

# SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

## Senior Division



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

# *Hebrews*

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# Foreword

How important it is to understand the vital truths involving our salvation! Darkness is covering the earth and gross darkness the people—but our Creator is eager to shine precious light from Heaven upon all who earnestly seek it. So many points in Scripture are as wonderful beacons of light to this dark world. That is why, for the next three months, Sabbath school students around the world will be studying *The Gospel According to Paul: Hebrews*.

The book of Hebrews teaches us much about the nature of God and of Christ, His Sabbath rest, His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf and the covenants made with us. We are also encouraged by the uplifting testimonies of the heroes of faith and the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. By prayerfully studying these lessons, we can enter into a deeper, closer relationship with our Lord.

“Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour’s death to redeem the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 165.

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul. The spirituality of the law of God, with its limiting principles, is brought into his life. The light of truth irradiates his understanding. A glow of perfect love for the Redeemer clears away the miasma which has interposed between his soul and God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 909.

As we draw closer to Christ, we come closer to one another as well. Amazing results will be seen in preparation for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power.

“When the churches become living, working churches, the Holy Spirit will be given in answer to their sincere request. Then the truth of God’s word will be regarded with new interest, and will be explored as if it were a revelation just from the courts above. Every declaration of inspiration concerning Christ will take hold of the inmost soul of those who love Him. Envy, jealousy, evil surmising, will cease. The Bible will be regarded as a charter from heaven. Its study will absorb the mind, and its truths will feast the soul. The promises of God now repeated as if the soul had never tasted of His love, will then glow upon the altar of the heart, and fall in burning words from the lips of the messengers of God. They will then plead with souls with an earnestness that cannot be repulsed. Then the windows of heaven will be open for the showers of the latter rain.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1890.

It is our prayer that this blessed experience will come upon all who study these lessons and fortify our hearts in the power of our Redeemer.

*General Conference Sabbath School Department*

## First Sabbath Offering for the “Eden” Health Center, Breaza, Romania

By God’s grace, the “Eden” Health Center in Romania opened its doors nearly 25 years ago. Over the years, this institution has offered both physical and spiritual relief for the suffering, being an oasis where people burdened with suffering have come in contact with both our spiritual and our health teachings.

The work here is one of seed-sowing, which God brings to growth and fruit-bearing in His time.

As a result of general changes in laws throughout Europe, along with some violent building fires in Romania which resulted in many lives lost, the legislation regarding fire security has significantly changed over the last six years, enforcing much stricter measures. In our institution, steps have been taken to implement the legislative demands which greatly exceed our financial possibilities. Generous brethren from Romania as well as other parts of Europe and the United States, knowing our needs, have promptly helped according to their ability, sending money for the advancement of the work. But the needs are still very great. Therefore, we appeal to your generosity, dear brethren from all over the world, to kindly help with the remodeling of this medical missionary center so that it can continue its activity unhindered by inspections, restrictions, or fines from the local authorities.

“The work of God is to become more extensive, and if His people follow His counsel, there will not be much means in their possession to be consumed in the final conflagration. All will have laid up their treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt; and the heart will not have a cord to bind it to earth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 197.

In view of the needs of the times, let us do our utmost to help those around us while we still are able. “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:7, 8). May God bless the gifts and the givers!

*Your brethren from the “Eden” Health Center, Breaza, Romania*



# The Son of God: Creator of the Universe

**MEMORY VERSE:** “[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:2).

“It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. ‘His strength setteth fast the mountains.’ ‘The sea is His, and He made it.’ Psalm 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19–26.

*Sunday*

*December 31*

## 1. COMMUNICATION FROM GOD

- a. After sin, how did God speak to the fathers? Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21.

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“Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but since man separated himself from God by transgression, the human race has been cut off from this high privilege. By the plan of redemption, however, a way has been opened whereby the inhabitants of the earth may still have connection with heaven. God has communicated with men by His Spirit, and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants. ‘Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ 2 Peter 1:21.”—*The Great Controversy*, (v).

- b. How has God revealed Himself in the last days? Hebrews 1:2; John 14:8, 9.

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“The Creator of man, He who upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the eternal law; in His dying agony vindicated His right to pardon transgression and sin.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 26, 1909.



## 2. CHRIST, THE FATHER, AND THE ANGELS

- a. What is the relationship between Christ and the Father? Hebrews 1:3; John 10:30.
- 

“As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. The outshining of the Father’s glory, ‘and the express image of his person,’ Jesus, as a personal Saviour, came to the world. As a personal Saviour He ascended on high. As a personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 40.

“Christ was the express image of His Father’s person; and He came to our world to restore in man God’s moral image, in order that man, although fallen, might through obedience to God’s commandments become enstamped with the divine image and character—adorned with the beauty of divine loveliness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 921.

- b. What is the position of Christ in relation to the angels? Hebrews 1:4–6.
- 

“The first chapter of Hebrews contrasts the position of the angels and the position of Christ. God has spoken words concerning Christ that are not to be applied to the angels. They are ‘sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,’ but Christ, as Mediator, is the great Minister in the work of redemption. The Holy Spirit is His representative in our world, to execute the divine purpose of bringing to fallen man power from above, that he may be an overcomer. All who enter into a covenant with Jesus Christ become by adoption the children of God. They are cleansed by the regenerating power of the Word, and angels are commissioned to minister unto them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 922.

“Should the angel Gabriel be sent to this world to take upon himself human nature, and to teach the knowledge of God, how eagerly men would listen to his instruction. Supposing that he were able to set us a perfect example of purity and holiness, sympathizing with us in all our sorrows, bereavements, and afflictions, and suffering the punishment of our sins, how eagerly we would follow him. What exaltation he would receive. . . .

“But One surpassing all that imagination can present came from heaven to this world. Nearly 2000 years ago a voice of strange and mysterious import was heard from the throne of God, ‘Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God.’ ”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 34.

### 3. "THOU ART MY SON"

- a. What was prophesied by the psalmist regarding Jesus Christ? Psalm 2:7. When and how was this prophecy fulfilled?

I. At His incarnation. Hebrews 1:6.

II. At His baptism. Matthew 3:16, 17.

III. At His resurrection. Acts 13:33; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5.

IV. His priesthood. Acts 2:33; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 5:5, 6.

- b. How does the Father address the Son? Hebrews 1:7–13.

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"[Hebrews 1:4–12 quoted.] In this language is represented the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus. He is introduced to the Bible student as the Creator of the world, and was its rightful Ruler. [Hebrews 1:13, 14 quoted]."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 921.

- c. Who is the only One to be worshiped? Matthew 4:10.

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"Satan had asked Christ to give him evidence that He was the Son of God, and he had in this instance the proof he had asked. At the divine command of Christ, he was compelled to obey. He was repulsed and silenced. He had no power to withstand the peremptory dismissal. He was compelled without another word instantly to desist and leave the world's Redeemer."—*Confrontation*, p. 54.

- d. When the prophet John was inclined to worship the angel Gabriel, what warning did he receive from the angel? Revelation 19:10; 22:8–10.
- e. Why did Jesus accept to be worshiped? Matthew 8:2, 3; Hebrews 1:8–10.

"The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Ephesians 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Psalm 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' Hebrews 1:6."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

## 4. HEAVENLY ANGELS, GOD'S MINISTERS

- a. What is the mission of God's angels regarding believers? Hebrews 1:14.

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"Divine ministration is needed to give power and efficiency to the church in this world. God's family on earth, subject to temptations and trials, is very near His heart of love. He has ordained that communication be kept up between heavenly intelligences and His children on this earth. Angels from the courts above are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, those who as faithful warriors are partaking of Christ's suffering. Christ is represented as dwelling in His people. They must be fed with meat in due season. Therefore a connection has been established between them and the church above. God cares for His human creation as a husbandman cares for a vineyard."—*The Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900.

- b. What is promised to those who fear the Lord? Psalm 34:7.

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"The principalities and powers of heaven are watching the warfare which, under apparently discouraging circumstances, God's servants are carrying on. New conquests are being achieved, new honors won, as the Christians, rallying round the banner of their Redeemer, go forth to fight the good fight of faith. All the heavenly angels are at the service of the humble, believing people of God; and as the Lord's army of workers here below sing their songs of praise, the choir above join with them in ascribing praise to God and to His Son.

"We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels. It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the cooperation of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim, and angels that excel in strength, stand at God's right hand, 'all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Hebrews 1:14."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 154.

"When you rise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness, and your need of strength from God? and do you humbly, heartily make known your wants to your heavenly Father? If so, angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong, and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you, and influencing your actions."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 90.



## 5. POWERFUL HEAVENLY WARRIORS

- a. What challenge did Sennacherib, king of Assyria put to Hezekiah, king of Judah? Isaiah 36:1–8.

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“Judah’s only hope was now in God. All possible help from Egypt had been cut off, and no other nations were near to lend a friendly hand.

“The Assyrian officers, sure of the strength of their disciplined forces, arranged for a conference with the chief men of Judah, during which they insolently demanded the surrender of the city. This demand was accompanied by blasphemous revilings against the God of the Hebrews. Because of the weakness and apostasy of Israel and Judah, the name of God was no longer feared among the nations, but had become a subject for continual reproach. See Isaiah 52:5.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 352.

- b. When God’s people were threatened with destruction by the Assyrian army, where did Hezekiah seek help? Isaiah 37:1–5; 2 Chronicles 32:20.

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- c. How did the Lord answer the prayers of His children in this difficult time? 2 Kings 19:6, 7; Isaiah 37:6, 7.

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“God answered the prayers of His servants. To Isaiah was given the message for Hezekiah: [2 Kings 19:6, 7 quoted].”—*Ibid.*, p. 354.

- d. How many angels did the Lord use to defeat the proud Assyrian king? Isaiah 37:36–38; 2 Chronicles 32:21.

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“That very night deliverance came.”—*Ibid.*, p. 361.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how the Creator in Heaven speaks to the human race on earth.
2. Name the significant differences between Christ and angels.
3. What is revealed about the relationship between the Father and Son?
4. Why should we be thankful for the holy angels?
5. What do we learn from the crisis faced by Hezekiah?

# The Son of Man: A Little Lower Than the Angels

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9).

“Christ was to be made ‘a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.’ Hebrews 2:9. As He should take human nature upon Him, His strength would not be equal to theirs, and they were to minister to Him, to strengthen and soothe Him under His sufferings.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 64.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63–70.

*Sunday*

*January 7*

## 1. MORE EARNEST HEED

- a. What solemn appeal is addressed to each one of us? Hebrews 2:1, 2.
- b. Is there any hope for us “if we neglect so great salvation”? Hebrews 2:3.

“We are neglecting our salvation if we give authors who have but a confused idea of what religion means, the most conspicuous place and devoted respect, and make the Bible secondary. Those who have been enlightened in reference to the truth for these last days will not find instruction in the books generally studied today, in regard to the things which are coming upon our world; but the Bible is full of the knowledge of God, and is competent to educate the student for usefulness in this life and for the eternal life.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 403.

“It is the duty of the people of God to have their lamps trimmed and burning, to be as men that wait for the Bridegroom, when He shall return from the wedding. You have not a moment to lose in neglect of the great salvation that has been provided for you. The time of the probation of souls is coming to an end. From day to day the destiny of men is being sealed, and even from this congregation we know not how soon many shall close their eyes in death and be habited for the tomb. We should now consider that our life is swiftly passing away, that we are not safe one moment unless our life is hid with Christ in God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 189.

## 2. MAN, THE KING OF THIS PLANET

- a. What was God's purpose at the creation of man? Genesis 1:26, 27.
- 

"Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature. He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands. Man, made in the divine image, could contemplate and appreciate the glorious works of God in nature."—*Confrontation*, pp. 10, 11.

- b. As a result of man's transgression, who became the prince of this world? John 12:31; 14:30.
- 

"Mighty issues for the world were at stake in the conflict between the Prince of light and the leader of the kingdom of darkness. After tempting man to sin, Satan claimed the earth as his, and styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he thought to establish here his empire. He declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign. Through his control of men, he held dominion over the world. Christ had come to disprove Satan's claim. As the Son of man, Christ would stand loyal to God. Thus it would be shown that Satan had not gained complete control of the human race, and that his claim to the world was false. All who desired deliverance from his power would be set free. The dominion that Adam had lost through sin would be recovered."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 114.

- c. What happened at the victory of Christ on the cross? Revelation 12:10.
- 

"The casting down of Satan as an accuser of the brethren in heaven was accomplished by the great work of Christ in giving up His life. Notwithstanding Satan's persistent opposition, the plan of redemption was being carried out. Man was esteemed of sufficient value for Christ to sacrifice His life for him. Satan, knowing that the empire he had usurped would in the end be wrested from him, determined to spare no pains to destroy as many as possible of the creatures whom God had created in His image."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 973.

### 3. HOPE FOR THE FALLEN RACE

- a. How many people were bought by the blood of Christ? Hebrews 2:9; John 3:16.
- 

“‘Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price.’ . . . What a price was paid to redeem the fallen race!”—*This Day With God*, p. 255.

“Think of how much it cost Christ to leave the heavenly courts, and take His position at the head of humanity. Why did He do this? Because He was the only one who could redeem the fallen race. There was not a human being in the world who was without sin. The Son of God stepped down from His heavenly throne, laid off His royal robe and kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He came to die for us, to lie in the tomb as human beings must, and to be raised for our justification. He came to become acquainted with all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He rose from the grave and proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ One equal with God passed through death in our behalf. He tasted death for every man, that through Him every man might be a partaker of eternal life.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 13.

- b. Whom does Jesus call His brethren and why? Hebrews 2:11; John 17:17.
- 

“Jesus Christ is our example in all things. He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept his will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God. . . . Those who have a sanctified will, that is in unison with the will of Christ, will day by day have their wills bound to the will of Christ, which will act in blessing others, and react upon themselves with divine power. Many cultivate those things which war against the soul; for their desires and their will are set against God, and employed in the service of Satan.

“Let us no longer gratify the enemy by complaining of the strength of our evil will; for in so doing we are feeding and encouraging our wills against God, and pleasing the evil one. Let us remember that we are children of God, pledged to cherish a holy will which cometh to us from God. ‘As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ ”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 29, 1894.

#### 4. A PARTAKER OF FLESH AND BLOOD

- a. Which nature did Christ take at His incarnation and why was this necessary? Hebrews 2:14–16.
- 

“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

“Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. Having taken our fallen nature, He showed what it might become, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker of the divine nature.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 134.

- b. Though Christ took our fallen nature, what should we understand about His life? Hebrews 7:26; 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22.
- 

“[Christ] is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, ‘in all points tempted like as we are;’ but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 93, 94.

“In taking upon Himself man’s nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed, ‘that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses’ (Matthew 8:17). He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. And yet He knew no sin. He was the Lamb ‘without blemish and without spot’ (1 Peter 1:19). Could Satan in the least particular have tempted Christ to sin, he would have bruised the Saviour’s head. As it was, he could only touch His heel. Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it came upon Adam. Christ and the church would have been without hope.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 256.

## 5. A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST

- a. What kind of Friend do we have in the heavenly sanctuary? Hebrews 2:17.

---

“[Christ] was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He knew what it meant to be hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He was a stranger and a sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women of today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God. ‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.’ John 1:14.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 472.

- b. Being human and divine, what is Christ willing to do for every one of us? Hebrews 2:18; Psalm 40:8.

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“Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see ‘God with us.’

“If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was ‘in all points tempted like as we are.’ Hebrews 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. . . . His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is it dangerous to neglect Bible study, prayer, and surrender to God?
2. Contrast between the power of the real Prince of light vs. Satan’s boastful claim.
3. How are we benefited from Christ’s divine offer of salvation?
4. Explain the perfect balance of Christ’s divine and human nature.
5. Why can we be especially thankful for Christ’s work in heaven?



# Jesus: Apostle and High Priest

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1).

“Study Christ. Study His character, feature by feature. He is our Pattern that we are required to copy in our lives and our characters, else we fail to represent Jesus, but present to the world a spurious copy. Do not imitate any man, for men are defective in habits, in speech, in manners, in character. I present before you the Man Christ Jesus. You must individually know Him as your Saviour before you can study Him as your pattern and your example.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 170.

**Suggested Reading:** *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 340–344.

## Sunday

January 14

### 1. GREATER THAN MOSES

- a. In what sense is Christ greater than Moses? Hebrews 3:1–6.

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- b. When should we surrender our life to Jesus our Saviour? Hebrews 3:7, 8 (first part).

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“Oh, that now, while it is called today, you would turn to the Lord! Your every deed is making you either better or worse. If your actions are on Satan’s side, they leave behind them an influence that continues to work its baleful results. Only the pure, the clean, and the holy can enter the city of God, ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,’ but turn to the Lord, that the path you travel may not leave desolation in its track.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 358.

“Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. ‘Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.’ ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 34.

## 2. LESSONS FROM ANCIENT ISRAEL

- a. How did the example of ancient Israel reveal the unbelief of the people—and what was the sure result? Hebrews 3:8–11.

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- b. With this reality in mind, what solemn appeal is addressed to us who are living in these last days? Hebrews 3:12, 13.

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“There is no encouragement given for unbelief. The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust [Hebrews 3:12 quoted].

“The Lord works in cooperation with the will and action of the human agent. It is the privilege and duty of every man to take God at His word, to believe in Jesus as his personal Saviour, and to respond eagerly, immediately, to the gracious propositions which He makes. He is to study to believe and obey the divine instruction in the Scriptures. He is to base his faith not on feeling but upon the evidence and the Word of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 928.

“Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. When brought into strait places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“God . . . gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. It is a bitter draught, and they can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. . . . This bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified. . . .

“If we seek our own interest, how we can best please ourselves, instead of seeking to please God and advance His precious, suffering cause, we shall dishonor God and the holy cause we profess to love.”—*Early Writings*, p. 47.

### 3. PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

- a. How can we be partakers of Christ? Hebrews 3:14, 15; 2 Peter 1:4.
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“We must learn of Christ. We must know what He is to those He has ransomed. We must realize that through belief in Him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. . . . [Ephesians 2:1–6 quoted.] . . .

“As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 943.

- b. How did the Israelites provoke the Lord? Hebrews 3:16. What was the fatal result of their provocation? Hebrews 3:17.
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“In their rebellion the people had exclaimed, ‘Would God we had died in this wilderness!’ Now this prayer was to be granted. The Lord declared: ‘As ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward. . . . But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.’ . . . As the spies had spent forty days in their journey, so the hosts of Israel were to wander in the wilderness forty years.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 391.

- c. What sin was the main cause of this rebellion? Hebrews 3:18, 19.
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“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief.’ Hebrews 3:19.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

#### 4. FINDING REST IN JESUS

- a. What special invitation do we receive from Jesus, our Saviour—and what should we learn from Him? Matthew 11:28–30.

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“ ‘Come unto Me,’ is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply. He tells us just how His rest is to be found.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 329.

“None but God can subdue the pride of man’s heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.”— *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

- b. What is the yoke Christ offers to each one of us? Matthew 11:29.

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“ ‘Take My yoke upon you,’ Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be coworkers with Him.

“The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan’s ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 329.

## 5. CHRIST'S YOKE

- a. What did Jesus say regarding His yoke? Matthew 11:30; 1 John 5:2, 3.

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“The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life’s burden light. He who walks in the way of God’s commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest. When Moses prayed, ‘Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee,’ the Lord answered him, ‘My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ And through the prophets the message was given, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.’ Exodus 33:13, 14; Jeremiah 6:16. And He says, ‘O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.’ Isaiah 48:18.

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.’ Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

# Friday

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As the light from Heaven shines on our hearts, what action must we take?
2. In what ways am I in danger of repeating the sin of the Israelites?
3. Describe the miraculous results of partaking of the divine nature.
4. Describe the rest that Jesus is willing to provide to whomever seeks it.
5. Explain the benefits of accepting the yoke of Christ.

# God's Rest

**MEMORY VERSE:** "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:10).

"God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, because He rested upon it from all His wondrous work of creation. The Sabbath was made for man, and God would have him put by his labor on that day, as He Himself rested after His six days' work of creation."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 247.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 281–289.

*Sunday*

*January 21*

## 1. TRUE DIVINE REST

a. Which rest is Paul talking about in Hebrews 4? Hebrews 4:1.

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"Rest is found when all self-justification, all reasoning from a self-ish standpoint, is put away. Entire self-surrender, an acceptance of His ways, is the secret of perfect rest in His love. . . . Do just what He has told you to do, and be assured that God will do all that He has said He would do. . . . Have you come to Him, renouncing all your makeshifts, all your unbelief, all your self-righteousness? Come just as you are, weak, helpless, and ready to die.

"What is the 'rest' promised?—It is the consciousness that God is true, that He never disappoints the one who comes to Him. His pardon is full and free, and His acceptance means rest to the soul, rest in His love."—*Our High Calling*, p. 97.

b. Why doesn't the gospel produce the expected result in some people? Hebrews 4:2, 6; Romans 9:30–32.

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"Unless we mix faith with our hearing of the Word, unless we receive the truths we hear as a message from heaven, to be carefully studied, to be eaten by the soul and assimilated into the spiritual life, we lose the impression of the Spirit of God. We do not understand by experience what it means to find rest by receiving the divine assurances of the Word."—*The Upward Look*, p. 75.



## 2. ENTERING INTO GOD'S REST

- a. When do we really enjoy God's divine rest? Hebrews 4:3 (first part). Describe the relationship between the seventh-day Sabbath and this divine rest. Hebrews 4:4.
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"Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, 'God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it'—set it apart for a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God's power and His love."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 281.

"No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ. When the command was given to Israel, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,' the Lord said also to them, 'Ye shall be holy men unto Me.' Exodus 20:8; 22:31. Only thus could the Sabbath distinguish Israel as the worshipers of God.

"As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God's rest day with burdensome requirements. In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hardhearted and cruel. It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God."—*Ibid.*, pp. 283, 284.

"The demands upon God are even greater upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They ask more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His special attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not wait for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests."—*Ibid.*, p. 207.

### 3. LABOR AND REST

- a. What kind of labor should we develop before finding the promised rest? Hebrews 4:9, 11.

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“[Hebrews 4:9, 11 quoted.] The rest here spoken of is the rest of grace, obtained by following the prescription, Labor diligently. Those who learn of Jesus His meekness and lowliness find rest in the experience of practicing His lessons. It is not in indolence, in selfish ease and pleasure-seeking, that rest is obtained. Those who are unwilling to give the Lord faithful, earnest, loving service will not find spiritual rest in this life or in the life to come. Only from earnest labor comes peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—happiness on earth and glory hereafter.

“Let us therefore labor. Speak often words that will be a strength and an inspiration to those who hear. We are altogether too indifferent in regard to one another. We forget that our fellow laborers are often in need of words of hope and cheer. When one is in trouble, call upon him and speak comforting words to him. This is true friendship.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 928.

- b. What happens with our own works when we find rest in the Lord? Hebrews 4:10; Exodus 20:10; Isaiah 58:13; Romans 14:23 (last part).

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“God made man in His own image and then gave him an example of observing the seventh day, which He sanctified and made holy. He designed that upon that day man should worship Him and engage in no secular pursuits. No one who disregards the fourth commandment, after becoming enlightened concerning the claims of the Sabbath, can be held guiltless in the sight of God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 247.

- c. What kind of works are in harmony with the Sabbath rest? Isaiah 58:6–8.

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“Jesus stated to [the rabbis] that the work of relieving the afflicted was in harmony with the Sabbath law. . . .

“He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. God’s holy rest day was made for man, and acts of mercy are in perfect harmony with its intent. God does not desire His creatures to suffer an hour’s pain that may be relieved upon the Sabbath or any other day.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 206, 207.

# 4. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

## a. How powerful is the Word of God? Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 4:12.

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"There is a point beyond which human effort is in vain. While we are to preach the word, we can not impart the power that will quicken the soul, and cause righteousness and praise to spring forth. In the preaching of the word there must be the working of an agency beyond any human power. Only through the divine Spirit will the word be living and powerful to renew the soul unto eternal life. This is what Christ tried to impress upon His disciples. He taught that it was nothing they possessed in themselves which would give success to their labors, but that it is the miracle-working power of God which gives efficiency to His own word."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 63, 64.

## b. How deep are we known before God? Hebrews 4:13; Ecclesiastes 12:14.

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"It is for the eternal interest of every one to search his own heart, and to improve every God-given faculty. Let all remember that there is not a motive in the heart of any man that the Lord does not clearly see. The motives of each one are weighed as carefully as if the destiny of the human agent depended upon this one result. We need a connection with divine power, that we may have an increase of clear light and an understanding of how to reason from cause to effect. We need to have the powers of the understanding cultivated, by our being partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Let each one consider carefully the solemn truth, God in heaven is true, and there is not a design, however intricate, nor a motive, however carefully hidden, that He does not clearly understand. He reads the secret devisings of every heart. Men may plan out crooked actions for the future, thinking that God does not understand; but in that great day when the books are opened, and every man is judged by the things written in the books, those actions will appear as they are."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1160.

"God's eye does not slumber. He knows every sin that is hidden from mortal eye. The guilty know just what sins to confess that their souls may be clean before God. Jesus is now giving them opportunity to confess, to repent in deep humility, and purify their lives by obeying and living out the truth. Now is the time for wrongs to be righted and sins to be confessed, or they will appear before the sinner in the day of God's wrath."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 156.

**5. MERCY AND GRACE IN TIME OF NEED**

- a. **Who only can be our advocate before the Father and why? Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14; 7:25; 1 John 2:1, 2.**

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“As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne. Upon the throne with the eternal, self-existent One, is He who ‘hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:4), who ‘was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin’ (Hebrews 4:15).”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 69.

“You have not a difficulty that did not press with equal weight upon [Jesus], not a sorrow that His heart has not experienced. His feelings could be hurt with neglect, with indifference of professed friends, as easily as yours. Is your path thorny? Christ’s was so in a tenfold sense. Are you distressed? So was He.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 59.

- b. **What do we find in the heavenly sanctuary to help us in our times of need? Hebrews 4:15, 16.**

“In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood in the sinner’s behalf. Thus is represented the union of justice and mercy in the plan of human redemption.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 415.

“Christ offered up His broken body to purchase back God’s heritage, to give man another trial. . . . By His spotless life, His obedience, His death on the cross of Calvary, Christ interceded for the lost race. And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our intercessor He executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, these ascend to God as a sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable, and pardon covers all transgression.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 74.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Describe what it means to enter into God’s rest.
2. What is uniquely special about God’s rest on the seventh-day Sabbath?
3. When resting in the Lord, how do we change?
4. Explain the powerful depth of God’s Word in the Christian life.
5. Why can we be so very thankful for Christ’s ministry in heaven?

## First Sabbath Offering for World Disaster Relief

Recent years have shown the fulfillment of prophecies we have studied for decades—wars, conflicts, terrible accidents, and pandemics are words that have become an integral part of our vocabulary, added to floods, hurricanes, earthquakes among many other tragedies.

In so many ways, we have clearly heard the footsteps of an approaching God. As a result of these sad events, hundreds go through extreme difficulties and need help to meet everything from the simplest needs to the most serious and costly ones.

In these situations, the GC Welfare Department has shared the blessings provided from our fund through the offerings sent by you, our brethren around the world. These are sent in a personal and specific way to meet the needs, as well as through First Sabbath Offerings. Dear brethren, your offerings have served as shelter for those who have lost their homes in natural tragedies. They have provided food for hundreds of families and cared for the orphan and widow, extending sustenance and help to them. These offerings have also helped parents obtain seeds to plant crops to feed their families or begin a small enterprise. Thus many persons of our faith are thereby able to work and generate some source of income otherwise impossible for them.

Thank God that in these times of trial, many have been touched to place their donations on the altar of the Lord. On behalf of those who are served, we deeply thank you!

However, the needs do not cease—on the contrary, they increase every day, and your generosity makes all the difference.

“The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. This, carried out in actual benevolence and good works, is the true fruit of the Christian life.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 14.

Today, as you give your special offering for the first Sabbath, put your best before God. Don't worry if it's too little or too much. It doesn't matter. The important thing is that you do your best. And from the sum of this shared love, we will continue to distribute blessings to our brethren throughout the world. “He who gives to the needy blesses others, and is blessed himself in a still greater degree.” (Ibid., p. 13). God bless you greatly!

*General Conference Welfare Department*



# Christ: The Author of Eternal Salvation

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And being made perfect, [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:9).

“The whole of our salvation comes through the gift of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How glad I am. It comes from such a source that we cannot doubt it. And He is ‘the author’—does it stop there? Does it stop there? ‘The author and finisher of our faith’ (Hebrews 12:2). Thank God. He attends us every step of the way through, if we are willing to be saved in Christ’s appointed way, through obedience to His requirements.”—*This Day With God*, p. 72.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 488–491.

*Sunday*

*January 28*

## 1. THE APPOINTED HIGH PRIEST

- a. What was the function of a high priest in Old Testament times? Hebrews 5:1, 2.

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“The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent Christ.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1100.

- b. To which order of priesthood was Christ connected—and what does His priesthood mean for us? Hebrews 5:5, 6, 10.

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“Christ glorified not Himself in being made High Priest. God gave Him His appointment to the priesthood. He was to be an example to all the human family. He qualified Himself to be, not only the representative of the race, but their Advocate, so that every soul if he will may say, I have a Friend at court. He is a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 930.

“Let us remember that our great High Priest is pleading before the mercy seat in behalf of His ransomed people. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”—*Ibid.*, p. 948.



## 2. MELCHISEDEK

- a. In what ways did Melchisedek prefigure Christ? Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:1–4.
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“God has never left Himself without witness on the earth. At one time Melchisedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ in person, to reveal the truth of heaven, and perpetuate the law of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1092.

“It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchisedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.”—*Ibid.*, p. 1093.

- b. Why couldn't Christ be the High Priest on earth? Hebrews 7:14–17.
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“Christ glorified not Himself in being made High Priest. God gave Him His appointment to the priesthood. He was to be an example to all the human family. He qualified Himself to be, not only the representative of the race, but their Advocate, so that every soul if he will may say, I have a Friend at court. He is a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 930.

“Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 1077.

- c. How did Christ prepare to be our merciful High Priest? Hebrews 5:7, 8.
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“While the city was hushed in silence, and the disciples had returned to their homes to obtain refreshment in sleep, Jesus slept not. His divine pleadings were ascending to His Father from the Mount of Olives that His disciples might be kept from the evil influences which they would daily encounter in the world, and that His own soul might be strengthened and braced for the duties and trials of the coming day. All night, while His followers were sleeping, was their divine Teacher praying. The dew and frost of night fell upon His head bowed in prayer. His example is left for His followers.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 508.

“Christ, the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering. His followers will encounter the enemy many times and will be severely tried, but they need not despair. Christ says to them: ‘Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’ John 16:33.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 212.

### 3. SAVED TO OBEY

- a. Can we be saved if we choose to be disobedient? Explain. Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 5:9.
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“Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God’s commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of His requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character, will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end. If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a colaborer with God. You are elected to wear the yoke of Christ—to bear His burden, to lift His cross. You are to be diligent ‘to make your calling and election sure.’ Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God’s law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 125.

- b. What testimony did Peter give before the Sanhedrin council—and what does this experience teach us? Acts 5:29–32.
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“We are not to inquire, What is the practice of men? or, What is the custom of the world? We are not to ask, How shall I act in order to have the approval of men? or, What will the world tolerate? The question of intense interest to every soul is, What hath God said? We are to read His Word and obey it, not swerving one jot or tittle from its requirements, but acting irrespective of human traditions and jurisdiction.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1056.

“If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

#### 4. MOVING ON TO MATURITY

- a. Describe the sad condition of many professed believers. Hebrews 5:11–13.

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“Paul could not speak to the Jewish converts as plainly as he desired regarding the mystery of godliness. Because of their spiritual weakness, their lack of perception, he could not utter the truth, which, could they have heard aright, with intelligent comprehension, would have been to them a savor of life unto life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1085.

“During the year and a half that Paul had spent in Corinth, he had purposely presented the gospel in its simplicity. . . .

“Paul had necessarily adapted his manner of teaching to the condition of the church. ‘I, brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual,’ he afterward explained to them, ‘but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.’ 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2. Many of the Corinthian believers had been slow to learn the lessons that he was endeavoring to teach them. Their advancement in spiritual knowledge had not been proportionate to their privileges and opportunities. When they should have been far advanced in Christian experience, and able to comprehend and to practice the deeper truths of the word, they were standing where the disciples stood when Christ said to them, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.’ John 16:12. Jealousy, evil surmising, and accusation had closed the hearts of many of the Corinthian believers against the full working of the Holy Spirit, which ‘searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.’ 1 Corinthians 2:10. However wise they might be in worldly knowledge, they were but babes in the knowledge of Christ.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 270, 271.

- b. How are we to advance to Christian perfection and what blessing awaits all that do? Hebrews 5:14; 6:1 (first part); 1 John 3:18; Hosea 6:3.

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“The church will never as a whole receive the latter rain unless they shall put away all envy, evil surmising, and evil speaking. Those who have cherished hatred in the heart until it has strengthened and become part of their character, must have a different experience if they would share in the latter rain.”—*The Home Missionary*, August 1, 1896.

## 5. COMING INTO CHRISTLIKENESS

- a. Describe God's aim for His children. **Philippians 3:12–16; Revelation 3:18–21.**

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached.”—*Education*, p. 18.

“‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

“The true Witness presents encouragements to all who are seeking to walk in the path of humble obedience, through faith in His name. He declares, ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.’

“These are the words of our Substitute and Surety. He who is the divine Head of the church, the mightiest of conquerors, would point His followers to His life, His toils, His self-denials, His struggles and sufferings, through contempt, through rejection, ridicule, scorn, insult, mockery, falsehood, up the path of Calvary to the scene of the crucifixion, that they might be encouraged to press on toward the mark for the prize and reward of the overcomer. Victory is assured through faith and obedience.

“Let us make an application of the words of Christ to our own individual cases. Are we poor, and blind, and wretched, and miserable? Then let us seek the gold and white raiment that He offers. The work of overcoming is not restricted to the age of the martyrs. The conflict is for us, in these days of subtle temptation to worldliness, to self-security, to indulgence of pride, covetousness, false doctrines, and immorality of life.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 966.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what position did God appoint Christ besides High Priest?
2. What is significant about the priesthood of Melchisedek?
3. How does obedience to God's Word relate to our receiving the Holy Spirit?
4. Name some necessary requirements to receive the latter rain.
5. What must we realize about God's aim for us and how it is attained?

# Growing in Understanding

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

“As we appropriate the blessing of God, we shall be able to receive greater measures of His grace. As we learn to endure as seeing Him who is invisible, we shall become changed into the image of Christ. . . .

“Growth in grace will not lead you to be proud, self-confident, and boastful, but will make you more conscious of your own nothingness, of your entire dependence upon the Lord.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 296.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 321–327.

## Sunday

February 4

### 1. ALWAYS GROWING

a. What is written about Jesus in His childhood? Luke 2:40.

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“The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, became a babe in Bethlehem, and for a time represented the helpless infant in its mother’s care. In childhood He spoke and acted as a child, honoring His parents, and carrying out their wishes in helpful ways. But from the first dawning of intelligence He was constantly growing in grace and in a knowledge of truth.”—*Education*, p. 106.

b. How about the child John, the cousin of Jesus? Luke 1:80. In fact, what is God’s plan for all His children? 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

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“Sanctification—how many understand its full meaning? The mind is befogged by sensual malaria. The thoughts need purifying. What might not men and women have been had they realized that the treatment of the body has everything to do with the vigor and purity of mind and heart.

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 909.

## 2. THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. What is the fearful condition of those who once enjoyed light from Heaven, yet later rejected it? Hebrews 6:4–6.

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- b. What serious warning did Jesus give to the Jews who rejected Him? Matthew 12:31, 32.

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“No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent.

“There is no . . . hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 58.

“Those who had spoken against Jesus Himself, not discerning His divine character, might receive forgiveness; for through the Holy Spirit they might be brought to see their error and repent. Whatever the sin, if the soul repents and believes, the guilt is washed away in the blood of Christ; but he who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him. It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 321.

- c. What influence do our words have upon our character? Matthew 12:36.

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“Closely connected with Christ’s warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. ‘Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. . . . Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 323.

### 3. GOD LOVES OUR UNSELFISH WORKS

- a. How does Paul write about the way God sees our activities in behalf of our neighbors? Hebrews 6:10.
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“Our spiritual strength and blessing will be proportionate to the labor of love and good works which we perform. The injunction of the apostle is, ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ’ (Galatians 6:2). Keeping the commandments of God requires of us good works, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and devotion for the good of others, not that our good works alone can save us, but that we surely cannot be saved without good works. After we have done all that we are capable of doing we are then to say, We have done no more than our duty, and at best are unprofitable servants, unworthy of the smallest favor from God. Christ must be our righteousness. . . .

“All around us there are those who have soul hunger and who long for love expressed in words and deeds. Friendly sympathy and real feelings of tender interest for others would bring to our souls blessings that we have never yet experienced, and would bring us into close relation to our Redeemer, whose advent to the world was for the purpose of doing good, and whose life we are to copy. What are we doing for Christ?”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 334.

- b. Even though we are not saved by our own works, how important are they in our Christian journey? Titus 2:13, 14; 3:8.
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“Genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the nonperformance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hardhearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn. . . . We are to be zealous of good works, be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says: ‘I know thy works’ (Revelation 2:2).”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 20.



#### 4. THE CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

- a. What can we learn regarding the assurance of God's promises? Hebrews 6:13–15.
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- b. What does God declare about His promises? Hebrews 6:16–18.
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“God is able and willing ‘more abundantly’ (Hebrews 6:17) to bestow upon His servants the strength they need for test and trial. The plans of the enemies of His work may seem to be well laid and firmly established, but God can overthrow the strongest of these. And this He does in His own time and way, when He sees that the faith of His servants has been sufficiently tested.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164.

- c. Where is our anchor of the soul? Hebrews 6:19, 20.
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“Our faith must pierce beyond the veil, seeing things that are invisible. No one else can look for you. Your must behold for yourself. In the place of murmuring for blessings that are withheld, let us remember and appreciate the blessings already bestowed.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 930.

“We cannot with safety accept the opinions of any man, however learned, unless they are in harmony with the words of the Great Teacher. The opinions of erring men will be presented for our acceptance, but God's Word is our authority, and we are never to accept human teaching without the most conclusive evidence that it agrees with the teaching of God's Word. We are to know that we do know that we are standing on the platform of eternal truth—the Word of the living God.

“Truth, precious truth from the Word of God is to be presented, both in public and in families. We have a message that is to prepare a people to stand amid the perils of the last days. . . . Truth will stand every test that is brought to bear upon it. It cannot be overthrown by the sophistries of Satan. The more it is assailed the more bright and clear it will shine out. As we see indications of the active, earnest efforts of the enemy, shall we not make determined efforts to give the message in clear, decided lines? Shall we not stand forth in the power and Spirit of God, and receive and impart lessons from the Great Teacher? . . . ‘O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth’ (Isaiah 25:1). . . . Let us anchor ourselves to the words of the Lord God of Israel.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 210.

## 5. THE PRIESTHOOD AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST

- a. Which family had been chosen by God for the priesthood in the earthly sanctuary—and why? Exodus 28:1, 2; 32:7, 8, 25, 26.

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“By divine direction the tribe of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. In the earliest times every man was the priest of his own household. In the days of Abraham the priesthood was regarded as the birthright of the eldest son. Now, instead of the firstborn of all Israel, the Lord accepted the tribe of Levi for the work of the sanctuary. By this signal honor He manifested His approval of their fidelity, both in adhering to His service and in executing His judgments when Israel apostatized in the worship of the golden calf. The priesthood, however, was restricted to the family of Aaron. Aaron and his sons alone were permitted to minister before the Lord; the rest of the tribe were entrusted with the charge of the tabernacle and its furniture, and they were to attend upon the priests in their ministration, but they were not to sacrifice, to burn incense, or to see the holy things till they were covered.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

- b. Why was this plan replaced by another priesthood which prefigured Christ? Hebrews 7:11, 15–17, 21–23.
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- c. Contrast the earthly priesthood with that of Christ and explain how effective Christ’s priesthood is for our salvation. Hebrews 7:25–28.

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“Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely’ (Revelation 22:17). No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 343.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can the education of Jesus and John the Baptist be an inspiration to us?
2. Explain the downhill process of the sin against the Holy Spirit.
3. How are genuine good works motivated?
4. What evidence have I seen in my life that God’s promises are true?
5. In seeking salvation, why is the priesthood of Christ important for me?

# Two Covenants

**MEMORY VERSE:** “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13).

“As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–373.

*Sunday*

*February 11*

## 1. GOD’S ETERNAL LAW

- a. What was the main object inside the ark of the covenant, and what did it signify? Exodus 25:16; 26:33, 34; 31:18; Psalm 85:10.

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“The law of God, enshrined within the ark, was the great rule of righteousness and judgment. That law pronounced death upon the transgressor; but above the law was the mercy seat, upon which the presence of God was revealed, and from which, by virtue of the atonement, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 349.

“Adam and Eve, at their creation, had a knowledge of the law of God; they were acquainted with its claims upon them; its precepts were written upon their hearts. When man fell by transgression the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given, and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin offering were established.”—*Ibid.*, p. 363.

- b. What did Christ say about the jurisdiction of God’s law? Matthew 5:17–19.

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“While many are saying in their hearts that He has come to do away with the law, Jesus in unmistakable language reveals His attitude toward the divine statutes. ‘Think not,’ He said, ‘that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.’ ”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, pp. 47, 48.

## 2. TRUE HAPPINESS

- a. How does obedience relate to happiness? Psalm 1:1, 2; Proverbs 6:23; 13:13.

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“It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God’s law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes. To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law ‘when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Job 38:7. The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

- b. After we have sinned, can we obey God’s moral law of the Ten Commandments in our own power—and why or why not? Romans 8:3, 4.

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“The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and the law under the new covenant. He says: ‘Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.’ ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh’—it could not justify man, because in his sinful nature he could not keep the law—‘God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:3, 4.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 373.

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

“We are utterly powerless to rescue ourselves from the grasp of Satan; but God has appointed a way of escape. The Son of the Highest has strength to fight the battle for us, and ‘through Him that loved us’ we may come off ‘more than conquerors.’ ”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 740.

### 3. PERFECT OBEDIENCE UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

- a. How can we present perfect obedience to God's law? Romans 3:31; 1:16, 17.

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"The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized. . . .

"Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.' Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 62, 63.

- b. What is God's assurance under the new covenant? Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33, 34.

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"The work Christianity is designed to achieve in the world is not to depreciate the law of God, not to detract from its sacred dignity in the slightest degree, but it is to write that law in the mind and heart. When the law of God is thus implanted in the soul of the believer, he is approaching eternal life through the merits of Jesus."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 50.

"The 'new covenant' was established upon 'better promises'—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God's law."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

#### 4. GOD'S LAW IN THE HEART

a. When is God's law written in the heart of believers? Romans 5:1-5.

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"The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit.' Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. Through the prophet He declared of Himself, 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Psalm 40:8. And when among men He said, 'The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.' John 8:29."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

b. What wonderful promises are provided to us under the new covenant? Hebrews 8:11, 12.

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

"The blessings of the new covenant are grounded purely on mercy in forgiving unrighteousness and sins. The Lord specifies, I will do thus and thus unto all who turn to Me, forsaking the evil and choosing the good. . . . [Hebrews 8:12 quoted.] All who humble their hearts, confessing their sins, will find mercy and grace and assurance.

"Has God, in showing mercy to the sinner, ceased to be just? Has He dishonored His holy law, and will He henceforth pass over the violation of it? God is true. He changes not. The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God's law. Perfect obedience, revealed in thought, word, and deed, is as essential now as when the lawyer asked Christ, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the law? how readest thou? . . . this do, and thou shalt live' (Luke 10:25-28)."—*That I May Know Him*, p. 299.

## 5. GOD'S COMMANDMENT-KEEPING PEOPLE

- a. What is written regarding God's people under the third angel's message? Revelation 12:17; 14:12.

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"Under the new covenant the conditions by which eternal life may be gained are the same as under the old—perfect obedience. . . . In the new and better covenant Christ has fulfilled the law for the transgressors of law if they receive Him by faith as a personal Saviour. . . . Mercy and forgiveness are the reward of all who come to Christ trusting in His merits to take away their sins. In the better covenant we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. . . . The sinner is helpless to atone for one sin. The power is in Christ's free gift, a promise appreciated by those only who are sensible of their sins and who forsake their sins and cast their helpless souls upon Christ, the sin-pardoning Saviour. He will put into their hearts His perfect law, which is 'holy, and just, and good' (Romans 7:12)."—*That I May Know Him*, p. 299.

- b. Based on the promises of the new covenant, who is really part of God's people in these last days? Hebrews 8:10; Isaiah 51:7, 8.

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"The great obstacle both to the acceptance and to the promulgation of truth is the fact that it involves inconvenience and reproach. This is the only argument against the truth which its advocates have never been able to refute. But this does not deter the true followers of Christ. These do not wait for truth to become popular. Being convinced of their duty, they deliberately accept the cross. . . .

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

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were the Ten Commandments placed in the most holy place of the ark?
2. What habit will tremendously enhance my happiness in life?
3. How only can I cultivate and develop such a habit?
4. Describe the greatest miracle of God's creative power in our behalf.
5. How is the new covenant experience to distinguish the final remnant of God's people?



# The Old Covenant

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second” (Hebrews 8:7).

“The terms of the ‘old covenant’ were, Obey and live: ‘If a man do, he shall even live in them’ (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5); but ‘cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.’ Deuteronomy 27:26.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

**Suggested Readings:** *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 135;  
*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 675–677.

## Sunday

February 18

### 1. A MONUMENTAL COVENANT

a. When and where was the old covenant established? Exodus 19:1, 2.

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“Soon after the encampment at Sinai, Moses was called up into the mountain to meet with God. Alone he climbed the steep and rugged path, and drew near to the cloud that marked the place of Jehovah’s presence. Israel was now to be taken into a close and peculiar relation to the Most High—to be incorporated as a church and a nation under the government of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

b. What was the condition of the covenant at Sinai, and why is this principle important? Exodus 19:3–6. How did the people respond? Exodus 19:8.

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“Obedience was the only condition upon which ancient Israel was to receive the fulfillment of the promises which made them the highly favored people of God; and obedience to that law will bring as great blessings to individuals and nations now as it would have brought to the Hebrews.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 218.

“Moses returned to the camp, and having summoned the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the divine message. Their answer was, ‘All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.’ Thus they entered into a solemn covenant with God, pledging themselves to accept Him as their ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of His authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

## 2. ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

- a. In what did the Israelites put their confidence when making their promise to obey God's law? Romans 10:1–3.

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"The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.' Exodus 24:7."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

- b. When was the same mistake made by the Jewish people in the time of Christ? Matthew 5:20; Romans 9:31, 32.

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"While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; 'being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness' (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God."—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 54, 55.

- c. What is written about our own righteousness? Isaiah 64:6.

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"[Isaiah 64:6 quoted.] Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God 'was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.' "—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 311.

"Unless the Holy Spirit works upon the human heart, at every step we shall stumble and fall. Man's efforts alone are nothing but worthlessness; but cooperation with Christ means a victory."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 381.

"When the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are; we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 28, 29.

### 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD COVENANT

- a. Since the covenant of grace was sufficient for salvation, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? Galatians 3:19; Psalm 119:18; Revelation 3:17, 18.

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“If the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage.

“But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

- b. What happened only a few weeks after the Israelites promised to keep God’s law? Exodus 32:1–6. In whom was the fault found under the covenant made at Sinai? Hebrews 8:8.

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“In utter discouragement and wrath because of their great sin, he [Moses] threw down the tables of stone by divine direction purposely to break them in the sight of the people, and thus signify that they had broken the covenant so recently made with God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1109.

“[The Israelites] had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

## 4. PETER'S "OLD COVENANT" EXPERIENCE

- a. Before going to Gethsemane, what did Peter promise to Jesus? Luke 22:33.
- b. What was the answer of Christ to Peter? Luke 22:34.

"In his early discipleship Peter thought himself strong. Like the Pharisee, in his own estimation he was 'not as other men are.' When Christ on the eve of His betrayal forewarned His disciples, 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night,' Peter confidently declared, 'Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.' Mark 14:27, 29. Peter did not know his own danger. Self-confidence misled him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 152.

- c. Soon afterwards, how did Peter behave when asked about his relationship to Jesus? Matthew 26:69–74.

- d. How did Jesus respond when Peter denied Him? Luke 22:61, 62.

"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. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he found mercy. The look of Christ assured him of pardon."—*Ibid.*, pp. 152–154.

"It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin. All the disciples, by sleeping in that critical hour, sustained a great loss. Christ knew the fiery ordeal through which they were to pass. He knew how Satan would work to paralyze their senses that they might be unready for the trial. Therefore it was that He gave them warning. Had those hours in the garden been spent in watching and prayer, Peter would not have been left to depend upon his own feeble strength. He would not have denied his Lord. Had the disciples watched with Christ in His agony, they would have been prepared to behold His suffering upon the cross. They would have understood in some degree the nature of His overpowering anguish. They would have been able to recall His words that foretold His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 713.

## 5. WITHOUT CHRIST, NOTHING CAN BE DONE

- a. How useless is our battle against sin by ourselves? Romans 7:14, 15, 18–25; Hebrews 8:7.

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“The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today, through which we have hope. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the Author and the Finisher of our faith.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1077.

- b. What did Christ say about our efforts without Him? John 15:5.

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“The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ’s strength, his emptiness to Christ’s fullness, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.

“This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. [John 15:5 quoted.] This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Consider the positive and negative aspects of Israel’s pledge at Sinai.
2. What warnings should we take from the frailty of Israel?
3. How can God make the best of our own mistakes and failures?
4. What should we always remember about Christ’s attitude when Peter fell?
5. Why does Jesus compare Himself to a vine?

## First Sabbath Offering For a Chapel and School in Hîncești, Moldova

Hîncești is the administrative municipality in the district bearing the same name located in the north-western part of the Republic of Moldova. The district has a population of 122,000 and is intersected by well-traveled roads leading to Romania and Ukraine. The economy of this area is based on agriculture (including vineyards and orchards), as well as other products such as shoes, clothes, furniture, and concrete building blocks.



Orthodoxy is the predominant religion (nearly 96%) in this area, while other Protestant denominations make up the remaining 4%. The message of the SDA Reform Movement was brought to this city by a family that moved here in 1959. Two other families joined the church in 1973 and 1983, respectively. So, through the grace of God, the number of church members increased, and, as a result, a congregation was organized here in 1990.

At first, the members met at local families' homes where they worshiped. Then, in 2000, a private house was bought, and this served as a worship place for 20 years. Today, the majority of members are young families and children. On the outskirts of town, a larger parcel of land has been secured for the building a house of worship to spread the gospel along with an educational classroom for our children to be taught in preparation for the last moments of earth's history. "Not only should a humble house of worship be erected, but all necessary arrangements should be made for the permanent establishment of the church school."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 108.

"The Lord has persons to engage in the work of establishing church schools as soon as something is done to prepare the way for them. . . .

"It is high time for Sabbathkeepers to separate their children from worldly associations and place them under the very best teachers, who will make the Bible the foundation of all study."—*Ibid.*, p. 109.

May the Lord touch hearts and bless our dear brethren around the world to contribute generously to this project, that the light here may spread—and together we can hasten the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We thank you in advance!

*Your brethren from Hîncești*

# The Earthly and the Heavenly Sanctuary

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

“Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but without regeneration through faith in His blood, there is no remission of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 112, 113.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 409–422.

*Sunday*

*February 25*

## 1. THE PURPOSE OF THE SANCTUARY

a. What was God’s purpose in building the sanctuary? Exodus 25:8.

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“In the building of the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, Moses was directed to make all things according to the pattern of things in the heavens. God called him into the mount, and revealed to him the heavenly things, and in their similitude the tabernacle, with all that pertained to it, was fashioned.

“So to Israel, whom He desired to make His dwelling place, He revealed His glorious ideal of character. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai. . . .

“But this ideal they were, in themselves, powerless to attain. The revelation at Sinai could only impress them with their need and helplessness. Another lesson the tabernacle, through its service of sacrifice, was to teach—the lesson of pardon of sin, and power through the Saviour for obedience unto life.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 192.

b. Who would fulfill the real purpose of the sanctuary? John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

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“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol—that glorious building.”—*Ibid.*



## 2. THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

- a. Describe the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary and its main objects. Hebrews 9:1, 2.
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“In the first apartment, or holy place, were the table of showbread, the candlestick, or lampstand, and the altar of incense. The table of showbread stood on the north. With its ornamental crown, it was overlaid with pure gold. On this table the priests were each Sabbath to place twelve cakes, arranged in two piles, and sprinkled with frankincense. The loaves that were removed, being accounted holy, were to be eaten by the priests. On the south was the seven-branched candlestick, with its seven lamps. Its branches were ornamented with exquisitely wrought flowers, resembling lilies, and the whole was made from one solid piece of gold. There being no windows in the tabernacle, the lamps were never all extinguished at one time, but shed their light by day and by night. Just before the veil separating the holy place from the most holy and the immediate presence of God, stood the golden altar of incense. Upon this altar the priest was to burn incense every morning and evening; its horns were touched with the blood of the sin offering, and it was sprinkled with blood upon the great Day of Atonement. The fire upon this altar was kindled by God Himself and was sacredly cherished. Day and night the holy incense diffused its fragrance throughout the sacred apartments, and without, far around the tabernacle.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 348.

- b. Describe the most holy place and its service. Hebrews 9:3–7.
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“Beyond the inner veil was the holy of holies, where centered the symbolic service of atonement and intercession, and which formed the connecting link between heaven and earth. In this apartment was the ark, a chest of acacia wood, overlaid within and without with gold, and having a crown of gold about the top. It was made as a depository for the tables of stone, upon which God Himself had inscribed the Ten Commandments. Hence it was called the ark of God’s testament, or the ark of the covenant, since the Ten Commandments were the basis of the covenant made between God and Israel.”—*Ibid.*

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration.”—*Ibid.*, p. 355.

### 3. ETERNAL REDEMPTION

**a. What is the sure result of the intercession of Christ? Hebrews 9:11, 12.**

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“Our great High Priest completed the sacrificial offering of Himself when He suffered without the gate. Then a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people. Jesus is our Advocate, our High Priest, our Intercessor. Our present position therefore is like that of the Israelites, standing in the outer court, waiting and looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . . . .

“When the high priest entered the holy place, representing the place where our High Priest is now pleading, and offered sacrifice on the altar, no propitiatory sacrifices were offered without. While the high priest was interceding within, every heart was to be bowed in contrition before God, pleading for the pardon of transgression. Type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. The great High Priest has made the only sacrifice that will be of any value. . . .

“In His intercession as our Advocate, Christ needs no man’s virtue, no man’s intercession. Christ is the only sin bearer, the only sin offering. Prayer and confession are to be offered only to Him who has entered once for all into the holy place.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 73.

**b. How can our life be benefited by the blood of Christ? Hebrews 9:13, 14.**

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“While we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ’s atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour’s character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are ever to bear in mind that there is One that can take away sin and save the sinner. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 93.

“Say unto the Lord, Mine iniquities have separated between me and my God. O Lord, pardon my transgressions. Blot out my sins from the book of Thy remembrance. Praise His holy name, there is forgiveness with Him, and you can be converted, transformed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 98.

“The blood of Christ is efficacious, but it needs to be applied continually. . . .

“If it was necessary in ancient times for the unclean to be purified by the blood of sprinkling, how essential for those living in the perils of the last days, and exposed to the temptations of Satan, to have the blood of Christ applied to their hearts daily.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 200.

#### 4. VALIDATING THE NEW COVENANT

##### a. When did the covenant of grace become ratified? Hebrews 9:22–24.

“The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God’s law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation.

“This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, ‘In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God’s law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, ‘I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.’ Genesis 17:1. The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, ‘Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’ Genesis 26:5. And the Lord declared to him, ‘I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations.’ . . .

“Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a *new* covenant. The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 370, 371.

##### b. How did the apostle Paul explain how the Hebrew system of sacrifices was fulfilled in Christ? Hebrews 9:24–26.

“Listen as [Paul] makes plain the work of the Redeemer as the great high priest of mankind—the One who through the sacrifice of His own life was to make atonement for sin once for all, and was then to take up His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Paul’s hearers were made to understand that the Messiah for whose advent they had been longing, had already come; that His death was the antitype of all the sacrificial offerings, and that His ministry in the sanctuary in heaven was the great object that cast its shadow backward and made clear the ministry of the Jewish priesthood.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 246.

## 5. CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

- a. What is promised to those who accept the covenant of grace? Hebrews 9:27, 28; Psalm 50:1–5; Isaiah 25:9.

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“The Lord desires us to appreciate the great plan of redemption, to realize our high privilege as the children of God, and to walk before Him in obedience, with grateful thanksgiving. He desires us to serve Him in newness of life, with gladness every day. He longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares for us. He bids us rejoice because we are the heritage of the Lord, because the righteousness of Christ is the white robe of His saints, because we have the blessed hope of the soon coming of our Saviour.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 299.

“We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world.

“The truth that Christ is coming should be kept before every mind.”—*Evangelism*, p. 220.

- b. What petition should be included in our prayers? Revelation 22:20.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What blessings does God have for me in studying the sanctuary?
2. Explain the significance of each distinct object in the sanctuary.
3. What do we need to understand about Christ’s sacrifice in our behalf?
4. Why is the new covenant named as it is—although it already existed in the time of Abraham?
5. What is the culmination of all our hopes and how is it to influence our daily life?

# The Superiority of Christ's Sacrifice

**MEMORY VERSE:** "But this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:12-14).

"Paul and his fellow workers proclaimed the doctrine of righteousness by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. They presented Christ as the one who, seeing the helpless condition of the fallen race, came to redeem men and women by living a life of obedience to God's law and by paying the penalty of disobedience. And in the light of the cross many who had never before known of the true God, began to comprehend the greatness of the Father's love."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 207, 208.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 156-166.

*Sunday*

*March 3*

## 1. THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES

- a. Why were the sacrifices offered in the earthly sanctuary unable to forgive sins? Hebrews 10:1-4.

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"The blood of beasts could not satisfy the demands of God as an atoning sacrifice for the transgression of His law. The life of a beast was of less value than the life of the offending sinner, therefore could not be a ransom for sin. It could only be acceptable with God as a figure of the offering of His Son. . . .

"God made man perfect and upright, and after his transgression there could be no sacrifice acceptable to God for him, unless the offering made should in value be superior to man as he was in his state of perfection and innocency."—*Lift Him Up*, p. 24.

"The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour's death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 165.

## 2. THE FULLY QUALIFIED HIGH PRIEST

### a. Who only could redeem the sinner, and why? Hebrews 10:5–10.

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“Upon Christ no requirements were laid. He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again. No obligation was laid upon Him to undertake the work of atonement. It was a voluntary sacrifice that He made. His life was of sufficient value to rescue man from his fallen condition.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 24.

### b. What gave Christ authority to be our High Priest? Hebrews 10:11–14.

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“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 755.

### c. Why, being fully innocent, did Christ die on the cross? 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 11.

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“It was not alone by dying on the cross that Christ accomplished His work of saving men. The ignominy and suffering and humiliation was a part of His mission. [Isaiah 53:5 quoted.] This penalty Christ bore for the sins of the transgressor; He has borne the punishment for every man and for this reason He can ransom every soul, however fallen his condition, if he will accept the law of God as his standard of righteousness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, pp. 1147, 1148.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

### 3. FREE ACCESS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

- a. **Having Christ as our High Priest, how can we approach the throne of grace? Ephesians 2:17, 18; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19, 22.**

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“Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.

“When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have access to God through Him; we are accepted in the Beloved.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 229.

“Let each one of you search his own heart, cleanse the defiled soul temple, and watch unto prayer. Be determined you will seek Jesus until you find Him; release not your grasp until His love dwells in your heart and you have His spirit subduing your life and fashioning your character. Then believe, and with boldness you may approach His throne, knowing that He will hear your prayers.”—*Ibid.*, p. 132.

- b. **What will be the result of our connection with Christ? Hebrews 10:23–25.**

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“Those who do not feel the necessity of seeking the assembly of the saints, with the precious assurance that the Lord will meet with them, show how lightly they value the help that God has provided for them.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 934.

“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.

“Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God’s Word. In amazement he hears the message, ‘Ye are complete in Him.’ Now all is at rest in his soul.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 107, 108.



#### 4. KEEPING GOD'S GOODNESS FOREMOST IN OUR MIND

- a. What will be the result if we neglect such a great salvation? Hebrews 2:3; 10:26–31.

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“God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit’s work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from God, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner. ‘Let him alone’ (Hosea 4:17) is the divine command.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 405.

- b. Why should we ever recall God’s deliverances for us—and what example do the Advent pioneers give in this regard? Hebrews 10:32, 33.

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“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. We are exhorted to call to ‘remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.’ Hebrews 10:32. For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 364, 365.

“In referring to our past experience, we are carrying out the exhortation of the apostle to the Hebrews: [Hebrews 10:32 quoted.]

“Our lives are interwoven with the cause of God. We have no separate interest aside from this work. And when we see the advancement that the cause has made from a very small beginning, coming up slowly yet surely to strength and prosperity; as we see the success of the cause in which we have toiled, and suffered, and nearly sacrificed our lives, who shall prevent or forbid our boasting in God? Our experience in this cause is valuable to us. We have invested everything in it.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 319.

## 5. SAFE PATHS

- a. How can we be safe on the way to life eternal? Hebrews 10:35–39.

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“It is not he that putteth on the armor that can boast of the victory; for he has the battle to fight and victory to win. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved. . . . If we do not go forward from victory to victory, the soul will draw back to perdition. We should raise no human standard whereby to measure character. We have seen enough of what men call perfection here below. God’s holy law is the only thing by which we can determine whether we are keeping His way or not. If we are disobedient, our characters are out of harmony with God’s moral rule of government, and it is stating a falsehood to say, ‘I am saved.’ No one is saved who is a transgressor of the law of God, which is the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 315.

- b. What are the main characteristics of God’s people in these last days? Revelation 12:17; 14:12.

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“There are only two parties upon the earth—those who stand under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 161.

“At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments—‘Christ our righteousness.’ There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”—*Christian Experience and Teachings*, p. 207.

“Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 172.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why wasn’t the blood of beasts adequate for salvation?
2. Explain, as far as we can grasp, the depth of Christ’s sacrifice for us.
3. What do you appreciate most about Christ’s ministration for you?
4. Why should we recall old experiences in our religious life?
5. What do many today fail to realize about salvation?

# Heroes of Faith

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report” (Hebrews 11:1, 2).

“Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

**Suggested Reading:** *Gospel Workers*, pp. 258–263.

*Sunday*

*March 10*

## 1. ABEL

a. Why did God accept Abel and his offering? Hebrews 11:4.

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“Abel grasped the great principles of redemption. He saw himself a sinner, and he saw sin and its penalty, death, standing between his soul and communion with God. He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law that had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous, and his offering accepted.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 72.

b. Why did God reject Cain and his offering? Hebrews 9:22.

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“Abel chose faith and obedience; Cain, unbelief and rebellion. Here the whole matter rested.

“Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favor with God. It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.

## 2. NOAH

- a. What is written about Noah? Genesis 6:8, 9, 22; Hebrews 11:7.

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“While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. It was thus that his faith was perfected and made evident. He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. As he began to construct that immense boat on dry ground, multitudes came from every direction to see the strange sight and to hear the earnest, fervent words of the singular preacher. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95.

- b. What comparison did Jesus give about these last days? Matthew 24:37–39.

“The sins that called for vengeance upon the antediluvian world exist today. The fear of God is banished from the hearts of men, and His law is treated with indifference and contempt. The intense worldliness of that generation is equaled by that of the generation now living. . . . God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking; He had given them the fruits of the earth in great abundance to supply their physical wants. Their sin consisted in taking these gifts without gratitude to the Giver, and debasing themselves by indulging appetite without restraint. It was lawful for them to marry. Marriage was in God’s order; it was one of the first institutions which He established. He gave special directions concerning this ordinance, clothing it with sanctity and beauty; but these directions were forgotten, and marriage was perverted and made to minister to passion.

“A similar condition of things exists now. That which is lawful in itself is carried to excess. Appetite is indulged without restraint. Professed followers of Christ are today eating and drinking with the drunken, while their names stand in honored church records. Intemperance benumbs the moral and spiritual powers and prepares the way for indulgence of the lower passions. Multitudes feel under no moral obligation to curb their sensual desires, and they become the slaves of lust. Men are living for the pleasures of sense; for this world and this life alone. Extravagance pervades all circles of society. Integrity is sacrificed for luxury and display. They that make haste to be rich pervert justice and oppress the poor, and ‘slaves and souls of men’ are still bought and sold. Fraud and bribery and theft stalk unrebuked in high places and in low. The issues of the press teem with records of murder—crimes so cold-blooded and causeless that it seems as though every instinct of humanity were blotted out.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 101, 102.

### 3. JACOB

- a. **What terrible sin made a dark stain on Jacob's experience? Genesis 25:29–33; 27:18–24.**

“Jacob and Rebekah succeeded in their purpose, but they gained only trouble and sorrow by their deception. God had declared that Jacob should receive the birthright, and His word would have been fulfilled in His own time had they waited in faith for Him to work for them. But like many who now profess to be children of God, they were unwilling to leave the matter in His hands. Rebekah bitterly repented the wrong counsel she had given her son; it was the means of separating him from her, and she never saw his face again. From the hour when he received the birthright, Jacob was weighed down with self-condemnation. He had sinned against his father, his brother, his own soul, and against God. In one short hour he had made work for a lifelong repentance. This scene was vivid before him in afteryears, when the wicked course of his sons oppressed his soul.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 180.

- b. **When was Jacob fully forgiven and justified? Genesis 32:24–31.**

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“With earnest cries and tears [Jacob] made his prayer before God. Suddenly a strong hand was laid upon him. . . . While he was thus battling for his life, the sense of his guilt pressed upon his soul; his sins rose up before him, to shut him out from God. But in his terrible extremity he remembered God's promises, and his whole heart went out in entreaty for His mercy. . . . It was Christ, ‘the Angel of the covenant,’ who had revealed Himself to Jacob. The patriarch was now disabled and suffering the keenest pain, but he would not loosen his hold. All penitent and broken, he clung to the Angel; ‘he wept, and made supplication’ (Hosea 12:4), pleading for a blessing. He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned. Physical pain was not sufficient to divert his mind from this object. His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release Himself; He urged, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaketh;’ but Jacob answered, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

“Jacob ‘had power over the Angel, and prevailed’ Hosea 12:4. Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea.”—*Ibid.*, p. 197.

## 4. SAMSON

- a. Explain God's plan for Samson. Judges 13:4, 5.

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"To the childless wife of Manoah 'the Angel of Jehovah' appeared with the message that she should have a son, through whom God would begin to deliver Israel. In view of this the Angel gave her instruction concerning her own habits, and also for the treatment of her child. . . . And the same prohibition was to be imposed, from the first, upon the child, with the addition that his hair should not be cut; for he was to be consecrated to God as a Nazarite."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 560.

- b. How are we warned by the first great mistake of Samson? Judges 14:1–3.

"Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life. To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing."—*Ibid.*, p. 563.

"Many mistake strong passions for a strong character, but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him. . . .

"Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall, sooner or later.

"The very ones whom God purposes to use as His instruments for a special work, Satan employs his utmost power to lead astray. He attacks us at our weak points, working through defects in the character to gain control of the whole man; and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed."—*Ibid.*, pp. 567, 568.

- c. After being unfaithful to his vow, what happened to Samson? Judges 16:4, 21. How deeply did he repent of his sins? Judges 16:22, 28–30; Hebrews 11:32.

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"In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance."—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 136.

## 5. JOSEPH

- a. What mistakes did Joseph and his father Jacob commit with regard to the rest of the sons? Genesis 37:2, 3. Through their hatred against Joseph, what did his brothers do to him? Genesis 37:28–36.

“[Jacob’s] affection was to become a cause of trouble and sorrow. Jacob unwisely manifested his preference for Joseph, and this excited the jealousy of his other sons. As Joseph witnessed the evil conduct of his brothers, he was greatly troubled; he ventured gently to remonstrate with them, but only aroused still further their hatred and resentment. He could not endure to see them sinning against God, and he laid the matter before his father, hoping that his authority might lead them to reform.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 209.

“To become a slave was a fate more to be feared than death. In an agony of terror [Joseph] appealed to one and another of his brothers, but in vain. . . . Steeling their hearts against his entreaties, they delivered him into the hands of the heathen traders.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212.

- b. How did God change the fate of Joseph? Romans 8:28; Genesis 45:4–8.

“The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ. . . .

“Joseph, through his bondage in Egypt, became a savior to his father’s family; yet this fact did not lessen the guilt of his brothers. So the crucifixion of Christ by His enemies made Him the Redeemer of mankind, the Saviour of the fallen race, and Ruler over the whole world; but the crime of His murderers was just as heinous as though God’s providential hand had not controlled events for His own glory and the good of man.”—*Ibid.*, p. 239.

# Friday

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we follow in the spiritual path of Abel rather than Cain?
2. What would reveal us to be Christians in the path of Noah?
3. Explain the key to Jacob’s victory despite his great sin.
4. How can parents guide their children to avoid Samson’s downfall?
5. Why can we be encouraged by God’s working in the life of Jacob?

# Looking Unto Jesus

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

“If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209.

**Suggested Reading:** *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 199–202.

*Sunday*

*March 17*

## 1. LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT

a. What is weighing us down in our Christian walk? Hebrews 12:1.

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“Envy, malice, evil thinking, evilspeaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonor upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312.

b. How can we overcome these defects of character? Hebrews 12:2.

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“Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 355.



## 2. CHRIST'S JOY

- a. What was the main motive for Christ to die in our behalf? Hebrews 12:2 (last part); Isaiah 53:11.

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"By offering Himself to make intercession for the transgression of the human race, Christ executed the office of priest. As a reward, He was to see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. His seed should prolong their days on the earth forever."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 402.

"What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 601.

- b. How can we follow Christ's example of self-denial? Hebrews 12:3; Matthew 16:24.

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"Those who would gain the blessing of sanctification must first learn the meaning of self-sacrifice. The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' . . . It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ's way."—*Ibid.*, p. 560.

"Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ."—*Ibid.*, p. 561.

"God bids you with one hand, faith, take hold of His mighty arm, and with the other hand, love, reach perishing souls. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Follow Him. Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Walk even as He walked. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. The work you have to perform is to do the will of Him who sustains your life for His glory. If you labor for yourselves, it can profit you nothing. To labor for others' good, to be less self-caring and more in earnest to devote all to God, will be acceptable to Him and be returned by His rich grace."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 170.

### 3. THE FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

- a. How does a loving father deal with his erring children? Hebrews 12:5–11; Revelation 3:19.

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“David learned wisdom from God’s dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before God. . . .

“Our Lord has said: ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.’ ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’ Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father’s tender love, ‘that we might be *partakers of His holiness.*’ ”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 683.

- b. What is God’s purpose for us in our trials? Matthew 5:4.

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“God ‘doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.’ Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is ‘for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.’ Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

“The trials of life are God’s workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 10.

“It is God who has led you through strait places. He had a purpose in this, that tribulation might work in you patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. He permitted trials to come upon you, that, through them, you might experience the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

“God led you through affliction and trials that you might have more perfect trust and confidence in Him, and that you might think less of your own judgment.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 416.

#### 4. FOLLOWING HOLINESS

- a. What is the meaning of holiness and sanctification? 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7; 5:23, 24.
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“ ‘This is the will of God,’ the apostle Paul wrote, ‘even your sanctification.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:3. The sanctification of the church is God’s object in all His dealings with His people. He has chosen them from eternity, that they might be holy. He gave His Son to die for them, that they might be sanctified through obedience to the truth, divested of all the littleness of self. From them He requires a personal work, a personal surrender. God can be honored by those who profess to believe in Him, only as they are conformed to His image and controlled by His Spirit. Then, as witnesses for the Saviour, they may make known what divine grace has done for them.

“True sanctification comes through the working out of the principle of love. ‘God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ 1 John 4:16. The life of him in whose heart Christ abides, will reveal practical godliness. The character will be purified, elevated, ennobled, and glorified. Pure doctrine will blend with works of righteousness; heavenly precepts will mingle with holy practices.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 559, 560.

- b. What is one of the main agents of our sanctification? John 17:17.
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“As darkness thickens and error increases, we should obtain a more thorough knowledge of the truth and be prepared to maintain our position from the Scriptures.

“We must be sanctified through the truth, be wholly consecrated to God, and so live out our holy profession that the Lord can shed increasing light upon us, and that we may see light in His light, and be strengthened with His strength.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 104, 105.

“ ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’ Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.’ John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

## 5. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SANCTIFICATION

- a. How can we receive the righteousness of Christ in our life? Matthew 5:6; Hebrews 10:37–39.

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“The sense of unworthiness will lead the heart to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and this desire will not be disappointed. Those who make room in their hearts for Jesus will realize His love. All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. [Matthew 5:6 quoted.]”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 391.

“To sin, wherever found, ‘our God is a consuming fire.’ Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 107.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some weights that may be hindering my race for immortality?
2. How can I share in the joy that motivated Christ while on earth?
3. Explain the balanced responsibility of a good, loving father.
4. What happens when we immerse ourselves in Scripture and apply its teaching?
5. Why are reverence and godly fear so important—yet so rare—today?

# Admonitions to Remember

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Hebrews 13:12, 13).

“Christ, our substitute, was to suffer without the boundaries of Jerusalem. He died outside the gate, where felons and murderers were executed. Full of significance are the words, ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.’ Galatians 3:13.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 741.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Adventist Home*, pp. 445–452.

## Sunday

March 24

### 1. BROTHERLY LOVE

- a. What was the specific problem of the Ephesus church? Revelation 2:4, 5.

“The members of the church [of Ephesus] were united in sentiment and action. Love for Christ was the golden chain that bound them together. They followed on to know the Lord more and still more perfectly, and in their lives were revealed the joy and peace of Christ. They visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and kept themselves unspotted from the world. . . .

“But after a time the zeal of the believers began to wane, and their love for God and for one another grew less. Coldness crept into the church. Some forgot the wonderful manner in which they had received the truth. One by one the old standard-bearers fell at their post. Some of the younger workers, who might have shared the burdens of these pioneers, and thus have been prepared for wise leadership, had become weary of oft-repeated truths. In their desire for something novel and startling they attempted to introduce new phases of doctrine, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel. . . .

“As these false doctrines were urged, differences sprang up, and the eyes of many were turned from beholding Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith. The discussion of unimportant points of doctrine, and the contemplation of pleasing fables of man’s invention, occupied time that should have been spent in proclaiming the gospel.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 579, 580.

## 2. A BEAUTIFUL CHRISTIAN QUALITY

- a. What Christian characteristic is emphasized by the apostle Paul? Titus 1:7, 8; Hebrews 13:1, 2.
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“ ‘A lover of hospitality’ is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction: ‘Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.’

“These admonitions have been strangely neglected. Even among those who profess to be Christians true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board without embarrassment or parade. . . .

“God is displeased with the selfish interest so often manifested for ‘me and my family.’ . . .

“When the spirit of hospitality dies, the heart becomes palsied with selfishness.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 445–447.

- b. Name two Old Testament examples of Christian hospitality. Genesis 18:1–8; 19:1–3.
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“The Bible lays much stress upon the practice of hospitality. Not only does it enjoin hospitality as a duty, but it presents many beautiful pictures of the exercise of this grace and the blessings which it brings. Foremost among these is the experience of Abraham. . . .

“These acts of courtesy God thought of sufficient importance to record in His word; and more than a thousand years later they were referred to by an inspired apostle: ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’

“The privilege granted Abraham and Lot is not denied to us. By showing hospitality to God’s children we, too, may receive His angels into our dwellings. Even in our day angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God’s countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes.”—*Ibid.*, p. 445.

### 3. MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE

- a. When did God establish the institution of marriage? Genesis 1:26–28; 2:18, 21–24. How did Christ bless marriage in His ministry? John 2:1–5.
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“God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honourable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.

“He who gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet performed His first miracle at a marriage festival. In the festal hall where friends and kindred rejoiced together, Christ began His public ministry. Thus He sanctioned marriage, recognizing it as an institution that He Himself had established. . . .

“Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, ‘Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.’ ”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 25, 26.

“[Christ’s] first miracle was wrought on the occasion of the marriage. Thus He announced to the world that marriage when kept pure and undefiled is a sacred institution.”—*Ibid.*, p. 341.

- b. When questioned regarding divorce, what did Christ say to the Pharisees? Matthew 19:1–8. How long must the marriage vow last? Romans 7:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Malachi 2:14–16.
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“In the youthful mind marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever.

“Every marriage engagement should be carefully considered, for marriage is a step taken for life. Both the man and the woman should carefully consider whether they can cleave to each other through the vicissitudes of life as long as they both shall live.”—*Ibid.*, p. 340.

#### 4. RESPECT TO FAITHFUL LEADERS

- a. According to Inspiration, how should church members consider their faithful leaders? Hebrews 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

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“The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as His ambassadors. The apostle Peter, describing a class who are abandoned sinners, says, ‘Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.’ 2 Peter 2:10, 11. And Paul, in his instruction for those who are placed over the church, says, ‘Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.’ 1 Timothy 5:19. He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders and teachers of His people will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 386.

- b. When Aaron and Miriam rebelled against the leadership of Moses, how did God deal with them? Numbers 12:1–10; Exodus 20:12.

“The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work.”—*Ibid.*

“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.”—*Ibid.*, p. 308.

- c. What biblical understanding has been strangely forgotten in modern society—and too often, why? Hebrews 13:17, 18; Leviticus 19:32.

“You often set your opinions up above men and women who have had many more years of experience than yourself, and who are far better qualified to direct and give words of wise judgment than yourself.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 163.



## 5. JESUS, ALWAYS THE SAME

- a. What is written about the two natures of Christ? Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1–3, 14; Hebrews 1:1–3, 6–10.

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“By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God ‘manifest in the flesh.’ 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says: ‘I AM the Good Shepherd.’ ‘I AM the living Bread.’ ‘I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ ‘All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.’ John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. ‘God with us’ is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 24, 25.

- b. Did Christ lose any of His divine attributes during His incarnation? Explain. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17.

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“God always has been. He is the great I AM. The psalmist declares, ‘Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.’ He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. . . . He is infinite and omnipresent. No words of ours can describe His greatness and majesty.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 92.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I escape the pitfall that occurred in Ephesus?
2. Why is hospitality such a valuable asset in the church?
3. If we are serious about Scripture, how must we understand marriage?
4. Explain the far-reaching extent of the fifth commandment.
5. Why is it vital for us to cherish the two natures of Christ?

# First Sabbath Offerings



**JANUARY 6**  
for the "Eden"  
Health Center, Breaza,  
Romania  
(see p. 4.)

**FEBRUARY 3**  
for World Disaster Relief  
(see p. 25.)



**MARCH 2**  
For a Chapel and  
School in Hincesti,  
Moldova  
(see p. 46.)