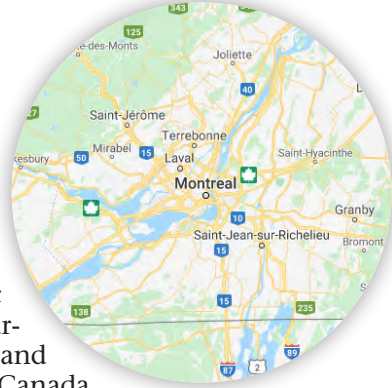
“In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone, and laid it Himself. He called it ‘a sure foundation.’ The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and griefs; it can endure them all. With perfect safety they may build upon it. Christ is a ‘tried stone.’ Those who trust in Him, He never disappoints. He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam’s guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 598, 599.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does God’s answer to Christ’s prayer at the Jordan mean to you?
2. What did the three disciples see and hear on the mountain with Christ?
3. How did Jesus respond when questioned regarding His authority to teach? Why?
4. What gave Jesus such authority when He spoke? What about us?
5. What further warning did Jesus give when He spoke of the Cornerstone? Why did He do this?

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Montreal

Canada is the second largest country in the world by area, occupying 9,984,670 square kilometers (3,855,100 square miles). Its population currently stands at about 37 million. Among the G7 countries, Canada has the largest demographic growth. It is a constitutional monarchy and a federation of ten provinces and three territories. Due to its history, Canada



has two official languages—English, spoken by the majority of Canadians, and French, a native tongue to about 20% of the population. A great majority of French native speakers live in the Province of Quebec. The seat of the provincial government is in Quebec City, but the economic hub of the province is the city of Montreal, the second largest French-speaking city in the world, with a population of over 4 million.

Due to the language barrier, the gospel work in Canada was mostly developed in its English-speaking part. However, since 2002, our church in Canada has leased various Protestant churches in Montreal, where we conduct regular Sabbath services in both French and English. We also offer cooking classes, Bible studies, distribute spiritual literature and reach the community by health services and personal witnessing. The Lord has blessed our efforts. The believers are strong in the faith and new souls are entering the fold. Many visitors regularly attend our church and several are being prepared for baptism. Our congregation reflects great ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, coming from countries such as China, Colombia, France, Haiti, Jamaica, United States, plus the native Canadians.

Our great need right now is for a house of worship that could also serve as a center for the French-speaking gospel work in the province of Quebec and beyond. Our local church members have already made generous donations and collected some funds, yet it is still far from sufficient to cover the cost of the building.

We pray that the Lord may impress your mind and heart with the awareness of our great need but also of the vast opportunities to reach souls in the French-speaking world. Please give generously when this special First Sabbath Offering is collected, so that one day a chapel may stand to God's glory in this part of the world. Thank you, and may God richly bless each gift and giver.

From brothers and sisters in the Canadian Field

Christ, the Servant of Men

“[Christ] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

“Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man’s necessity. He ‘took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,’ that He might minister to every need of humanity. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character.”—*Our Father Cares*, p. 284.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 17–22.

Sunday

November 1

1. A SELF-SACRIFICING LIFE

a. How far reaching was the ministry of Christ? Mark 2:2; 5:21, 24.

“Among the crowds that thronged about the Saviour were many who had spent their lives about the Sea of Galilee.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 147.

b. How pressed was He by the needs of others? Mark 3:20; Matthew 8:20.

“[Christ] devoted entire nights to prayer, [and] through the day He was thronged by great companies of people, and did not give Himself time so much as to eat.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 321.

“[Jesus’] life was one of constant self-sacrifice. He had no home in this world except as the kindness of friends provided for Him as a wayfarer. He came to live in our behalf the life of the poorest and to walk and work among the needy and the suffering. Unrecognized and un-honored, He walked in and out among the people for whom He had done so much.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 19.

2. CARING FOR OTHERS

- a. As the needs of the people were so pressing, what did Jesus do in order to provide rest for His disciples? Mark 6:31. Why?
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“Though time is short, and there is a great work to be done, the Lord is not pleased to have us so prolong our seasons of activity that there will not be time for periods of rest, for the study of the Bible, and for communion with God. All this is essential to fortify the soul, to place us in a position where we shall receive wisdom from God to employ our talents in the Master’s service to the highest account.

“When Jesus said the harvest was great and the laborers were few, He did not urge upon His disciples the necessity of ceaseless toil. . . . He tells His disciples that their strength has been severely tried, that they will be unfitted for future labor unless they rest awhile. . . . In the name of Jesus, economize your powers, that after being refreshed with rest, you may do more and better work.”—*My Life Today*, p. 133.

“It is not wise to be always under the strain of work and excitement, . . . for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the powers of mind and soul and body are overtaxed.

“Care needs to be exercised in regard to the regulation of hours for sleeping and laboring. We must take periods of rest, periods of recreation, periods for contemplation.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 233.

- b. When the people continued to follow them, what was Jesus’ response? How did He provide for their needs? Verses 34–44.
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“Jesus, precious Saviour, never seemed to become weary of the importunities of the sin-sick souls and the sick with all kinds of diseases. ‘And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them’ (Mark 6:34). This means a great deal to the suffering ones. He identified His interest with theirs. He shared their burdens. He felt their fears. He had yearning pity that was pain to the heart of Christ.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 47.

- c. After the people had been fed physically and spiritually, how did Jesus provide rest for Himself and His disciples? Verses 45, 46.
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3. THE PATH OF SERVICE

- a. What is involved in following Christ in the path of service? Mark 8:34.
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“Says Christ, the beloved Teacher: ‘Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ Yes, follow Him through evil as well as through good report. Follow Him in befriending the most needy and friendless. Follow Him in being forgetful of self, abundant in acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice to do others good; when reviled, reviling not again; manifesting love and compassion for the fallen race. He counted not His life dear, but gave it up for us all. Follow Him from the lowly manger to the cross. He was our example. He tells you that if you would be His disciple you must take the cross, the despised cross, and follow Him. Can ye drink of the cup? Can ye be baptized with the baptism?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 178.

- b. How does Jesus compare worldly gain with the price paid in serving Him? Verses 35–37.
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“What can be compared with the loss of a human soul? It is a question which every soul must determine for himself—whether to gain the treasures of eternal life or to lose all because of his neglect to make God and His righteousness his first and only business. Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, . . . looks with grief upon the large number of those who profess to be Christians who are not serving Him but themselves. They scarcely think of eternal realities, notwithstanding He calls their attention to the rich reward awaiting the faithful who will serve Him with their undivided affections. . . .

“He would have every individual sense his responsibility to so use his precious time here in this world that it will be fruitful daily in good works. This is the only worthy aim of every living mortal—to employ his God-given faculties with endless results in view.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 321.

- c. As we give ourselves wholly to God, to serve wherever He calls, of what does He assure us? Luke 22:35.
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4. FOLLOWING IN THE MASTER'S FOOTSTEPS

- a. What request was made concerning James and John, and what was Jesus' response? Mark 10:35–40.
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“In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained; they are the tokens of self-conquest through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 549.

- b. How did Jesus use this opportunity to compare worldly kingdoms to His own kingdom? Verses 41–44.
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“It is in a life of service only that true happiness is found. He who lives a useless, selfish life is miserable. He is dissatisfied with himself and with everyone else. The Lord disciplines His workers that they may be prepared to fill the places appointed them. Thus He desires to fit them to do more acceptable service. . . .

“There are many who are not satisfied to serve God cheerfully in the place that He has marked out for them or to do uncomplainingly the work that He has placed in their hands. It is right for us to be dissatisfied with the way in which we perform duty, but we are not to be dissatisfied with the duty itself, because we would rather do something else. In His providence God places before human beings service that will be as medicine to their diseased minds. Thus He seeks to lead them to put aside the selfish preference, which if cherished would disqualify them for the work He has for them.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 229.

- c. How did Jesus' own life testify that He was the greatest Servant of all? Verse 45.
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“Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far away from us. But instead of moving farther away, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain perfection. By a death of shame and suffering He paid our ransom. From the highest excellency He came, His divinity clothed with humanity, descending step by step to the lowest depths of humiliation. No line can measure the depth of His love.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 17.

5. THE MASTER SERVES HIS STUDENTS

- a. What did Jesus do for His disciples at the time of the Passover? John 13:3–5.
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“The disciples had just been disputing as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They could not agree. One would claim the honor for himself; another for himself. None of the disciples were in a proper frame of mind to comprehend the significance of coming events, or to appreciate the solemnity of the present occasion. They were not prepared to participate in the Passover Supper.

“Christ looked upon them sadly. Trials, He knew, were before them, and His great heart of love went out to them in tender pity and sympathy. As a manifestation of His love for them, He ‘took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.’ This was a great rebuke to them all.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 261.

- b. What lesson of service did He give them? Verses 12–16.
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“By the ordinance of humility we are taught an impressive lesson. Christ had shown to us the necessity of walking humbly before God, and of realizing what He has done for us by the gift of His Son. Christ knew that His disciples would never forget the lesson on humility given them at the Last Supper. In taking upon Himself the humblest form of service, He administered to the twelve the sternest rebuke that could have been given them.”—*Ibid.*

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some ways that Jesus put the needs of others above His own human needs.
2. How does Jesus care for His laborers today? What happens when we overtax ourselves?
3. What does it mean practically to follow Christ in self-denial?
4. How can we find true happiness? How should we react to the work God places in our hands?
5. How did Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper give His disciples a strong rebuke?

The Call to Absolute Commitment

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

“Christ first selected a few persons, and bade them follow Him. Then they went in search of their relatives and acquaintances and brought them to Christ. This is the way we are to labor. A few souls brought out and fully established on the truth will, like the first disciples, be laborers for others.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 245.

Suggested Reading: *Gospel Workers* (1915), pp. 111–116.

Sunday

November 8

1. ACCEPTING THE CALL

- a. **Whom did Jesus first call to follow Him, and what was their response? Mark 1:16–18.**

“When Jesus bade Peter and his companions follow Him, they immediately left their boats and nets. Some of these disciples had friends dependent on them for support; but when they received the Saviour’s invitation, they did not hesitate, inquiring, How shall I live, and sustain my family? They were obedient to the call; and when afterward Jesus asked them, ‘What I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?’ they could answer, ‘Nothing.’ [Luke 22:35.]”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 113, 114.

- b. **When Jesus called James and John, what were they doing? Why should we be inspired by how they responded to His call? Verses 19, 20.**

“God will call men from the plow and from the vineyard and will send them forth into His service, even as Christ called fishermen from their daily occupation. . . . These devoted servants of Christ will not seek the highest seat, but will follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice, and they will win souls to the Saviour.”—*Manuscript Releases*, no. 760, p. 11.

2. THE PRICE OF SERVICE

- a. **What would happen as the followers of Christ shared the gospel? Mark 13:9, 12. How will history repeat itself?**
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“In the history of prophets and apostles, are many noble examples of loyalty to God. Christ’s witnesses have endured imprisonment, torture, and death itself, rather than break God’s commands. The record left by Peter and John is as heroic as any in the gospel dispensation. As they stood for the second time before the men who seemed bent on their destruction, no fear or hesitation could be discerned in their words or attitude.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 81.

“The time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name’s sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith.”—*Maranatha*, p. 252.

- b. **When brought to testify before others, what assurance do we have? Mark 13:11; Matthew 10:19.**
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“The servants of Christ are to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial for their faith. Their preparation is to be made day by day, in treasuring up in their hearts the precious truths of God’s Word, in feeding upon the teaching of Christ, and through prayer strengthening their faith; then, when brought into trial, the Holy Spirit will bring to their remembrance the very truths that will reach the hearts of those who shall come to hear. God will flash the knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures, into their memory at the very time when it is needed.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 356.

- c. **Although we shall be hated of all men for Christ’s sake, what promise has He given to all His followers? Mark 13:13.**
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“The work of salvation is not child’s play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. 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.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 101, 102.

3. THE GREATEST SERVANT

- a. **What price was Jesus soon to pay for the sins of the world? Mark 9:31; 10:33, 34.**
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“On the journey through Galilee, Christ had again tried to prepare the minds of His disciples for the scenes before Him. He told them that He was to go up to Jerusalem to be put to death and to rise again. And He added the strange and solemn announcement that He was to be betrayed into the hands of His enemies.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 432.

- b. **What was the disciples’ reaction when Jesus told them of His future sufferings? Mark 9:32; 10:32.**
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“The disciples did not even now comprehend His words. Although the shadow of a great sorrow fell upon them, a spirit of rivalry found a place in their hearts. They disputed among themselves which should be accounted greatest in the kingdom.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **How did they show that they still did not understand the nature of His kingdom? Mark 9:33–35.**
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“Although [Christ] had spoken so plainly of what awaited Him, His mention of the fact that He was soon to go to Jerusalem again kindled their hope that the kingdom was about to be set up. This had led to questioning as to who should fill the highest offices. . . .

“The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them, ‘If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.’ There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ’s kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. But the real cause lay deeper. . . . The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die.”—*Ibid.*, p. 435.

4. THE BLESSINGS OF SERVICE

- a. What comment of Peter's showed the nature of the commitment the disciples had made? Mark 10:28.
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"Jesus called them to forsake their former life, and unite their interests with His. Peter had accepted the call. Upon reaching the shore, Jesus bade the three other disciples, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left all, and followed Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 249.

- b. What does God provide for those who sacrifice all for Him? Verses 29, 30.
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"Before asking them to leave their nets and fishing boats, Jesus had given them the assurance that God would supply their needs. The use of Peter's boat for the work of the gospel had been richly repaid. He who is 'rich unto all that call upon Him,' has said, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.' Romans 10:12; Luke 6:38. In this measure He had rewarded the disciple's service. And every sacrifice that is made in His ministry will be recompensed according to 'the exceeding riches of His grace.' Ephesians 3:20; 2:7."—*Ibid.*, p. 249.

"If we live to do others good and to glorify God, we shall not be considerate of ourselves, but shall seek to be of use in the world, blessing humanity, and we shall receive the blessing of 'Well done' from the lips of the Master. . . .

"I have seen that those who live for a purpose, seeking to benefit and bless their fellow men and to honor and glorify their Redeemer, are the truly happy ones on the earth, while the man who is restless, discontented, and seeking this and testing that, hoping to find happiness, is always complaining of disappointment. He is always in want, never satisfied, because he lives for himself alone. Let it be your aim to do good, to act your part in life faithfully."—*This Day with God*, p. 280.

"God does not promise us ease, honor, or wealth in His service; but He assures us that all needed blessings will be ours, with 'persecutions,' and in the world to come 'life everlasting.' Nothing less than entire consecration to His service will Christ accept. This is the lesson which every one of us must learn."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 42.

5. THE CALL TO US TODAY

- a. What should have first priority in our life today no matter what our specific calling in life may be? Matthew 6:33.
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“We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure, that would hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 99.

- b. What should motivate us? How? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.
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“When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1100, 1101.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did the disciples react when called to work for the Master? How does God provide for His workers today?
2. What can we do each day in order to prepare ourselves to be witnesses for God? How will He assist us in our time of need?
3. As Jesus was trying to prepare the disciples for the scenes of His suffering, what was going on among them? Why?
4. Before Jesus asked the disciples to leave their occupations, what assurance did He give them? How? What can we learn from this?
5. What should be the criteria for us when deciding which career to follow or in what activity to engage?

When Jesus Commanded Silence

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 (last part)).

“The Saviour never went to extremes, never lost self-control, never violated the laws of good taste. He knew when to speak and when to keep silent.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 317.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 54–58, 67–70, 95–98.

Sunday

November 15

1. WHEN CASTING OUT DEMONS

- a. **What command did Jesus give to the unclean spirits? Mark 1:23–27; 3:11, 12. What did this reveal about His authority?**

“The attention of the people was diverted from Christ, and His words were unheeded. This was Satan’s purpose in leading his victim to the synagogue. But Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, ‘Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.’ . . .

“He who had conquered Satan in the wilderness of temptation was again brought face to face with His enemy. The demon exerted all his power to retain control of his victim. To lose ground here would be to give Jesus a victory. It seemed that the tortured man must lose his life in the struggle with the foe that had been the ruin of his manhood. But the Saviour spoke with authority, and set the captive free.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 255, 256.

- b. **How did Jesus show that He did not want to be associated with the demons in any way? Luke 4:41 (margin).**
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2. A COMMAND TO SOME WHO WERE HEALED

- a. **How did Jesus react to a man with leprosy, and what did He tell the man after He healed him? Mark 1:40–44. Why?**
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“Should the priests learn the facts concerning the healing of the leper, their hatred of Christ might lead them to render a dishonest sentence. Jesus desired that an impartial decision be secured. He therefore bids the man tell no one of the cure, but without delay present himself at the temple with an offering before any rumors concerning the miracle should be spread abroad. Before the priests could accept such an offering, they were required to examine the offerer and certify his complete recovery.

“This examination was made. The priests who had condemned the leper to banishment testified to his cure. The healed man was restored to his home and society. . . . Notwithstanding the caution of Jesus, he could no longer conceal the fact of his cure, and joyfully he went about proclaiming the power of the One who had made him whole.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 69, 70.

- b. **After healing Jairus’ daughter, what command did Jesus give afterwards? Mark 5:41–43; John 5:2, 3, 8, 9. Why was Jesus even reluctant to heal on another occasion?**
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“[Christ] longed to exercise His healing power and make every sufferer whole. But it was the Sabbath day. Multitudes were going to the temple for worship, and He knew that such an act of healing would so excite the prejudice of the Jews as to cut short His work.”—*Ibid.*, p. 81.

- c. **After Jesus healed the deaf and dumb man, what did He request, and what was the result? Mark 7:31–36.**
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“Looking up to heaven, [Jesus] sighed at thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer. At the word, ‘Be opened,’ the man’s speech was restored, and, disregarding the command to tell no man, he published abroad the story of his cure.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 404.

3. A CONTRASTING COMMAND TO OTHERS

- a. **What was the condition of the man (or men, as described in other gospels) in the country of the Gadarenes? Mark 5:1–5.**
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“The disciples and their companions flee in terror; but presently they notice that Jesus is not with them, and they turn to look for Him. He is standing where they left Him. He who stilled the tempest, who has before met Satan and conquered him, does not flee before these demons. When the men, gnashing their teeth and foaming at the mouth, approach Him, Jesus raises that hand which has beckoned the waves to rest, and the men can come no nearer. They stand before Him, raging but helpless.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 95, 96.

- b. **Describe the man after Jesus had healed him of the unclean spirits. Verse 15.**
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“The evil spirits are forced to release their victims, and a wonderful change comes over the demoniacs. Light shines into their minds. Their eyes beam with intelligence. The countenances so long deformed into the image of Satan become suddenly mild, the bloodstained hands are quiet, and the men lift their voices in praise to God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 97.

- c. **Although Jesus at times told those who were healed to be silent, what did He tell the man healed of the unclean spirit? Verse 19. Why?**
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“[The healed demoniacs] could not instruct the people as the disciples who had been daily with Christ were able to do. . . . [But] they could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. . . . This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 340.

“He who has felt the power of the grace of Christ has a story to tell. . . . Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 230.

4. WHEN SOME DID NOT KEEP SILENT

- a. **What happened when those whom Jesus requested to keep silent did the opposite? Mark 1:45; 3:9; 5:24; 6:31.**
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“[The healed leper’s] act in blazing abroad the matter resulted in hindering the Saviour’s work. It caused the people to flock to Him in such multitudes that He was forced for a time to cease His labors.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 265.

- b. **When the crowds became quite large, what did Jesus do? Why? Mark 6:45, 46; Matthew 14:23.**
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“All day [Jesus] ministered to the throngs that came to Him, and at eventide, or in the early morning, He went away to the sanctuary of the mountains for communion with His Father.

“Often His incessant labor and the conflict with the enmity and false teaching of the rabbis left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and brothers, and even His disciples, feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the freshness and life and power that seemed to pervade His whole being. From hours spent alone with God He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 55, 56.

“In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to turn aside from ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As the throng that had followed Him depart, He goes into the mountains, and there, alone with God, pours out His soul in prayer for these suffering, sinful, needy ones.”—*Ibid.*, p. 58.

- c. **Why else did Jesus at times not want His fame published everywhere? John 7:6, 30; 8:20.**
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“At the time of the Feast of Tabernacles [Christ’s] journey to Jerusalem was made swiftly and secretly. When urged by His brothers to present Himself publicly as the Messiah, His answer was, ‘My time is not yet come.’ John 7:6. He made His way to Jerusalem unobserved, and entered the city unannounced, and unhonored by the multitude.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 485.

5. WHEN WE SHOULD BE SILENT

- a. What does Solomon tell us about our speech? Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 (last part). How did Christ exemplify this advice, and how can we do the same?
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“Christ never erred in His judgment of men and of truth. He was never deceived by appearances. He never raised a question but what was clearly appropriate. He never gave an answer but what was fitting and right to the point. . . . Christ never went to extremes, never lost self-control or the balance of mind under any excitement. He never violated the law of good taste and discernment when to speak and when to keep silent.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 178.

“When any put questions that serve only to confuse the mind and sow the seeds of doubt, they should be advised to refrain from such questioning. We must learn when to speak and when to keep silent, learn to sow the seeds of faith, to impart light, not darkness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 69.

- b. Name one type of circumstance when it is appropriate to be silent. Proverbs 27:2.
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“Self-denial means . . . when you might praise yourself, to keep silent and let other lips praise you. Self-denial is to do good to others where inclination would lead you to serve and please yourself.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 521.

- c. How did Jesus exemplify this principle in His own life as the Son of man? John 8:50 (first part); 7:18.
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why didn't Christ allow the demons to speak?
2. Why did Jesus request that the leper not tell of his cure?
3. Why did Jesus give opposite instructions to the healed demoniac?
4. For what reasons did Jesus not want His fame spread everywhere?
5. When should we be silent regarding questions we may have? Why?

Who Accepts Jesus?

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me” (John 13:20).

“Those who receive Christ are melted and subdued by the manifestation of His love and His humiliation, suffering, and death in their behalf.”—*My Life Today*, p. 77.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 679–681.

Sunday

November 22

1. THE COMMON PEOPLE RECEIVE THE SAVIOUR

- a. Describe the attitude of many people toward Jesus and His miracles. Mark 7:37; 5:42 (second part).

“Never before spoke one who had such power to awaken thought, to kindle aspiration, to arouse every capability of body, mind, and soul.”—*Education*, p. 81.

- b. How did the common people respond to Jesus and His ministry? Mark 12:37 (last part). Why?

“In an unobtrusive way, from His very childhood, [Jesus] ministered to others, and because of this, when He began His public ministry, many heard Him gladly.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 350.

“Jesus’ manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar, and the common people heard Him gladly; for they could comprehend His words.”—*Christian Education*, p. 126.

2. RECEIVING THE WORD

- a. **What is represented by the seed in the parable of the sower? Mark 4:14, 15. Where is the seed sown?**
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“The seed is the word of God, and the soul who receives it, is said to be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which liveth and abideth forever. . . .

“The good seed of the word falls into the heart, and at once the first development of Christian experience is made manifest. This experience is likened to the tender blade, and to the young child. The blade is beautiful, and the child is attractive, but should there be no further development, we would look upon the plant as stunted, and the child as dwarfed. The young convert is to advance in knowledge, to grow in grace. Christ looks upon His children, and He is not ignorant as to how the seed is developing.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 27, 1893.

- b. **What are three evidences which show that the seed has been sown in a receptive heart? Verse 20; Luke 8:15.**
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“The good-ground hearer receives the word ‘not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God’ (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the word; for to him it is a living reality. He opens his understanding and his heart to receive it.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 59.

“The word of God often comes in collision with man’s hereditary and cultivated traits of character and his habits of life. But the good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its conditions and requirements. His habits, customs, and practices are brought into submission to God’s word.”—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

- c. **What do we show by whether or not we keep Christ’s words? What does Christ say about His own words? John 14:23, 24.**
-

“We shall be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. His character will be reproduced in our nature. Thus shall we bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit—‘some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.’ ”—*Ibid.*, p. 61.

3. FEARING THE SAVIOUR

- a. What was the disciples' reaction when in danger on the sea? How did they view Jesus afterwards? Mark 4:38–41.

“A hush fell upon the disciples. Even Peter did not attempt to express the awe that filled his heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 335.

- b. What did the chief priests feel about Jesus after He cleansed the temple the second time? What did they want to do next? Mark 11:18.

“Three years before, the rulers of the temple had been ashamed of their flight before the command of Jesus. They had since wondered at their own fears, and their unquestioning obedience to a single humble Man. They had felt that it was impossible for their undignified surrender to be repeated. Yet they were now more terrified than before, and in greater haste to obey His command. There were none who dared question His authority. Priests and traders fled from His presence, driving their cattle before them. . . .

“After a season the priests and rulers ventured back to the temple. When the panic had abated, they were seized with anxiety to know what would be the next movement of Jesus.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 591, 592.

“The Pharisees were utterly perplexed and disconcerted. One whom they could not intimidate was in command. Jesus had taken His position as guardian of the temple. Never before had He assumed such kingly authority. Never before had His words and works possessed so great power. He had done marvelous works throughout Jerusalem, but never before in a manner so solemn and impressive. In presence of the people who had witnessed His wonderful works, the priests and rulers dared not show Him open hostility. Though enraged and confounded by His answer, they were unable to accomplish anything further that day.”—*Ibid.*, p. 593.

- c. Describe the way in which God desires us to fear Him. Hebrews 12:28.

“In our speaking, our singing, and in all our spiritual exercises, we are to reveal that calmness and dignity and godly fear that actuates every true child of God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 373.

4. REJECTING JESUS, THE WORD

- a. What was Jesus' attitude toward the rich young ruler? What was the ruler's response? Mark 10:17–22.**

“Christ looked into the face of the young man, as if reading his life and searching his character. He loved him, and He hungered to give him that peace and grace and joy which would materially change his character.

“[Christ] longed to see in him a humble and contrite heart, conscious of the supreme love to be given to God, and hiding its lack in the perfection of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 519.

“[Jesus] had left everything for the salvation of man, and He entreated the young man to come and imitate His example, and assured him that he should have treasure in heaven. Did the heart of the young man leap with joy at this assurance that he should indeed have treasure in heaven? Oh, no! His earthly treasures were his idol; they eclipsed the value of the eternal inheritance.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 679.

- b. Name a common reason why people reject God's Word. John 8:47; 6:60.**

“[Some] cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities. Like the disciples who left Jesus, they are ready to say, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’ John 6:60.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 47, 48.

- c. What can make it difficult to accept the Word? Matthew 6:24.**

“A union with Christ . . . costs us something. . . . There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is, they try to attach themselves to Christ without detaching themselves from these cherished idols.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 221.

5. WILL YOU ACCEPT JESUS?

- a. What call comes to each of us today? Joshua 24:15.

“Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 118.

- b. Where does the choice to follow God begin, and what follows this choice? Proverbs 23:26.

“God asks you to give Him your heart. Your powers, your talents, your affections, should all be surrendered to Him, that He may work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, and fit you for eternal life.

“When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer.”—*My Life Today*, p. 7.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did people gladly listen to Jesus in His public ministry?
2. Describe true learners. What governs all their actions?
3. What were the feelings of the priests and rulers after Jesus cleansed the temple the second time?
4. What are some reasons why people reject Jesus and His Word?
5. Describe how complete our self-surrender should be.

First Sabbath Offering for literature for Africa

Thanks to the kind generosity of our donors to the First Sabbath Offerings for literature, and by God's grace, there are now two print shops operating in Africa. In past years, the SDARM General Conference had to incur the high expense of shipping large parcels of *Sabbath Bible Lessons* and other publications by ocean freight. But beginning with



the first two quarters of 2020, our brethren in Africa are blessed to be printing and distributing these truth-filled materials on their own continent. The Northern African Region is printing our literature in Rwanda, and the Southern African Region in Angola.

What a breakthrough this is! With additional support, these printing facilities will soon be able to translate and produce more publications in native African languages.

“Many are ready to investigate the truth, for angels of God have prepared their hearts for its reception. Publications should be issued, written in the plainest, simplest language, explaining the subjects of vital interest, and making known the things that are to come upon the world. The condition of the earth demands that light should shine upon its darkness. Will not the people to whom has been committed sacred responsibilities awake and put away every indifference, every jealousy, every misunderstanding, and take hold of the work with determined energy? Men claiming to be teachers of Bible truth will assail those who embrace the truth, who have no experience in meeting objections, and they will seek to overwhelm them with false statements and wily reasoning. On this account, as well as for other reasons, it is necessary to have publications explaining the doctrines and meeting the arguments of objectors. If those who come into the faith can have a clear statement of the truths assailed, they will be armed with arguments with which to meet opposers, and defend themselves. In defending themselves, they will unconsciously be sowing seeds of truth. . . . God has given great light upon important truths, and it must come to the world.”—*The Home Missionary*, February 1, 1890.

When the First Sabbath Offering is gathered for literature for Africa, please give generously that precious souls may be fortified in the present truth for these last days!

The General Conference Publishing Department

Jesus Speaks of His Kingdom

“The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show [margin]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20, 21).

“The kingdom of God begins in the heart. Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 506.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 419–425, 509, 510.

Sunday

November 29

1. AN EARLY HINT OF THE SAVIOUR'S SUFFERING

- a. **What questions did John's disciples ask Jesus? How did the scribes and Pharisees try to belittle Him in the eyes of the people? Mark 2:18.**

“[The Pharisees] sought out the disciples of John the Baptist, and tried to set them against the Saviour. These Pharisees had not accepted the mission of the Baptist. They had pointed in scorn to his abstemious life, his simple habits, his coarse garments, and had declared him a fanatic. . . .

“Now when Jesus came mingling with the people, eating and drinking at their tables, they accused Him of being a glutton and a winebibber. The very ones who made this charge were themselves guilty. As God is misrepresented, and clothed by Satan with his own attributes, so the Lord's messengers were falsified by these wicked men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 275, 276.

- b. **How did Jesus take this opportunity to prophesy of His sufferings? Verses 19, 20.**

“It was a bright picture which the words of Christ had called up, but across it lay a heavy shadow, which His eye alone discerned.”—*Ibid.*, p. 277.

2. REVEALING THE FUTURE TO THE DISCIPLES

- a. How did Jesus plainly reveal the future to His disciples? Mark 8:31; 9:31.
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- b. What was Peter's response? What about the disciples in general? Mark 8:32; 9:32.
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- c. How did Jesus try to correct the common misunderstanding regarding His kingdom? John 18:36. How do many people confuse His kingdom of grace with the future kingdom of glory?
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"Today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 509, 510.

"Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamoring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Galatians 2:20."—*Ibid.*, p. 510.

"Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 44.

3. THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GLORY IN MINIATURE

a. What did Jesus tell the disciples about seeing His future kingdom? Mark 9:1.

b. Who was given a glimpse of His kingdom of glory? Why? Verses 2–4, 7.

“The Saviour has seen the gloom of His disciples, and has longed to lighten their grief by an assurance that their faith has not been in vain. Not all, even of the twelve, can receive the revelation He desires to give. Only the three who are to witness His anguish in Gethsemane have been chosen to be with Him on the mount. Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes, and that His disciples may be strengthened to behold it. He pleads that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that He is of a surety the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption. . . .

“Jesus was clothed with the light of heaven, as He will appear when He shall come ‘the second time without sin unto salvation.’ For He will come ‘in the glory of His Father with the holy angels’ (Hebrews 9:28; Mark 8:38). The Saviour’s promise to the disciples was now fulfilled. Upon the mount the future kingdom of glory was represented in miniature,—Christ the King, Moses a representative of the risen saints, and Elijah of the translated ones.

“The disciples do not yet comprehend the scene; but they rejoice that the patient Teacher, the meek and lowly One, who has wandered to and fro a helpless stranger, is honored by the favored ones of heaven. They believe that Elijah has come to announce the Messiah’s reign, and that the kingdom of Christ is about to be set up on the earth. The memory of their fear and disappointment they would banish forever. Here, where the glory of God is revealed, they long to tarry. . . . The disciples are confident that Moses and Elijah have been sent to protect their Master, and to establish His authority as king.

“But before the crown must come the cross.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 420–422.

c. What did Jesus command the disciples regarding the transfiguration? How did their response show that they did not understand the nature of His kingdom? Verses 8–10.

4. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF GRACE

- a. Describe how the growth of the seed relates to the kingdom of God. Mark 4:26–29.

“Christ used other illustrations . . . seeking to turn their thoughts from the hope of a worldly kingdom to the work of God’s grace in the soul.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 62.

“The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a figure of the development of character. There can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the growth of character. . . .

“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through cooperation with divine agencies. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, so are we to receive the Holy Spirit.”—*Education*, pp. 105, 106.

- b. How is the kingdom of God like a grain of mustard seed? Verses 30–32.

“The kingdom of Christ in its beginning seemed humble and insignificant. Compared with earthly kingdoms it appeared to be the least of all. By the rulers of this world Christ’s claim to be a king was ridiculed. Yet in the mighty truths committed to His followers the kingdom of the gospel possessed a divine life. And how rapid was its growth, how widespread its influence! . . .

“So the work of grace in the heart is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the soul, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results?”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 77, 78.

- c. What will be the result of the seed of the Word growing within us? John 15:5, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

“God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

5. THE KINGDOM OF GRACE ESTABLISHED

- a. How did God go about to establish His kingdom of grace? Romans 5:6–10.
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“The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour, wearied with the stubbornness and ingratitude of men, might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. Had He done this, there could have been no redemption for fallen men. But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, ‘It is finished,’ then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 347, 348.

- b. Who are to be included in the invitation into the kingdom of grace? With what urgency are they to be invited? Luke 14:21–23.
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where does the kingdom of God begin? Why do many people look for a temporal kingdom?
2. What opposite principles exist in God’s kingdom vs. a worldly kingdom?
3. How was the future kingdom revealed to three of the disciples? For what purpose?
4. Describe how the kingdom of grace is compared to the growth of the seed.
5. When was the kingdom of grace instituted? When was it established?

Ushering in the Kingdom

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

“The triumphal ride of Christ into Jerusalem was the dim foreshadowing of His coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory, amid the triumph of angels and the rejoicing of the saints.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 580.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 529–536, 569–572, 589–593.

Sunday

December 6

1. A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE

- a. **What was always in the mind of Jesus as He considered His lifework and how should it influence us? John 9:4; 4:34.**
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“The Saviour’s life on earth was not a life of ease and devotion to Himself, but He toiled with persistent, earnest, untiring effort for the salvation of lost mankind. From the manger to Calvary He followed the path of self-denial and sought not to be released from arduous tasks, painful travels and exhausting care and labor. He said, ‘The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.’ Matthew 20:28. This was the one great object of His life. Everything else was secondary and subservient. It was His meat and drink to do the will of God and to finish His work. Self and self-interest had no part in His labor.

“So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 78.

- b. **What was Jesus’ response when asked to do things which would shorten His time to work? John 7:6, 8.**
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2. THE CROWNING MIRACLE

- a. What did God allow to happen to one of Jesus' closest friends, and when did Jesus go to see him? John 11:14, 17.
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“Had Christ been in the sickroom, Lazarus would not have died; for Satan would have had no power over him. Death could not have aimed his dart at Lazarus in the presence of the Life-giver. Therefore Christ remained away. He suffered the enemy to exercise his power, that He might drive him back, a conquered foe.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

“Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character would not have been performed.”—*Ibid.*

- b. What did Jesus do next? Verses 38–44.
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“Christ could have commanded the stone to remove, and it would have obeyed His voice. He could have bidden the angels who were close by His side to do this. At His bidding, invisible hands would have removed the stone. But it was to be taken away by human hands. Thus Christ would show that humanity is to cooperate with divinity. What human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man's aid. He strengthens him, cooperating with him as he uses the powers and capabilities given him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 535.

- c. What was the reaction of the priests and rulers? Verses 47–54.
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“Many who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus were led to believe on Jesus. But the hatred of the priests against Him was intensified. . . . They were more than ever determined to put a stop to Christ's work. . . .

“Thus far the Sadducees had not encouraged the plan of putting Christ to death. But after the resurrection of Lazarus they decided that only by His death could His fearless denunciations against them be stopped.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 537, 538.

“Christ's crowning miracle—the raising of Lazarus—had sealed the determination of the priests to rid the world of Jesus and His wonderful works, which were fast destroying their influence over the people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 66.

3. WHY A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY?

- a. Describe the preparations for Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem for the last time. Mark 11:1–10.
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- b. What Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled by Christ in allowing Himself to be welcomed as a king? Isaiah 62:10, 11; Zechariah 9:9.
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- c. What was the reaction of the people to this event? Matthew 21:10; Luke 19:39. How did this affect Jesus' future?
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“Those who have once been blind . . . are the first to lead the way in that wonderful procession. . . . One whom He has raised from the dead leads the animal on which He is seated. The once deaf and dumb, with ears opened and tongues unloosed, help swell the glad hosannas. Cripples, with buoyant steps and grateful hearts, are now most active in breaking down the palm branches and strewing them in His path as their tribute of homage to the mighty Healer. The leper, who has listened to the dread words of the priest, ‘Unclean,’ . . . is there. . . . The demoniac is there, not now to have the words wrenched from his lips by Satan’s power.”—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 253.

“From the multitudes gathered to attend the Passover, thousands go forth to welcome Jesus. They greet Him with the waving of palm branches and a burst of sacred song. The priests at the temple sound the trumpet for evening service, but there are few to respond, and the rulers say to one another in alarm. ‘The world is gone after Him.’

“Never before in His earthly life had Jesus permitted such a demonstration. He clearly foresaw the result. It would bring Him to the cross. . . .

“The events connected with this triumphal ride would be the talk of every tongue, and would bring Jesus before every mind. After His crucifixion, many would recall these events in their connection with His trial and death. They would be led to search the prophecies, and would be convinced that Jesus was the Messiah; and in all lands converts to the faith would be multiplied.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 571.

4. THE NEXT STEP TOWARD THE CROSS

- a. What was one of the first things Jesus did when He came into Jerusalem? Mark 11:15–17.
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“At the beginning of His ministry, Christ had driven from the temple those who defiled it by their unholy traffic; and His stern and god-like demeanor had struck terror to the hearts of the scheming traders. At the close of His mission He came again to the temple, and found it still desecrated as before. The condition of things was even worse than before. . . .

“The indignation of Jesus was stirred; He knew that His blood, so soon to be shed for the sins of the world, would be as little appreciated by the priests and elders as was the blood of beasts which they kept incessantly flowing. . . .

“Christ spoke with a power that swayed the people like a mighty tempest: ‘It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.’ His voice sounded like a trumpet through the temple. The displeasure of His countenance seemed like consuming fire. With authority He commanded, ‘Take these things hence.’ John 2:16.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 589–591.

- b. What was the reaction of the priests? Why did they feel this way? Verse 18.
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“The Pharisees were utterly perplexed and disconcerted. One whom they could not intimidate was in command. Jesus had taken His position as guardian of the temple. Never before had He assumed such kingly authority. Never before had His words and works possessed so great power. He had done marvelous works throughout Jerusalem, but never before in a manner so solemn and impressive. In presence of the people who had witnessed His wonderful works, the priests and rulers dared not show Him open hostility. Though enraged and confounded by His answer, they were unable to accomplish anything further that day.”—*Ibid.*, p. 593.

- c. What did Jesus do to avoid further conflict at this time? Verse 19.
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5. JESUS AGAIN PROPHESES OF HIS DEATH

- a. Relate the parable Jesus then spoke to the people. Mark 12:1–11.
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- b. What was the reaction of the leaders of Israel? Why? Verse 12.
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“The speakers had not at first perceived the application of the parable, but they now saw that they had pronounced their own condemnation. In the parable the householder represented God, the vineyard the Jewish nation, and the hedge the divine law which was their protection. The tower was a symbol of the temple. The lord of the vineyard had done everything needful for its prosperity. ‘What could have been done more to my vineyard,’ he says, ‘that I have not done in it.’ Isaiah 5:4. Thus was represented God’s unwearied care for Israel. And as the husbandmen were to return to the lord a due proportion of the fruits of the vineyard, so God’s people were to honor Him by a life corresponding to their sacred privileges. But as the husbandmen had killed the servants whom the master sent to them for fruit, so the Jews had put to death the prophets whom God sent to call them to repentance. Messenger after messenger had been slain. Thus far the application of the parable could not be questioned, and in what followed it was not less evident. In the beloved son whom the lord of the vineyard finally sent to his disobedient servants, and whom they seized and slew, the priests and rulers saw a distinct picture of Jesus and His impending fate. Already they were planning to slay Him whom the Father had sent to them as a last appeal. In the retribution inflicted upon the ungrateful husbandmen was portrayed the doom of those who should put Christ to death.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 596, 597.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the great purpose of Jesus’ life?
2. How did the resurrection of Lazarus hasten the coming kingdom?
3. How would the triumphal entry convict souls of Jesus’ divinity?
4. What was the result of Jesus’ cleansing of the temple for the second time?
5. What distinct picture was presented to the priests and rulers through the parable of the vineyard? How did they react?

Forsaken by Friend and Foe

“And they all forsook him, and fled” (Mark 14:50).

“[The Son of God] was afflicted, He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Majesty of heaven had to leave the scene of His labor again and again because of Satan’s bruising His heel, and finally Satan’s malignity reached its utmost power when Satan inspired and controlled the minds of wicked men to crucify Him.”—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 248.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 698–715.

Sunday

December 13

1. BETRAYED BY A FRIEND

a. How did Judas betray Jesus? Mark 14:10, 11, 43–46.

“The case of Judas has been presented to me as a lesson for all. Judas was with Christ through the entire period of the Saviour’s public ministry. He had all that Christ could give him. Had he used his capabilities with earnest diligence, he could have accumulated talents. Had he sought to be a blessing, instead of a questioning, criticizing, selfish man, the Lord would have used him to advance His kingdom. But Judas was a speculator. He thought that he could manage the finances of the church, and by his sharpness in business get gain. He was divided in heart. He loved the praise of the world. He refused to give up the world for Christ. He never committed his eternal interests to Christ. He had a superficial religion, and therefore he speculated upon his Master and betrayed Him to the priests, being fully persuaded that Christ would not allow Himself to be taken.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1101, 1102.

b. How was this prophesied? Psalm 41:9.

2. DESERTED BY A CLOSE FRIEND

- a. As Jesus told His disciples that they would all be offended because of Him, what did Peter insist? What further insight did Jesus give? Mark 14:27–31.
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- b. How were Jesus' words fulfilled? Verses 66–72.
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“Peter followed his Lord after His betrayal. He was anxious to see what would be done with Jesus. But when he was accused of being one of His disciples, fear for his own safety led him to declare that he knew not the man. The disciples were noted for the purity of their language, and Peter, to convince his accusers that he was not one of Christ's disciples, denied the charge the third time with cursing and swearing.”—*Early Writings*, p. 169.

“When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that grieved look, in which compassion and love for him were blended, Peter understood himself. He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ's broke his heart. Peter had come to the turning point, and bitterly did he repent his sin. . . . The look of Christ assured him of pardon.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 152, 154.

- c. How did the Old Testament writers express this feeling of desertion? Psalms 88:8 (first part); 69:8; Job 19:13, 14. Why did Jesus allow this?
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“It was to save sinners that Christ left His home in heaven and came to earth to suffer and to die. For this He toiled and agonized and prayed, until, heartbroken and deserted by those He came to save, He poured out His life on Calvary.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 82.

“Nothing could have induced Christ to leave His honor and majesty in heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected by those He came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 207.

3. DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN

- a. **What happened to the witnesses brought by the chief priests to testify against Christ? Mark 14:55–59.**
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“False witnesses had been bribed to accuse Jesus of inciting rebellion and seeking to establish a separate government. But their testimony proved to be vague and contradictory. Under examination they falsified their own statements. . . .

“Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 705, 706.

- b. **When asked if He was the Christ, the Son of God, what was Jesus’ response? How did the high priest receive these words? Verses 61–64.**
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“Conviction mingled with passion led Caiaphas to do as he did. He was furious with himself for believing Christ’s words, and instead of rending his heart under a deep sense of truth, and confessing that Jesus was the Messiah, he rent his priestly robes in determined resistance. This act was deeply significant. Little did Caiaphas realize its meaning. In this act, done to influence the judges and secure Christ’s condemnation, the high priest had condemned himself. By the law of God he was disqualified for the priesthood. He had pronounced upon himself the death sentence.”—*Ibid.*, p. 708.

- c. **How was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in the trial of Jesus? Isaiah 53:3, 7.**
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“Behold Him who with one word could summon legions of angels to His assistance, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatens not; when falsely accused, He opens not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them; He is paying an infinite price for every one of them. He bears the penalty of man’s sins without a murmur. And this uncomplaining victim is the Son of God.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 233.

4. FORSAKEN BY A PEOPLE-PLEASER

- a. What was Pilate's attitude toward Jesus' silence? Mark 15:2–5.
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“[Pilate] did not believe that the prisoner had plotted against the government. His meek and humble appearance was altogether out of harmony with the charge. Pilate was convinced that a deep plot had been laid to destroy an innocent man who stood in the way of the Jewish dignitaries. Turning to Jesus he asked, ‘Art Thou the King of the Jews?’ The Saviour answered, ‘Thou sayest it.’ And as He spoke, His countenance lighted up as if a sunbeam were shining upon it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 726.

- b. How did Pilate try to save Christ? Verses 6–11.
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“Pilate . . . now bethought himself of a custom which might serve to secure Christ's release. It was customary at this feast to release some one prisoner whom the people might choose. This custom was of pagan invention; there was not a shadow of justice in it, but it was greatly prized by the Jews. The Roman authorities at this time held a prisoner named Barabbas, who was under sentence of death. . . . Under cover of religious enthusiasm he was a hardened and desperate villain, bent on rebellion and cruelty. By giving the people a choice between this man and the innocent Saviour, Pilate thought to arouse them to a sense of justice. He hoped to gain their sympathy for Jesus in opposition to the priests and rulers.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 733.

- c. Although Pilate was convinced that Christ was innocent, what did he do? Why? Verses 12–15; Matthew 27:24.
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“Pilate longed to deliver Jesus. But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honor. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 324.

5. GOD NEVER FORSAKES US

- a. How did Jesus' humanity manifest itself in His dying hours? Mark 15:34. How was Christ able to gain the victory over this feeling of being forsaken?

“Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

- b. Although we may be forsaken by those nearest and dearest to us, what does God promise us? Psalm 27:10; Hebrews 13:5 (second part); Isaiah 49:16.

“Trust in the Lord Jesus to lead you step by step into the right path. You can derive assurance and strength at every step you advance, for you can be assured that your hand is in His hand. You can ‘run and not be weary’; you can ‘walk and not faint,’ for you can realize by faith that you have your hand in the hand of Christ. You will not sink under discouragement, for as you follow on to know the Lord, trusting in Him, you will have the assurance that the One who never forsakes those who fully trust Him is your constant Helper.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 320.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What characteristics of Judas proved to be his downfall?
2. Why was Peter led to deny Christ?
3. Why were Christ's words misstated by false witnesses?
4. Why did Pilate allow an innocent man to die? How might we be in danger of acting in a similar way?
5. How did Jesus find peace when feeling forsaken by God?

Hopes Crushed and Then Revived

“Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Matthew 28:5, 6).

“Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless. Jesus lives, and because He lives, we shall live also. From grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, Christ is risen! He lives to make intercession for us. Grasp this hope, and it will hold the soul like a sure, tried anchor.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 794.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 741–757, 779–787.

Sunday

December 20

1. BEARING THE CROSS

- a. How did the people treat Jesus, the Saviour of the world? Mark 15:16–20.

- b. Who carried the cross of Jesus? Verse 21. How significant was this act? Luke 14:27; Galatians 6:2.

“[Christ’s] persecutors saw that it was impossible for Him to carry His burden farther. They were puzzled to find anyone who would bear the humiliating load. The Jews themselves could not do this, because the defilement would prevent them from keeping the Passover. None even of the mob that followed Him would stoop to bear the cross.

“At this time a stranger, Simon a Cyrenian . . . meets the throng. He hears the taunts and ribaldry of the crowd. . . . He stops in astonishment at the scene; and as he expresses his compassion, they seize him and place the cross upon his shoulders.

“Simon had heard of Jesus. His sons were believers in the Saviour, but he himself was not a disciple. The bearing of the cross to Calvary was a blessing to Simon, and he was ever after grateful for this providence. It led him to take upon himself the cross of Christ from choice, and ever cheerfully stand beneath its burden.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 742.

2. JESUS FULFILLS PROPHECY

- a. **Who was crucified alongside Christ? How did this fulfill what had been foretold in Scripture? Mark 15:27, 28; Isaiah 53:12.**
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“With longing heart He has listened for some expression of faith from His disciples. He has heard only the mournful words, ‘We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.’ How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief! While the leading Jews deny Him, and even the disciples doubt His divinity, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, calls Jesus Lord. Many were ready to call Him Lord when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour. . . .

“The thieves crucified with Jesus were placed ‘on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.’ This was done by the direction of the priests and rulers. Christ’s position between the thieves was to indicate that He was the greatest criminal of the three. Thus was fulfilled the scripture, ‘He was numbered with the transgressors’ (Isaiah 53:12). But the full meaning of their act the priests did not see. As Jesus, crucified with the thieves, was placed ‘in the midst,’ so His cross was placed in the midst of a world lying in sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 750, 751.

“As man’s substitute and surety, the iniquity of men was laid upon Christ; He was counted a transgressor that He might redeem them from the curse of the law. . . . He, the sin-bearer, endures judicial punishment for iniquity and becomes sin itself for man.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 225.

- b. **What did they do with Christ’s garments when they crucified Him? How was this predicted by David? Mark 15:24; Psalm 22:18.**
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“Centuries before the crucifixion, the Saviour had foretold the treatment He was to receive. [Psalm 22:16–18, quoted.] The prophecy concerning His garments was carried out without counsel or interference from the friends or the enemies of the Crucified One. To the soldiers who had placed Him upon the cross, His clothing was given. Christ heard the men’s contention as they parted the garments among them. His tunic was woven throughout without seam, and they said, ‘Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 746.

3. JESUS' LAST HOURS

- a. How did nature respond to its King dying on the cross? Mark 15:33.
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“Inanimate nature expressed a 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 enveloped the cross and all the vicinity about, like a funeral pall. The darkness lasted three full hours. At the ninth hour the terrible darkness lifted from the people, but still wrapt the Saviour as in a mantle. The angry lightnings seemed to be hurled at Him as He hung upon the cross.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 226.

- b. What other supernatural events took place when Jesus died? Verses 37, 38; Matthew 27:50–53.
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“At the moment in which Christ died, there were priests ministering in the temple before the veil which separated the holy from the most holy place. Suddenly they felt the earth tremble beneath them, and the veil of the temple, a strong rich drapery that had been renewed yearly, was rent in twain from top to bottom by the same bloodless hand that wrote the words of doom upon the walls of Belshazzar’s palace.”—*Ibid.*

“The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the holy place.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 259, 260.

“When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, ‘*It is finished,*’ the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened.”—*Ibid.*, p. 184.

4. HE IS RISEN!

- a. **Who came forward and offered an honorable burial for Jesus, and what did he do? Mark 15:43, 46; Matthew 27:59, 60.**
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“Even in death, Christ’s body was very precious to His disciples. They longed to give Him an honored burial, but knew not how to accomplish this. . . .

“In this emergency, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus came to the help of the disciples. Both these men were members of the Sanhedrin, and were acquainted with Pilate. Both were men of wealth and influence. They were determined that the body of Jesus should have an honorable burial.

“Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus. . . .

“The request of Joseph was granted. While John was troubled about the burial of his Master, Joseph returned with Pilate’s order for the body of Christ; and Nicodemus came bringing a costly mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a hundred pounds’ weight, for His embalming. The most honored in all Jerusalem could not have been shown more respect in death. The disciples were astonished to see these wealthy rulers as much interested as they themselves in the burial of their Lord.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 772, 773.

- b. **Having rested on the Sabbath, who came very early to the grave on Sunday morning, and what did they find? Mark 16:1–6; Matthew 28:5, 6.**
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“As [the women] lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid. They turned to flee, but the angel’s words stayed their steps. ‘Fear not ye,’ he said; ‘for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 788, 789.

- c. **What were they to do next? How did they react? Mark 16:7, 8; Matthew 28:7, 8.**
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5. CHRIST EMPOWERS HIS FOLLOWERS

- a. To whom did Jesus appear, and what was their reaction? Mark 16:9–14; Luke 24:13–15.
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“As [Mary] turned from the sepulcher, she saw Jesus standing near, but knew Him not. He spoke to her tenderly, inquiring the cause of her sorrow and asking whom she was seeking. Supposing that He was the gardener, she begged Him, if He had borne away her Lord, to tell her where he had laid Him, that she might take Him away. Jesus spoke to her with His own heavenly voice, saying, ‘Mary!’ She was acquainted with the tones of that dear voice, and quickly answered, ‘Master!’ and in her joy was about to embrace Him; but Jesus said, ‘Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.’ Joyfully she hastened to the disciples with the good news. Jesus quickly ascended to His Father to hear from His lips that He accepted the sacrifice, and to receive all power in heaven and upon earth.”—*Early Writings*, p. 187.

- b. What commission was given to Christ’s followers, and how did they respond? Verses 15–18, 20.
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“Upon all the inhabitants of the earth, high and low, rich and poor, was the light of heaven to shine in clear, strong rays. The disciples were to be collaborators with their Redeemer in the work of saving the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 818.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How was the carrying of the cross a turning point in the life of Simon?
2. Why was Jesus placed between the thieves on the cross? How did this fulfill prophecy?
3. How did nature sympathize with its dying Author?
4. How did God provide for the burial of Jesus? Who came forward to help?
5. What was Jesus’ main concern after He arose from the dead?

First Sabbath Offerings



OCTOBER 3
for the headquarters in
Savigny-sur Orge, France
(see p. 4.)

NOVEMBER 7
for a chapel in
Montreal, Canada
(see p. 30.)



DECEMBER 5
for literature for
needed countries
(see p. 51.)

