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Sabbath Bible Lessons
Senior Division



Highlights From the Minor Prophets

Ancient messages from Heaven,
still relevant today.



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

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Foreword

Although we call them the “minor” prophets, their message is not insignificant! The name is simply due to the fact that the books they wrote are brief. Yet these power-packed messages are forceful, direct, and highly relevant for today. This is why Sabbath school students worldwide will focus on *Highlights From the Minor Prophets* for the next three months as a timely investment in our preparation for the close of probation and return of Christ.

The minor prophets do not bring smooth, easy messages. No indeed—they cut like an axe laid at the very root of a tree. “God does not send messengers to flatter the sinner. He delivers no message of peace to lull the unsanctified into fatal security. He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer, and pierces the soul with arrows of conviction.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

“God has ever been faithful to punish crime. He sent His prophets to warn the guilty, denounce their sins, and pronounce judgment upon them. Those who question why the word of God brings out the sins of His people in so plain a manner for scoffers to deride and saints to deplore, should consider that it was all written for their instruction, that they may avoid the evils recorded and imitate only the righteousness of those who served the Lord.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 12.

“Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul’s aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 53.

The minor prophets called for God’s people to be awake, to understand His providence, and to accept His work in their hearts. This is the very message that we also need to hear.

“Brethren, to whom the truths of God’s word have been opened, what part will you act in the closing scenes of this world’s history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and on earth? Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to those things that are written therein; ‘for the time is at hand.’ Let none now tamper with sin, the source of every misery in our world. No longer remain in lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know that you are fully on the Lord’s side.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 404.

May the Lord guide us as we study these lessons!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, January 3, 2026



The Headquarters in Siguatepeque, Honduras

Honduras is the second-largest country in Central America. In a territory extending 43,433 square miles (112,492 km²), it is centrally located and bordered by the nations of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, to the south by the Pacific Ocean at the Gulf of Fonseca, and to the north by the Gulf of Honduras, a large inlet of the Caribbean Sea. Among the population of 10.8 million inhabitants, 48.7% are Catholics, 41% Protestants, 8% atheists, agnostics, or profess no religion, and 3% are of other religions. The official language is Spanish; the national exports are primarily agricultural, followed by electronic equipment.

The SDARM arrived in the 1960's with the visit of our brothers Silvestre Cabanillas from Perú and Felipe García from Argentina. After many years of labor, the message spread to such an extent that in 2016, the Honduran Union was organized, consisting of three Fields with a combined membership of 542 members and approximately 700 regular visitors who attend frequently.

Because of the age of some of our Field and Union headquarters buildings, they have deteriorated over the years. Some remain incomplete, and one of our Fields is without administrative headquarters. We have made great efforts to provide suitable spaces for our offices, meeting rooms for conferences, and the operation of our missionary school for the growing work. This is why we appeal to your generosity, so that together we can achieve our dream of having headquarters that function as lighthouses of truth, where many can gratefully come to know Jesus.

The Lord motivates us to mutual cooperation when carrying out the projects of His work, shown in His direction to Moses: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." Exodus 25:2. Devotion to God and a spirit of sacrifice were the first requirements to build the dwelling place of the Most High. The whole community responded unanimously: "And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Exodus 35:21).

We thank you in advance for your generous help with this project. May God greatly bless you.

Your brothers and sisters from Honduras

Hosea's Tender, Loving Appeal

MEMORY VERSE: "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hosea 2:20).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 404–410.

"Now, while mercy's sweet voice is still heard, while it is not yet too late for wrongs to be righted, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 99.

1. A DIFFICULT WAKE-UP CALL

Sun, Dec 28

- a. Describe the difficult life of the prophets of God. James 5:10.

"Those to whom God has intrusted important responsibilities have not been brought up in ease and luxury; the noble prophets, the leaders and judges of God's appointment, have been men whose characters were formed by the stern realities of life."—*The Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1880.

- b. How did God illustrate to Hosea the relationship between Himself and His unfaithful people? Hosea 1:1–9; Jeremiah 3:14; (compare 2 Corinthians 11:2).

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

"The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow. The sin of Israel in departing from the Lord is presented under this figure."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

a. After declaring judgement, what hopeful promise did God give to Israel? Hosea 1:10.

“God is abundantly able to transform the hearts of Jew and Gentile alike, and to grant to every believer in Christ the blessings promised to Israel. . . . ‘And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like unto Gomorrah.’. . . .

“Notwithstanding the awful doom pronounced upon the Jews as a nation at the time of their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, there have lived from age to age many noble, God-fearing Jewish men and women who have suffered in silence. God has comforted their hearts in affliction and has beheld with pity their terrible situation. He has heard the agonizing prayers of those who have sought Him with all the heart for a right understanding of His word. Some have learned to see in the lowly Nazarene whom their forefathers rejected and crucified, the true Messiah of Israel. As their minds have grasped the significance of the familiar prophecies so long obscured by tradition and misinterpretation, their hearts have been filled with gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift He bestows upon every human being who chooses to accept Christ as a personal Saviour.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 379.

b. How does the apostle Paul echo this comforting truth? Romans 9:25–27.

“When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah. Among Christian ministers there are only a few who feel called upon to labor for the Jewish people; but to those who have been often passed by, as well as to all others, the message of mercy and hope in Christ is to come.

“In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. . . .

“Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 380, 381.

a. Despite the serious spiritual decay of His people, what tender appeal does God extend to them? Hosea 2:14.

“It is as true now as when Christ was upon the earth, that every inroad made by the gospel upon the enemy’s dominion is met by fierce opposition from his vast armies. The conflict that is right upon us will be the most terrible ever witnessed. But though Satan is represented as being as strong as the strong man armed, his overthrow will be complete, and everyone who unites with him in choosing apostasy rather than loyalty will perish with him.

“The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. . . .

“Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and backsliding.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 407, 408.

b. How can our amazing God give a fresh start, providing hope beyond a stained legacy of sin? Hosea 2:15; Psalm 130:7, 8.

“God have mercy. Why will not those who are overtaken in crime manifest repentance proportionate to the enormity of their crime, and fly to Christ for mercy, and heal, as far as possible, the wounds they have made?”—*The Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868.

“No matter how weak the sinner may be; no matter how many or how great may have been his transgressions, the Saviour will accept him. Christ loves every member of the human race; for He has bought them all with a price;—and what a price!”—*Ibid.*, September 3, 1903.

a. Describe the deeper bond of devotion a soul will have with God when they truly repent and turn away from their sinful ways. Hosea 2:16, 17.

“ ‘And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi [‘My husband,’ margin]; and shalt call Me no more Baali [‘My lord,’ margin]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.’ Hosea 2:14–17.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 298, 299.

b. How is this prophecy of spiritual restoration to be fulfilled in our day? Hosea 2:18–20.

“In the last days of this earth’s history, God’s covenant with His commandment-keeping people is to be renewed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 299.

“While mercy lingers, while the Saviour is making intercession, let us make thorough work for eternity.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 405.

c. What is the foundation of becoming God’s people today, according to Hosea and John? Hosea 2:23; John 1:12.

“Visit your neighbors and show an interest in the salvation of their souls. Arouse every spiritual energy to action. Tell those whom you visit that the end of all things is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ will open the door of their hearts and will make upon their minds lasting impressions.

“Strive to arouse men and women from their spiritual insensibility. Tell them how you found Jesus and how blessed you have been since you gained an experience in His service. Tell them what blessing comes to you as you sit at the feet of Jesus and learn precious lessons from His word. Tell them of the gladness and joy that there is in the Christian life. Your warm, fervent words will convince them that you have found the pearl of great price. Let your cheerful, encouraging words show that you have certainly found the higher way. This is genuine missionary work, and as it is done, many will awake as from a dream.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 38.

- a. Describe the glorious outcome soon to occur among those who wholeheartedly take heed to God's final appeal. Hosea 3:4, 5.

“To the ten tribes, long rebellious and impenitent, was given no promise of complete restoration to their former power in Palestine. Until the end of time, they were to be ‘wanderers among the nations.’ But through Hosea was given a prophecy that set before them the privilege of having a part in the final restoration that is to be made to the people of God at the close of earth’s history, when Christ shall appear as King of kings and Lord of lords. . . . [Hosea 3:4, 5 quoted.]

“In symbolic language Hosea set before the ten tribes God’s plan of restoring to every penitent soul who would unite with His church on earth, the blessings granted Israel in the days of their loyalty to Him in the Promised Land.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 298.

“‘In that day’ ‘the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.’ Isaiah 10:20. From ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will ‘worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God’s mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept ‘the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:6, 7, 12.”—Ibid., pp. 299, 300.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does God illustrate the pain He suffers due to our waywardness?
2. What message in Hosea reveals the tremendous longsuffering of God?
3. How does God treat those who have sinned against Him?
4. What can result from my reaching out to people whose fruits openly demonstrate that they are far away from God?
5. How can my life indeed serve as a monument to God’s mercy?

A Time of Reckoning

MEMORY VERSE: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6, first part).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 604–609.

“In every age, transgression of God’s law has been followed by the same result.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 297.

1. A HOST OF PERVERSIONS

Sun, Jan 4

- a. While God has long had a message of mercy, what else did He bid Hosea to declare—to be applied more than once in human history? Hosea 4:1.

“When the people of Israel, in their worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, paid supreme homage to the forces of nature, they severed their connection with all that is uplifting and ennobling, and fell an easy prey to temptation.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 281.

“‘The noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world.’—J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, b. 1, ch. 4. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God’s law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position. The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.

“The condition of the world under the Romish power presented a fearful and striking fulfillment of the words of the prophet Hosea [Hosea 4:6, 1, 2 quoted]. Such were the results of banishing the word of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 60.

a. How did the alarming message of Hosea mention specific sins God hates—and how does this echo down to our day? Hosea 4:2; Luke 17:26, 27.

“The iniquity in Israel during the last half century before the Assyrian captivity was like that of the days of Noah, and of every other age when men have rejected God and have given themselves wholly to evil-doing. The exaltation of nature above the God of nature, the worship of the creature instead of the Creator, has always resulted in the grossest of evils. . . . With the defenses of the soul broken down, the misguided worshipers had no barrier against sin and yielded themselves to the evil passions of the human heart.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 281, 282.

“Very plainly Christ saw what the condition of society would be in the future. He saw that self-indulgence would control men and women. What of the marriage relation today? Is it not perverted and defiled, made even as it was in Noah’s day? Divorce after divorce is recorded in the daily papers. This is the marriage of which Christ speaks when He says that before the flood they were ‘marrying and giving in marriage.’”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 56.

“This very sin, fornication, prevailed among ancient Israel, which brought the signal manifestation of God’s displeasure. The judgments of God followed close upon their heinous sin. Thousands of them fell, and their polluted bodies were left in the wilderness.”—*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 142.

b. Name some bitter consequences that result from rebellion—and the vast blessings to be reaped by submission to God’s will. Hosea 4:3–5; John 17:3.

“The Lord gave His people commandments, in order that by obeying them they might preserve their physical, mental, and moral health. They were to live by obedience; but death is the sure result of the disobedience of the law of God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 413.

“He who chooses a course of disobedience to God’s law is deciding his future destiny; he is sowing to the flesh, earning the wages of sin, even eternal destruction, the opposite of life eternal. Submission to God and obedience to His holy law bring the sure result. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 376.

a. Why is it so important for each of us to take earnest heed to every ray of light graciously provided to us? Hosea 4:6.

“The words of God to ancient Israel have a solemn warning to the church and its leaders today. Of Israel the Lord said, ‘I have written to him the great things of My law; but they were counted as a strange thing.’ Hosea 8:12. And to the priests and teachers He declared, ‘My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.’ Hosea 4:6.

“Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world’s scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God’s word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel’s sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 306.

b. Explain the danger of rejecting the Holy Spirit. Matthew 12:31, 32.

“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.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 323.

“It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and 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. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. . . . For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy’s ground, standing under his black banner.

“My brother, the Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus. Repent of your sins, make confession to God, forsake all iniquity, and you may appropriate to yourself all His promises. ‘Look unto Me, and be ye saved,’ is His gracious invitation.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634.

a. How has God often described the condition of many who profess to be His followers—including today? Hosea 4:7–11, 16.

“The people of God are unready for the fearful, trying scenes before us, unready to stand pure from evil and lust amid the perils and corruptions of this degenerate age. They have not on the armor of righteousness, and are unprepared to war against the prevailing iniquity. Many are not obeying the commandments of God, yet they profess so to do. If they would be faithful to obey all the statutes of God they would have a power which would carry conviction to the hearts of the unbelieving.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 446, 447.

“Those who profess godliness, yet are not sanctified by the truth which they profess, will not change materially their course of action, which they know is hateful before God, because they are not subjected to the trial of being reproved individually for their sins. They see, by the testimonies of others, their own case faithfully pointed out before them. They are cherishing the same evil. By continuing their course of sin, they are violating their consciences, hardening their hearts, and stiffening their necks, just the same as though the testimony had been borne directly to them. In passing on and refusing to put away their sins and correct their wrongs by humble confession, repentance, and humiliation, they choose their own way, and are given up to the same, and are finally led captive by Satan at his will. They may become quite bold because they are able to conceal their sins from others and because the judgments of God do not come in a visible manner upon them. They may be apparently prosperous in this world. They may deceive poor, shortsighted mortals and be regarded as patterns of piety while in their sins. But God cannot be deceived.”—Ibid., pp. 447, 448.

b. Describe the longing of God’s heart over this situation. Jeremiah 3:14, 15.

“Unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing as the people backslide from God. It is all through our ranks, all over the field. But few know what our churches are to experience. I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance, but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in a tempestuous night, shine here and there among the clouds.”—Ibid., vol. 5, p. 76.

- a. How can one avoid the worst verdict to come to a backslider? Hosea 4:17.

“Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul’s aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 53.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.”—Ibid, vol. 1, p. 187.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When God’s Word is banished, denounced, or diluted, what happens?
2. How serious is the marriage commitment exactly as taught in Scripture?
3. What happens when we fail to appreciate messages of present truth?
4. Why should I study *Testimonies for the Church* written to someone else?
5. Why is it dangerous to hold onto even one known sin?

Preparing in Hope

MEMORY VERSE: “Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up” (Hosea 6:1).

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 177–182.

“In the gathering, when God has set His hand to gather His people, efforts to spread the truth will have their designed effect. All should be united and zealous in the work.”—*Early Writings*, p. 74.

1. MISGUIDED ZEAL

Sun, Jan 11

a. If our actions betray God, what is the fearful result? Hosea 5:4–7; Isaiah 1:11, 15.

“If the truth of God has not transformed our character into the likeness of Christ, all our professed knowledge of Him and the truth is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. [Isaiah 1:10–20 quoted.]

“Let all who claim to keep the commandments of God, look well to this matter, and see if there are not reasons why they do not have more of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. How many have lifted up their souls unto vanity! They think themselves exalted in the favor of God, but they neglect the needy, they turn a deaf ear to the calls of the oppressed, and speak sharp, cutting words to those who need altogether different treatment. Thus they offend God daily by their hardness of heart. . . . Let every member of the church closely examine his heart, and investigate his course of action, to see if these are in harmony with the spirit and work of Jesus; for if not, what can he say when he stands before the Judge of all the earth? . . .

“Christ has identified His interest with that of suffering humanity; and while He is neglected in the person of His afflicted ones, all our assemblies, all our appointed meetings, all the machinery that is set in operation to advance the cause of God, will be of little avail. ‘This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ ‘Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’”—*The Review and Herald*, August 4, 1891.

a. What serious warning did God give to Ephraim and Judah—and what mistake did they make in crisis? Hosea 5:8–14.

“The closing years of the ill-fated kingdom of Israel were marked with violence and bloodshed such as had never been witnessed even in the worst periods of strife and unrest under the house of Ahab. For two centuries and more the rulers of the ten tribes had been sowing the wind; now they were reaping the whirlwind. . . . Those who should have stood before the nations of earth as the depositaries of divine grace, ‘dealt treacherously against the Lord’ and with one another. Hosea 5:7. . . .

“Some of the leaders in Israel felt keenly their loss of prestige and wished that this might be regained. But instead of turning away from those practices which had brought weakness to the kingdom, they continued in iniquity, flattering themselves that when occasion arose, they would attain to the political power they desired by allying themselves with the heathen.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 279, 280.

b. In this crisis hour, what words of hope and entreaty did God direct the prophet to declare? Hosea 5:15; 6:1, 2. How does this apply to us right now?

“The transgressors were given many opportunities to repent. In their hour of deepest apostasy and greatest need, God’s message to them was one of forgiveness and hope.”—*Ibid.*, p. 283.

“I appeal to our brethren to wake up. The spiritual faculties will grow weak and die if they are not exercised in winning souls to Christ. What excuse can be offered for the neglect of the great, grand work that Christ gave His life to accomplish?

“We cannot afford in the few days we have here on earth to spend our time in trifling and nothingness. We need to humble our souls before God, that every heart may drink in the truth, and let it work in the life a reformation that will convince the world that this is indeed the truth of God. Let the life be hid with Christ in God. Only when we seek the Lord as little children, when we cease picking flaws in our brethren and sisters, and in those who are seeking to carry faithfully the responsibilities of the work, and seek to get our own hearts right with God, can He use us to the glory of His name.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 105, 106.

a. What is God's special promise to His church in the last days and why is it needed? Hosea 6:3.

"In the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

"But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

b. What prevents us from receiving this blessing in fullness? Hosea 6:4–6.

"Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. . . . [Revelation 22:11 quoted.] I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action."—*Early Writings*, p. 71.

- a. How is the instability of God's professed people depicted? Hosea 7:2, 7-11, 15.

- b. What conditions in Hosea's day parallel spiritual dangers in the church today? Hosea 8:1-3; Jeremiah 23:1.

“There are professedly pious men who screen the sinner by their own transgression. They disregard the commandments of God, choosing the traditions of men, making void the law of God, and promoting apostasy. The excuses they make are feeble and weak and will bring destruction to their own souls and the souls of others. . . .

“Upon those who have taken upon them the work of shepherds of the flock, will be visited the heaviest judgments, because they have presented to the people fables instead of truth. Children will rise up and curse their parents. Church members, who have seen the light and been convicted, but who have trusted the salvation of their souls to the minister, will learn in the day of God that no other soul can pay the ransom for their transgression. A terrible cry will be raised, ‘I am lost, eternally lost.’ Men will feel as though they could rend in pieces the ministers who have preached falsehoods and condemned the truth. The pure truth for this time requires a reformation in the life, but they separate themselves from the love of the truth, and of them it can be said, ‘O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.’ The Lord sends a message to the people, ‘Set a trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant and trespassed against my law.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1157.

- c. How did idolatry and counterfeit worship undermine Israel—and what was the result? Hosea 8:5, 6.

“The ten tribes of Israel were now to reap the fruitage of the apostasy that had taken form with the setting up of the strange altars at Bethel and at Dan.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 285.

- a. What lesson is taught by the principle of sowing and reaping? Hosea 8:7; Galatians 6:7, 8.

“The unbelieving world . . . have despised and trampled upon the truths of God’s word. They have indulged in extravagant dress, and have spent their lives in hilarity and glee. They have sown to the wind; they must reap the whirlwind. In the time of distress and perplexity of nations there will be many who have not given themselves wholly to the corrupting influences of the world and the service of Satan, who will humble themselves before God and turn to Him with their whole heart and find acceptance and pardon.

“Those among Sabbathkeepers who have been unwilling to make any sacrifice, but have yielded to the influence of the world, are to be tested and proved. The perils of the last days are upon us, and a trial is before the young which they have not anticipated. They are to be brought into most distressing perplexity. The genuineness of their faith will be proved. They profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man, yet some of them have been a miserable example to unbelievers. . . .

“A day of heart-rending anguish is before us. I was shown that pointed testimonies should be borne, and that those who will come up to the help of the Lord will receive His blessing.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 268–270.

- b. Why is it time for us to pay closer attention to God’s will? Hosea 8:12.

“Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world’s scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God’s word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel’s sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 306.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is it essential to live up to all the light we have in these last days?
2. Just as in ancient times, what may be distracting us from our mission?
3. What precious end-time promise can change my life—and why?
4. When and why does God come as an eagle against the house of the Lord?
5. In what areas of life do I need to sever some lingering ties with the world?

Treasuring God's Mercy

MEMORY VERSE: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help" (Hosea 13:9).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 186–213.

"Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 36.

1. THE DAYS OF VISITATION

Sun, Jan 18

a. What warning echoes down to the close of probation? Hosea 9:7.

"The heart of A has not been devoted to God. He has capabilities and talents for which he must render an account to the great Giver of all. His heart has been un consecrated and his life unworthy of his profession; yet he has been closely connected with the sacred work of God for more than a score of years. What light he has had, what privileges! He has enjoyed the rarest opportunities to develop a substantial Christian character. The words of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem are applicable to him: 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' A, the retribution of God hangs over you, 'because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.'

"B, is of the same cast of mind, but not so thoroughly selfish. Both are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Their course is entirely inconsistent with the Christian life. They lack stability, sobriety, and devotion to God. With B the work of grace is altogether too superficial. He desires to be a Christian, but does not strive to maintain the victory over self and act up to his convictions of right and wrong. Deeds, not idle words and empty intentions, are acceptable to God.

"A, you have heard the word of God in reproofs, in counsels, in warnings, as well as in the entreaties of love. But hearing is not enough. 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.' It is easy to be borne along by the current, and to cry Hosannah with the multitude; but in the calm of everyday life, when there is no special excitement or exaltation, then comes the test of true Christianity."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 187, 188.

a. How does the enemy often lead believers to ruin? Hosea 9:8, 9, 17.

“[Satan] seizes men and women who are selfish and unconsecrated, and makes of them sentinels to watch the faithful servants of God, to question their words, their actions, and their motives, and to find fault and murmur at their reproofs and warnings. Through them he creates suspicion and jealousy, and seeks to weaken the courage of the faithful, to please the unsanctified, and to bring to nought the labors of God’s servants.

“Satan has had great power over the minds of parents through their undisciplined children. The sin of parental neglect stands marked against many Sabbathkeeping parents. The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan’s special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions. Brethren and sisters are too ready to talk of the faults and errors that they think exist in others, and especially in those who have borne unflinchingly the messages of reproof and warning given them of God.

“The children of these complainers listen with open ears and receive the poison of disaffection. Parents are thus blindly closing the avenues through which the hearts of the children might be reached. How many families season their daily meals with doubt and questionings. They dissect the characters of their friends, and serve them up as a dainty dessert.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 194, 195.

b. What was the root cause of Israel’s spiritual failure? Hosea 10:1; Deuteronomy 8:11–14.

“The people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God’s representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfill their holy mission. The blessings they received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages they appropriated for their own glorification. They shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation. The restrictions that God had placed upon their association with idolaters as a means of preventing them from conforming to the practices of the heathen, they used to build up a wall of separation between themselves and all other nations. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example. “Priests and rulers became fixed in a rut of ceremonialism. They were satisfied with a legal religion, and it was impossible for them to give to others the living truths of heaven.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 14, 15.

a. What appeal does God make to His people who have become spiritually unresponsive? Hosea 10:12; James 4:8.

“Our churches are to cooperate in the work of spiritual tilling, with the hope of reaping by and by. There is much perversity to be met, much thwarting of holy plans and consecrated effort, because of the evil heart of unbelief. But the work must be done. The soil is stubborn, but the fallow ground must be broken up, the seeds of righteousness must be sown. Pause not, teachers beloved by God, as though doubtful whether to prosecute a labor which will grow as performed. Fail not, neither be discouraged. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. . . . Remember that you cannot trust in self.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 420.

b. How does God reveal His tender love for His people, extending His hand to us even in our waywardness? Hosea 11:1–4.

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

“Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. . . . I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 480–483.

a. What illustrates the depth of God's mercy? Hosea 11:7-9; Luke 13:6-9.

"Must [God] give up the people for whom such a provision has been made, even His only-begotten Son, the express image of Himself? God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father.

"Herein His love commends itself in the most marvelous manner to the rebellious race. What a sight for angels to behold!"—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 246.

b. Why does God use prophets—and how are they crucial to spiritual restoration? Hosea 12:10, 13; Amos 3:7.

"[The] plain utterances of the prophets and of the Master Himself, should be received by us as the voice of God to every soul."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 327.

c. Even in the tragic end of Israel, what shows God is fair? Hosea 13:4-9; 14:1.

"[Those] sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control.

"We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 35, 36.

- a. How did Jesus illustrate His people's fate as a nation? Matthew 21:19, 20.

“Jesus had come to the fig tree hungry, to find food. So He had come to Israel, hungering to find in them the fruits of righteousness. He had lavished on them His gifts, that they might bear fruit for the blessing of the world. Every opportunity and privilege had been granted them, and in return He sought their sympathy and cooperation in His work of grace. He longed to see in them self-sacrifice and compassion, zeal for God, and a deep yearning of soul for the salvation of their fellow men. Had they kept the law of God, they would have done the same unselfish work that Christ did. But love to God and man was eclipsed by pride and self-sufficiency. They brought ruin upon themselves by refusing to minister to others. The treasures of truth which God had committed to them, they did not give to the world. In the barren tree they might read both their sin and its punishment. Withered beneath the Saviour’s curse, standing forth sere and blasted, dried up by the roots, the fig tree showed what the Jewish people would be when the grace of God was removed from them. Refusing to impart blessing, they would no longer receive it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 583.

- b. How does the book of Hosea conclude by emphasizing God’s hope, healing, and a call to wisdom? Hosea 14:4, 5, 8, 9.

“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through cooperation with divine agencies. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, so are we to receive the Holy Spirit. If our hearts are stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us ‘as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.’ As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us ‘with healing in His wings.’ We shall ‘grow as the lily.’ We ‘shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.’ Hosea 6:3; Malachi 4:2; Hosea 14:5, 7.”—*Education*, p. 106.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does God require of us in the day of His visitation?
2. Why was God not satisfied with the merely external religion of Israel?
3. What does breaking up the fallow ground of the heart do for us?
4. On what should I be focusing in these remaining moments of probation?
5. How can I be assured of being blessed rather than cut off by God?

Joel: A Consecrated Messenger

MEMORY VERSE: “Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly” (Joel 2:15).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 11–18.

“The pillar of cloud which speaks wrath and terror to the transgressor of God’s law is light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 404.

1. APPLIED TO THE FUTURE

Sun, Jan 25

- a. What catastrophe does the prophet Joel depict—how does it relate to an event still in the future? Joel 1:10–12, 17–20; Revelation 16:8, 9.

“In the [fourth] plague . . . , power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.’ Verses 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: ‘The land mourneth; . . . because the harvest of the field is perished. . . . All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.’ ‘The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate. . . . How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture. . . . The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ ‘The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.’ Joel 1:10–12, 17–20; Amos 8:3.

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy. In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God’s mercy which they have so long despised.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 628, 629.

a. Of what do we need to be solemnly mindful? Joel 1:15, 16.

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes . . . recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

“Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.

“The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men’s hearts to fail them for fear”—*Education*, pp. 179, 180.

b. In light of the imminent danger, what prompt action are we as believers directed to undertake with fervor? Joel 1:14; 2:1, 2.

“In view of that great day the word of God, in the most solemn and impressive language, calls upon His people to arouse from their spiritual lethargy and to seek His face with repentance and humiliation.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 311.

c. How does Joel’s prophecy foreshadow the day of Christ’s second coming? Joel 2:3–6.

“Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. . . . A rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 15, 16.

a. What assurance does God give to those who repent with sincere hearts?
Joel 2:12, 13; Psalm 34:18.

“The fasting which the word of God enjoins is something more than a form. It does not consist merely in refusing food, in wearing sackcloth, in sprinkling ashes upon the head. He who fasts in real sorrow for sin will never court display.

“The object of the fast which God calls upon us to keep is not to afflict the body for the sin of the soul, but to aid us in perceiving the grievous character of sin, in humbling the heart before God and receiving His pardoning grace. His command to Israel was, ‘Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.’ Joel 2:13.

“It will avail nothing for us to do penance or to flatter ourselves that by our own works we shall merit or purchase an inheritance among the saints. . . . Repentance is turning from self to Christ; and when we receive Christ so that through faith He can live His life in us, good works will be manifest.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 87.

b. What is involved in the confession we so desperately need? Matthew 6:6; 1 John 1:9.

“Confess your secret sins alone before your God. Acknowledge your heart wanderings to Him who knows perfectly how to treat your case. If you have wronged your neighbor, acknowledge to him your sin and show fruit of the same by making restitution. Then claim the blessing. Come to God just as you are, and let Him heal all your infirmities. Press your case to the throne of grace; let the work be thorough. Be sincere in dealing with God and your own soul. If you come to Him with a heart truly contrite, He will give you the victory. Then you may bear a sweet testimony of freedom, showing forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. He will not misapprehend or misjudge you. Your fellow men cannot absolve you from sin or cleanse you from iniquity. Jesus is the only one who can give you peace. He loved you and gave Himself for you. His great heart of love is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities?’ What sins are too great for Him to pardon? what soul too dark and sin-oppressed for Him to save? He is gracious, not looking for merit in us, but of His own boundless goodness healing our backslidings and loving us freely, while we are yet sinners.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 649.

a. Describe the urgent step God's church is to take. Joel 2:15-17.

"Christ will be with every minister who, although he may not have attained to perfection of character, is seeking most earnestly to become Christlike. Such a minister will pray. He will weep between the porch and the altar, crying in soul anguish for the Lord's presence to be with him; else he cannot stand before the people, with all heaven looking upon him, and the angel's pen taking note of his words, his deportment, and his spirit."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 143.

"Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and backsliding."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 408.

b. How does God desire to respond to such fervent prayers offered by His people? Joel 2:23.

"The enemy moves upon his servants to propose measures that would greatly impede the work of God; but statesmen who fear the Lord are influenced by holy angels to oppose such propositions with unanswerable arguments. Thus a few men will hold in check a powerful current of evil. The opposition of the enemies of truth will be restrained that the third angel's message may do its work. When the final warning shall be given, it will arrest the attention of these leading men through whom the Lord is now working, and some of them will accept it, and will stand with the people of God through the time of trouble.

"The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of worldwide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 610, 611.

- a. Relate the fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel 2:28-32.

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘*last days*’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”—*Early Writings*, p. 78.

“May 19, 1780, stands in history as ‘The Dark Day.’ Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as given by eyewitnesses, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, recorded by the prophet Joel, twenty-five hundred years previous to their fulfillment. [Joel 2:31 quoted.]”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 308.

- b. Despite hoping for peace, into what terrible fate will mankind finally be drawn? Joel 3:9, 10; 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

“The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 14.

- c. Where will the faithful be at that time? Joel 3:16; Psalm 91:1-7.

“Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.”—Ibid., p. 17.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What causes the catastrophic event foreseen in Joel 1:15-20?
2. What response will I have to the second coming of Christ?
3. How and why do we need to humble ourselves before the Lord?
4. Describe the blessing received by those who are truly consecrated to God at the end.
5. Now more than ever, why must we avoid incitement toward the spirit of war?

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, February 7, 2026



General Conference Welfare Department

The General Conference Welfare Department aims to bring relief to those suffering in various natural or provoked tragedies. Brethren have lost their property to fires, floods, and even wars and conflicts.

When one sees their work destroyed, it is extremely refreshing to have a helping hand outstretched, bringing care and aid. Those who have experienced such disasters often mention the joy of being cared for in a situation of great need and are grateful for the privilege of being part of a true spiritual family.

There are also some who live in extreme misery and eat only once a day at the most—yet, even amid their keen suffering, they remain firm in the hope and certainty that Jesus will soon return, and all this will pass. . . . On such the Welfare Department again extends its friendly and caring hand. With the words of Christ: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40), our work is guided by the understanding that true religion does not consist of words but action in the care of the orphan, the widow, the sick, and refugees. When contributions are received, we quickly distribute them—meeting the most critical needs, especially of our family of faith.

Churches destroyed by natural tragedies have been rebuilt; houses destroyed by fire, floods, and other weather disasters, have been rebuilt and refurnished; the sick have been treated; orphans, widows and needy people have received food and basic care. Much has been done, yet we are still far from our ideal, to have no needy among our household of faith, just as at Pentecost!

For this, dear brethren, we count on your generous, abundant—but above all, affectionate—offering! As you set aside your First Sabbath Offering, think of how much you have received from God; He will multiply your offering and turn it into blessings, for you, your family and for those to be helped in times of difficulty.

“It is through the exercise of this practical love that the churches draw nearer together in Christian unity. Through the love of the brethren, love to God is increased, because He has not forgotten those who were in distress, and thus thank offerings ascend to God for His care.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 344.

May God bless you greatly!

General Conference Welfare Department

Amos' Call to Preparation

MEMORY VERSE: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12, last part).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 329–335.

"Our work is to proclaim the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 'Prepare to meet thy God' (Amos 4:12), is the warning to be given to the world. It is a warning to us individually."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 116.

1. SERVING GOD OR NOT?

Sun, Feb 1

- a. After mentioning the transgressions of Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Rabbah, and Moab, what protest does God declare about Judah and Israel, who professed to serve Him? Amos 2:4–8.

- b. What does the Lord testify about His compassion toward them, and the consequences of their despising His mercy? Amos 2:9–16.

- c. What question is asked when there is a betrayal of God's trust—and how does this principle also apply in human relationships? Amos 3:1–3; Psalm 11:3.

"How can the carnal mind harmonize with the mind that is assimilated to the mind of Christ? One is sowing to the flesh, thinking and acting in accordance with the promptings of his own heart; the other is sowing to the Spirit, seeking to repress selfishness, to overcome inclination, and to live in obedience to the Master, whose servant he professes to be."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 507, 508.

"However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 174.

a. Why can we truly appreciate the value of prophecy? Amos 3:7, 8.

“While ‘the secret things belong unto the Lord our God,’ ‘those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.’ . . . God has given these things to us, and His blessing will attend the reverent, prayerful study of the prophetic scriptures.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

b. Sadly, how did God’s professed people often treat Him? Amos 4:4-11.

“‘The Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water.’ . . .

“Yet the Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. During the years that were to follow the rending of the kingdom, Elijah and Elisha were to live and labor, and the tender appeals of Hosea and Amos and Obadiah were to be heard in the land. Never was the kingdom of Israel to be left without noble witnesses to the mighty power of God to save from sin.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108.

c. Like Amos, what message are we fearlessly to bear, just as John the Baptist did? Amos 4:12 (last part); Matthew 3:1, 2.

“As a people who believe in Christ’s soon appearing, we have a message to bear—‘Prepare to meet thy God.’ Amos 4:12. Our message must be as direct as was the message of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding that his life was imperiled, he did not hesitate to declare God’s word. And our work in this age must be done as faithfully.

“In order to give such a message as John gave, we must have a spiritual experience like his. The same work must be wrought in us. We must behold God, and in beholding Him lose sight of self.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 332, 333.

- a. Why is God unique in the universe, and what earnest appeals show His fervent desire to grant the meek what is best? Amos 4:13; 5:6-9, 14.

- b. As Amos shared these truths, how was he treated—and what was the general outcome in the face of these warnings and appeals? Amos 5:10, 15-18.

“By far the greater number of those who heard these invitations [of Amos] refused to profit by them.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 284.

- c. What reproofs regarding lifestyle are to be a wake-up call? Amos 6:1, 3-7.

“There are disagreeable duties that somebody must do or souls will be left to perish. Christians will find a blessing in doing these duties, however unpleasant they may be. Christ took the disagreeable task upon Himself of coming from the abode of purity and unsurpassed glory, to dwell, a man among men, in a world seared and blackened by crime, violence, and iniquity. He did this to save souls; and shall the objects of such amazing love and unparalleled condescension excuse their lives of selfish ease? shall they choose their own pleasure, follow their own inclinations, and leave souls to perish in darkness because they will meet with disappointment and rebuffs if they labor to save them? Christ paid an infinite price for man’s redemption, and shall he say: ‘My Lord, I will not labor in Thy vineyard; I pray Thee have me excused?’

“God calls for those who are at ease in Zion to be up and doing. Will they not listen to the Master’s voice? He wants prayerful, faithful workers who will sow beside all waters. Those who labor thus will be surprised to find how trials, resolutely borne in the name and strength of Jesus, will give firmness to the faith and renew the courage. In the path of humble obedience is safety and power, comfort and hope; but the reward will finally be lost by those who do nothing for Jesus. Weak hands will be unable to cling to the Mighty One, feeble knees will fail to support in the day of adversity. Bible readers and Christian workers will receive the glorious prize, and hear the ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 76.

a. What revealed that God's appeals given through Amos were unwelcome to Amaziah, the idolatrous priest? Amos 7:10-13.

"So contrary to the evil desires of the impenitent were the words of God's messengers, that the idolatrous priest at Bethel sent to the ruler in Israel, saying, 'Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.' Amos 7:10."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 284.

"For a season these predicted judgments were stayed, and during the long reign of Jeroboam II the armies of Israel gained signal victories; but this time of apparent prosperity wrought no change in the hearts of the impenitent, and it was finally decreed, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.' Amos 7:11.

"The boldness of this utterance was lost on king and people, so far had they gone in impenitence."—*Ibid.*, p. 286.

b. How did Amos boldly respond to Amaziah's hostile remarks—and how were the prophet's words later fulfilled? Amos 7:14-17; 1 Chronicles 5:25, 26.

"The words spoken against the apostate tribes were literally fulfilled; yet the destruction of the kingdom came gradually. . . .

"Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, invaded Israel and carried away with him a multitude of captives from among the tribes living in Galilee and east of the Jordan. 'The Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,' with others of the inhabitants of 'Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali' (1 Chronicles 5:26; 2 Kings 15:29), were scattered among the heathen in lands far removed from Palestine.

"From this terrible blow the northern kingdom never recovered. The feeble remnant continued the forms of government, though no longer possessed of power."—*Ibid.*, p. 287.

c. When tempted to assume that God simply winks at laxity in the heart of a professed believer, of what are we reminded? Amos 8:1-7; Hebrews 4:12.

- a. Describe the scene of spiritual famine soon to come. Amos 8:3, 11, 12.

“The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 228.

“[Amos 8:3 quoted.] These plagues [of Revelation 16] are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 628, 629.

“Those who had not prized God’s Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, ‘They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizes earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.’

“Many of the wicked were greatly enraged as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of fearful agony. Parents were bitterly reproaching their children, and children their parents, brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. Loud, wailing cries were heard in every direction, ‘It was you who kept me from receiving the truth which would have saved me from this awful hour.’ The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, ‘You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us.’ But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 281, 282.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In order for harmony to exist in a relationship, what is necessary?
2. What is needed for me to be a “brand plucked from the burning”?
3. Why was Amos constrained to reprove the lifestyle of many in Israel?
4. When unfavorable news comes from an inspired source, what must I do?
5. What warning should I heed from the reality of Amos 4:11, 12?

Power in Repentance

MEMORY VERSE: “When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple” (Jonah 2:7).

Suggested Readings: *Early Writings*, pp. 269–273; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 62–84.

“The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.”—*Early Writings*, p. 270.

1. A SHAKING THAT SIFTS

Sun, Feb 8

a. Because so much evil is comingled with good, what does God do? Amos 9:9.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.”—*Early Writings*, p. 270.

“Among God’s professed people are corrupt hearts; but they will be tested and proved. That God who reads the hearts of everyone, will bring to light hidden things of darkness where they are often least suspected, that stumbling blocks which have hindered the progress of truth may be removed, and God have a clean and holy people to declare His statutes and judgments.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 333.

“‘God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church. We cannot read the heart of man. But the Lord has provided means to keep the church pure. A corrupt people has arisen who could not live with the people of God. They despised reproof, and would not be corrected. They had an opportunity to know that theirs was an unrighteous warfare. They had time to repent of their wrongs; but self was too dear to die.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 99.

a. How is God able to deal with those who are proud? Amos 9:2; Obadiah 1:3, 4.

“Self-exaltation is a dangerous element. It tarnishes everything it touches. It is the offspring of pride, and it works so ingeniously that, unless guarded against, it will take possession of the thoughts and control the actions.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 962.

b. What kind of city was Nineveh—and what did the prophet Jonah do when God assigned him to preach there? Jonah 1:1-3.

“As the prophet thought of the difficulties and seeming impossibilities of this commission, he was tempted to question the wisdom of the call. From a human viewpoint it seemed as if nothing could be gained by proclaiming such a message in that proud city. He forgot for the moment that the God whom he served was all-wise and all-powerful. . . .

“In the charge given him, Jonah had been entrusted with a heavy responsibility; yet He who had bidden him go was able to sustain His servant and grant him success. Had the prophet obeyed unquestioningly, he would have been spared many bitter experiences, and would have been blessed abundantly. Yet in the hour of Jonah’s despair the Lord did not desert him. Through a series of trials and strange providences, the prophet’s confidence in God and in His infinite power to save was to be revived.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 266, 267.

c. How does God often reveal His love by hindering our path? Jonah 1:4, 7-12.

“Your way has been hedged up, on the right hand and on the left, to hinder your progress to perdition. The Lord has brought your unruly, untamable spirit to submit to Him. By a mixture of judgment and mercy you have been brought to repentance. Like Jonah, you fled from present duty to sea. God hedged up your way by the visitations of His providence.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 423.

- a. How was God's omnipotence shown to the mariners, and how did they respond? *Jonah 1:13-16.*

- b. What was God's plan for Jonah, and what did the fugitive pray while inside the belly of the fish? *Jonah 1:17; 2:1-4.*

- c. Describe the depth of Jonah's repentance toward God. *Jonah 2:5-9.* How did the Lord respond to His humbled child? *Jonah 2:10.*

"At last Jonah had learned that 'salvation belongeth unto the Lord.' Psalm 3:8. With penitence and a recognition of the saving grace of God, came deliverance. Jonah was released from the perils of the mighty deep and was cast upon the dry land."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 269.

- d. How can we be encouraged by the new action Jonah now took, similar to that of a young missionary in the New Testament? *Jonah 3:1-3; Acts 15:36-39.*

"[Barnabas] felt anxious that Mark should not abandon the ministry, for he saw in him qualifications that would fit him to be a useful worker for Christ. In after years his solicitude in Mark's behalf was richly rewarded, for the young man gave himself unreservedly to the Lord and to the work of proclaiming the gospel message in difficult fields."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 170.

"Time is short, and what you do must be done quickly. Resolve to redeem the time. Seek not your own pleasure. Rouse yourself! Take hold of the work with a new purpose of heart. The Lord will open the way before you. Make every possible effort to work in Christ's lines, in meekness and lowliness, relying upon Him for strength. Understand the work the Lord gives you to do, and, trusting in God, you will be enabled to go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace. You will be enabled to work diligently, perseveringly, for your people while the day lasts; for the night cometh in which no man shall work."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 200.

a. To obey God, what reveals the courage Jonah now needed? Jonah 3:4.

“In the time of its temporal prosperity Nineveh was a center of crime and wickedness. Inspiration has characterized it as ‘the bloody city, . . . full of lies and robbery.’ In figurative language the prophet Nahum compared the Ninevites to a cruel, ravenous lion. ‘Upon whom,’ he inquired, ‘hath not thy wickedness passed continually?’ Nahum 3:1, 19.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 265.

b. Describe how God blessed Jonah’s work in a powerful way—and explain why we ourselves should wake up to the decision Nineveh made. Jonah 3:5-10.

“Nineveh, wicked though it had become, was not wholly given over to evil. He who ‘beholdeth all the sons of men’ (Psalm 33:13) and ‘seeth every precious thing’ (Job 28:10) perceived in that city many who were reaching out after something better and higher, and who, if granted opportunity to learn of the living God, would put away their evil deeds and worship Him.”—Ibid.

“When Jonah proclaimed in the streets of Nineveh that within forty days the city would be overthrown, the Lord accepted the humiliation of the Ninevites and extended their period of probation; yet the message of Jonah was sent of God, and Nineveh was tested according to His will.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 406.

“Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, ‘Peace, peace,’ when the Lord hath not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that ere long all prophesying among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.

“When God shall work His strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people. Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh, that our people may, as did Nineveh, repent with all their might and believe with all their heart, that God may turn away His fierce anger from them.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 77, 78.

- a. How did Jonah's human frailty again manifest itself? Jonah 4:1-3.

"When Jonah learned of God's purpose to spare the city that, notwithstanding its wickedness, had been led to repent in sackcloth and ashes, he should have been the first to rejoice because of God's amazing grace; but instead he allowed his mind to dwell upon the possibility of his being regarded as a false prophet. Jealous of his reputation, he lost sight of the infinitely greater value of the souls in that wretched city. . . .

"Once more he yielded to his inclination to question and doubt, and once more he was overwhelmed with discouragement."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 271.

- b. Unlike Jonah did, why can we truly rejoice when souls repent? Jonah 4:4, 11.

"The lesson is for God's messengers today, when the cities of the nations are as verily in need of a knowledge of the attributes and purposes of the true God as were the Ninevites of old. Christ's ambassadors are to point men to the nobler world, which has largely been lost sight of."—*Ibid.*, p. 274.

"God's messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: 'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.' Acts 18:9, 10. . . . In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus."—*Ibid.*, p. 277.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is separation through sifting necessary?
2. What evidences in my life have revealed that God is in control, not me?
3. When tempted to think God cannot hear me, what does Jonah's trial teach?
4. Although Nineveh was later destroyed, why did this not occur in 40 days?
5. What do I need to keep in mind about souls in the wicked cities near me?

God's Plan of Restoration

MEMORY VERSE: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants" (Micah 6:3, 4, first part).

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 253–264.

"No earthly parent ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made us pleads with the transgressor."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 275.

1. A CRISIS IN JUDAH

Sun, Feb 15

- a. What kind of things were going on in Judah when Ahaz ascended to the throne? 2 Kings 16:2–4.

"The accession of Ahaz to the throne brought Isaiah and his associates face to face with conditions more appalling than any that had hitherto existed in the realm of Judah. Many who had formerly withstood the seductive influence of idolatrous practices were now being persuaded to take part in the worship of heathen deities. Princes in Israel were proving untrue to their trust; false prophets were arising with messages to lead astray; even some of the priests were teaching for hire. Yet the leaders in apostasy still kept up the forms of divine worship and claimed to be numbered among the people of God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 322.

- b. How did God respond to these abominations? Jeremiah 7:30–34.

"By perverted conceptions of divine attributes, heathen nations were led to believe human sacrifices necessary to secure the favor of their deities; and the most horrible cruelties have been perpetrated under the various forms of idolatry. Among these was the practice of causing their children to pass through the fire before their idols. . . . In times of great apostasy these abominations prevailed, to some extent, among the Israelites."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 337.

- a. Besides Isaiah and Jeremiah, whom else did God call to prophesy to Judah—and why? Micah 1:1-5; 2:1, 2, 7.

- b. In the reign of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, how was Micah to confront the false prophets—and why is this also needed today? Micah 3:5-8; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

“When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image (Revelation 14:9-11), should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it. But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth and are turned unto fables. The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days: ‘The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.’ 2 Timothy 4:3. That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

“But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 594, 595.

- c. Describe the danger of self-righteous exclusiveness. Micah 3:9-12.

“[Micah 3:9-11 quoted.] These words faithfully described the corrupt and self-righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. While claiming to observe rigidly the precepts of God’s law, they were transgressing all its principles. . . . While they slew their Saviour because He reproved their sins, such was their self-righteousness that they regarded themselves as God’s favored people and expected the Lord to deliver them from their enemies.”—Ibid., p. 27.

- a. What delayed the judgment foretold by Micah—and how does this reflect God's mercy? Jeremiah 26:18, 19.

- b. What promise does God give to those who overcome—and how does this point to the restoration of Eden? Micah 4:1, 2, 6-8.

“Satan, by means of his success in turning man aside from the path of obedience, became ‘the god of this world.’ 2 Corinthians 4:4. The dominion that once was Adam’s passed to the usurper. But the Son of God proposed to come to this earth to pay the penalty of sin, and thus not only redeem man, but recover the dominion forfeited. It is of this restoration that Micah prophesied when he said, ‘O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto Thee shall it come, even the first dominion.’ Micah 4:8.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 682.

“The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to ‘the first dominion.’ Micah 4:8. Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man’s creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 483, 484.

- c. How did Micah and others prophesy of this final victory? Micah 4:10-12.

“The prophets to whom these great scenes were revealed longed to understand their import. . . .

“To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God’s children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!”—*Education*, p. 183.

a. In an abundant outpouring of God's mercy, how was the prophecy of Micah 5:1, 2 revealing the eternal divine nature of Christ fulfilled—yet how was its beauty overlooked? Matthew 2:3–6.

“Through patriarchs and prophets, as well as through types and symbols, God spoke to the world concerning the coming of a Deliverer from sin. A long line of inspired prophecy pointed to the advent of ‘the Desire of all nations.’ Haggai 2:7. Even the very place of His birth and the time of His appearance were minutely specified. The Son of David must be born in David’s city.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 697.

“At the time of Christ’s first advent the priests and scribes of the Holy City, to whom were entrusted the oracles of God, might have discerned the signs of the times and proclaimed the coming of the Promised One. The prophecy of Micah designated His birthplace; Daniel specified the time of His advent. Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25. God committed these prophecies to the Jewish leaders; they were without excuse if they did not know and declare to the people that the Messiah’s coming was at hand. Their ignorance was the result of sinful neglect. The Jews were building monuments for the slain prophets of God, while by their deference to the great men of earth they were paying homage to the servants of Satan. Absorbed in their ambitious strife for place and power among men, they lost sight of the divine honors proffered them by the King of heaven.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 313.

b. What was revealed as God’s plan for the remnant of Israel? Micah 5:7.

“He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

“Christ’s followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker. . . .

“The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 27-28.

- a. What wonderful appeal did Micah make during the reign of Ahaz, inviting erring Israel to return to their allegiance to God? Micah 6:2-5.

“God has a controversy with all who practice the least injustice; for in so doing they reject the authority of God and imperil their interest in the atonement, the redemption which Christ has undertaken for every son and daughter of Adam. Will it pay to take a course abhorrent to God? Will it pay to put upon your censers strange fire to offer before God, and say it makes no difference?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 373.

- b. What heart-longing plea of many people does God desire to answer? Micah 6:6, 7; Jeremiah 8:22; John 1:29.

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. . . .

“It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good.’ ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’ But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, ‘I am carnal, sold under sin.’ Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 18, 19.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Of what history should we be aware when planning our worship?
2. What is to characterize the doctrines of God’s church in the last days?
3. Why was Micah able to be filled with hope for the future?
4. Explain the contrast between the Jews in Christ’s day and the final remnant.
5. What makes it possible for God to reach the heart of His erring children?

We Already Know What to Do!

MEMORY VERSE: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 306–313.

“Those who have a humble, trusting, contrite heart, God accepts, and hears their prayer; and when God helps, all obstacles will be overcome.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 539.

1. IN GOD'S EYES

Sun, Feb 22

- a. With what simple explanation was the prophet Micah bidden to summarize our duty toward God? Micah 6:8.

“The words and law of God, written in the soul, and exhibited in a consecrated, holy life, have a powerful influence to convict the world. Covetousness, which is idolatry, and envy, and love of the world, will be rooted from the hearts of those who are obedient to Christ, and it will be their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. Oh, how much is comprised in this, walking humbly before God! The law of God, if written in the heart, will bring the mind and will into subjection to the obedience of Christ.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 201.

- b. How are we reminded about the need for sterling integrity? Micah 6:11.

“A slight deviation from truth, a little variation from the requirements of God, is thought to be, after all, not so very sinful, when pecuniary gain or loss is involved. But sin is sin, whether committed by the possessor of millions or by the beggar in the streets. Those who secure property by false representations are bringing condemnation on their souls.”—Ibid., vol. 4, p. 311.

a. What apt description is given of the condition of God's professed people in Micah's day? Micah 7:2-4.

"This was indeed a time of great peril for the chosen nation. Only a few short years, and the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel were to be scattered among the nations of heathendom. And in the kingdom of Judah also the outlook was dark. The forces for good were rapidly diminishing, the forces for evil multiplying."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 324.

b. What perspective helps us stay focused on our need for God? Micah 7:5-7; Psalm 60:11.

c. Describe the precious hope all are privileged to grasp by faith. Micah 7:8, 9.

"Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world. God longs to breathe into prostrate humanity the breath of life. And He will not permit any soul to be disappointed who is sincere in his longing for something higher and nobler than anything the world can offer. Constantly He is sending His angels to those who, while surrounded by circumstances the most discouraging, pray in faith for some power higher than themselves to take possession of them and bring deliverance and peace. In various ways God will reveal Himself to them and will place them in touch with providences that will establish their confidence in the One who has given Himself a ransom for all, 'that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.' Psalm 78:7."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 377, 378.

d. How does Micah plainly extol the character of God? Micah 7:18, 19.

"Glorious truth!—just to His own law, and yet the Justifier of all that believe in Jesus."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 116.

a. How can we summarize the perfect balance in God's character? Nahum 1:3.

“He who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary judges righteously. His pleasure is more in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin, than in the host of angels that surround His throne.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 176.

“The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner.”—Ibid., p. 177.

b. In realizing that the mercy of God is vital to our existence, of what else do we need to be continually mindful? Nahum 1:5–8.

“God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish; but His forbearance has a limit, and when the boundary is past, there is no second probation. His wrath will go forth and He will destroy without remedy.

“When men, being in power, oppress and spoil their fellow men, and no earthly tribunal can be found to do justice, God will interpose in behalf of those who cannot defend themselves. He will punish for every act of oppression. No earthly wisdom can secure wrongdoers against the judgments of heaven. And when men put their trust in earthly powers instead of their Maker, when they become lifted up in pride and self-confidence, God will in His own time make them to be despised.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 946.

“The world has become bold in transgression of God's law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, ‘How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?’ Psalm 73:11. But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 177, 178.

c. How do we know that sin will not reappear in the new earth? Nahum 1:9.

a. What scene does Nahum depict as pointing to the last days before Christ's return—and what should this make us consider as a priority in today's fast-paced environment? Nahum 2:3, 4; John 9:4.

"Sound an alarm through the land. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. . . .

"We have no time to lose. The powers of darkness are working with intense energy, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do, but soon it will be more difficult than we imagine. . . .

"The coming of the Lord is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. Every report of calamity by sea or land is a testimony to the fact that the end of all things is at hand. Wars and rumors of wars declare it. Is there a Christian whose pulse does not beat with quickened action as he anticipates the great events opening before us?

"The Lord is coming. We hear the footsteps of an approaching God, as He comes to punish the world for its iniquity. We are to prepare the way for Him by acting our part in getting a people ready for that great day."—*Evangelism*, pp. 218, 219.

"Every power lent us by God, whether physical, mental, or spiritual, is to be sacredly cherished to do the work assigned us for our fellow men who are perishing in their ignorance."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 180.

"Every church member who has a knowledge of the truth is expected to work while the day lasts; for the night cometh, wherein no man can work."—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 26.

b. Describe the fate of all who reject God's mercy—receiving His fury, as shown toward Nineveh in Assyria. Nahum 2:8-11.

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

- a. How is Assyria's downfall depicted—and why is this especially relevant now? Nahum 3:7, 12, 13, 18, 19.

"Great was the glory of the Assyrian realm; great was its downfall."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 365.

"The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time. Of the nations of earth today who in arrogance and pride array themselves against Him, God inquires, 'To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth.' "—Ibid., p. 366.

- b. How is a similar scene soon to occur? Revelation 18:7–11, 15–18.

"[Revelation 18:11, 3, 15–17 quoted.] Such are the judgments that fall upon Babylon in the day of the visitation of God's wrath. She has filled up the measure of her iniquity; her time has come; she is ripe for destruction.

"When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life. While probation continued they were blinded by Satan's deceptions, and they justified their course of sin. The rich prided themselves upon their superiority to those who were less favored; but they had obtained their riches by violation of the law of God. They had neglected to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to deal justly, and to love mercy. They had sought to exalt themselves and to obtain the homage of their fellow creatures. Now they are stripped of all that made them great and are left destitute and defenseless. They look with terror upon the destruction of the idols which they preferred before their Maker."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 653, 654.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to Micah 6:8, what three simple things are required of us?
2. Why only is there hope even for the worst sinner?
3. Why is humility a necessary virtue God values, especially today?
4. As many today are doomed to Nineveh's fate, what should we prioritize?
5. In what sense does the fall of Babylon relate to a neglect of Micah 6:8?

First Sabbath Offering

Sabbath, March 7, 2026



Maranhão Piauí Field (AMAPI) Headquarters, Brazil

In northeastern Brazil, the states of Maranhão and Piauí, together, are home to about 10.4 million inhabitants, spread over a territorial area of about 224,282 square miles (581,406 km²). The climate here ranges from equatorial to tropical to semi-arid, having diverse vegetation with native palms, mangroves, Amazon forest, cerrado, and caatinga.

The first church in the Reform Movement in this region was established in 1960, in the city of Bacabal, Maranhão. With the growth in the number of members and the establishment of new churches in these states, the Maranhão Piauí Field (AMAPI) was organized in 2016 with about 530 members.

As a Field, we need to build administrative offices, accommodations, and an auditorium. For the completion of the new headquarters, we count on the generosity and liberality of our dear brothers and sisters from all over the world.

"God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others will strengthen the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world, who 'was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.' And it is only as we fulfill the divine purpose in our creation that life can be a blessing to us. All the good gifts of God to man will prove only a curse, unless he employs them to bless his fellow men, and for the advancement of God's cause in the earth."—*The Review and Herald*, December 7, 1886.

When this appeal reaches you, please remember the blessings that fall upon the faithful steward and kindly collaborate with us in this endeavor—which by the grace of God will be of great importance for the growth and continuation of the work in this Field. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Your brothers and sisters from the Maranhão Piauí Field

Reverence for the Omnipotent One

MEMORY VERSE: “The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him” (Habakkuk 2:20).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 491–500.

“Reverence for the house of God has become almost extinct. . . . We have abundant reason to maintain a fervent, devoted spirit in the worship of God. We have reason even to be more thoughtful and reverential in our worship than had the Jews.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 495.

1. A BIG QUESTION

Sun, Mar 1

- a. What did the prophet Habakkuk express in his opening prayer to God? Habakkuk 1:1–4.

“From a human point of view the divine purpose for the chosen nation seemed almost impossible of accomplishment. The apostasy of former centuries had gathered strength with the passing years; ten of the tribes had been scattered among the heathen; only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained, and even these now seemed on the verge of moral and national ruin. The prophets had begun to foretell the utter destruction of their fair city, where stood the temple built by Solomon, and where all their earthly hopes of national greatness had centered. Could it be that God was about to turn aside from His avowed purpose of bringing deliverance to those who should put their trust in Him? In the face of the long-continued persecution of the righteous, and of the apparent prosperity of the wicked, could those who had remained true to God hope for better days? These anxious questionings were voiced by the prophet Habakkuk.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 384, 385.

- b. How did the Lord respond? Habakkuk 1:6–11.

a. Why was Habakkuk willing to accept God's plan? Habakkuk 1:12, 13.

"God answered the cry of His loyal children. Through His chosen mouth-piece He revealed His determination to bring chastisement upon the nation that had turned from Him to serve the gods of the heathen. Within the life-time of some who were even then making inquiry regarding the future, He would miraculously shape the affairs of the ruling nations of earth and bring the Babylonians into the ascendancy. These Chaldeans, 'terrible and dreadful,' were to fall suddenly upon the land of Judah as a divinely appointed scourge."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 385.

b. What lesson given to the prophet was highly applicable in the experience of the early Advent pioneers? Habakkuk 2:1–4.

"When the time passed at which the Lord's coming was first expected—in the spring of 1844—those who had looked in faith for His appearing were for a season involved in doubt and uncertainty. While the world regarded them as having been utterly defeated and proved to have been cherishing a delusion, their source of consolation was still the word of God. Many continued to search the Scriptures, examining anew the evidences of their faith and carefully studying the prophecies to obtain further light. . . .

"Interwoven with prophecies which they had regarded as applying to the time of the second advent was instruction specially adapted to their state of uncertainty and suspense, and encouraging them to wait patiently in the faith that what was now dark to their understanding would in due time be made plain. Among these prophecies was that of Habakkuk 2:1–4. . . .

"As early as 1842 the direction given in this prophecy to 'write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it,' had suggested to Charles Fitch the preparation of a prophetic chart to illustrate the visions of Daniel and the Revelation. The publication of this chart was regarded as a fulfillment of the command given by Habakkuk. No one, however, then noticed that an apparent delay in the accomplishment of the vision—a tarrying time—is presented in the same prophecy."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 391, 392.

a. How has Habakkuk 2:4 strengthened believers in every generation?
Romans 1:16, 17.

“The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God’s people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. ‘The just shall live by his faith.’ In the service of God there need be no despondency, no wavering, no fear. . . .

“We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 386, 387.

b. When tempted to doubt or fall into presumption, what must we always keep in mind? Lamentations 3:25, 26; Habakkuk 2:20.

“The time of waiting may seem long, the soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, ‘The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.’”—Ibid pp. 387, 388.

“True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence.”—*Education*, p. 242.

“‘Holy and reverend is His name.’ Psalm 111:9, Angels, as they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!

“We should reverence God’s Word. For the printed volume we should show respect, never putting it to common uses, or handling it carelessly.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 538.

“Parents, be careful what example and what ideas you give your children. Their minds are plastic, and impressions are easily made. In regard to the service of the sanctuary, if the speaker has a blemish, be afraid to mention it. Talk only of the good work he is doing, of the good ideas he presented, which you should heed as coming through God’s agent. It may be readily seen why children are so little impressed with the ministry of the Word and why they have so little reverence for the house of God. Their education has been defective in this respect.”—Ibid., p. 545.

a. What fervent prayer of Habakkuk should we echo today? *Habakkuk 3:2.*

“There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 590.

b. Even in the face of serious hardship and difficulties, what should consistently characterize our faith—and why? *Habakkuk 3:17–19; Philippians 2:14, 15.*

“Let the hard-pressed, sorely tried one say, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 317.

“The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy. . . .

“The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 629.

c. What other prophet was raised up during this same period to bring messages also relevant to our time? *Zephaniah 1:1.*

“Habakkuk was not the only one through whom was given a message of bright hope and of future triumph as well as of present judgment. During the reign of Josiah the word of the Lord came to Zephaniah, specifying plainly the results of continued apostasy, and calling the attention of the true church to the glorious prospect beyond. His prophecies of impending judgment upon Judah apply with equal force to the judgments that are to fall upon an impenitent world at the time of the second advent of Christ.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 389.

- a. What sobering message unveils the reality of God's wrath against false worship and those who promote it? Zephaniah 1:2-6.

- b. While one may casually assume to be following God, what attitudes reveal serious rebellion hidden in the heart? Zephaniah 1:12, 13; Matthew 24:48-51.

"The people to whom God has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time are sleeping at their post. They say by their actions: We have the truth; we are 'rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,' while the True Witness declares: Thou 'knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'

"With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: '*Knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Messages of warning, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are borne by the servants of God, defects of character are presented before the erring; but they say: 'That does not represent my case. I do not accept the message you bring. I am doing the best I can. I believe the truth.'

"That evil servant who said in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a 'servant,' outwardly devoted to the service of God while at heart he had yielded to Satan. He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart—that the Lord's coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. He accepts the world's maxims and conforms to its customs and practices. Selfishness, worldly pride, and ambitions predominate. Fearing that his brethren may stand higher than himself, he begins to disparage their efforts and impugn their motives. Thus he smites his fellow servants."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 101, 102.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. If puzzled by God's ways, what must I learn from Habakkuk's prayers?
2. Whom do I know that would appreciate a timeline chart of prophecy?
3. What aspects of my deportment in the house of God should improve?
4. Why is it vital for me to resist the temptation to murmur and complain?
5. When reproved, why is it vital for me to invest in deep heart-searching?

Vigilant to Glorify God

MEMORY VERSE: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:7).

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 92–96.

"You should make no delay, but closely search your own heart and die to self daily."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 336.

1. TWO CLASSES

Sun, Mar 8

- a. Describe the complex scene soon to take place. Zephaniah 1:14–18.

"Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated. Zephaniah thus describes the true state of this class and the terrible judgments that will come upon them."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 271.

"[Zephaniah 1:2, 3, 8–18 quoted.] There will be a series of events revealing that God is master of the situation. The truth will be proclaimed in clear, unmistakable language. As a people we must prepare the way of the Lord under the overruling guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is to be given in its purity. The stream of living water is to deepen and widen in its course. In all fields, nigh and afar off, men will be called from the plow and from the more common commercial business vocations that largely occupy the mind, and will be educated in connection with men of experience. As they learn to labor effectively they will proclaim the truth with power. Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come."—Ibid., vol. 9, p. 96.

a. What is the key to God's protection in the coming crisis? Zephaniah 2:1-3, 15; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

"God requires His people to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. All those who are indifferent and excuse themselves from this work, waiting for the Lord to do for them that which He requires them to do for themselves, will be found wanting when the meek of the earth, who have wrought His judgments, are hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 619.

"In the day of the Lord, just before the coming of Christ, God will send lightnings from Heaven in His wrath, which will unite with fire in the earth. The mountains will burn like a furnace, and will pour forth terrible streams of lava, destroying gardens and fields, villages and cities; and as they pour their melted ore, rocks and heated mud into the rivers, will cause them to boil like a pot, and send forth massive rocks and scatter their broken fragments upon the land with indescribable violence. Whole rivers will be dried up. The earth will be convulsed, and there will be dreadful eruptions and earthquakes everywhere. God will plague the wicked inhabitants of the earth until they are destroyed from off it. The saints are preserved in the earth in the midst of these dreadful commotions, as Noah was preserved in the ark at the time of the flood."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 82, 83.

b. In contrast to those having a merely shallow profession, what characterizes God's faithful believers? Zephaniah 3:1-4, 12, 13.

c. How does Zephaniah reveal the great hope for—and the mission—in behalf of God's faithful people in all parts of the world? Zephaniah 3:14-16.

"All heaven takes an interest, not only in the lands that are nigh and that need our help, but in the lands that are afar off. The heavenly beings are watching and waiting for human agencies to be deeply moved by the needs of their fellow workmen who are in perplexity and trial, in sorrow and distress."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 459.

a. What descriptions unveil the depth of God's love for His children—and how we are to reflect it? Zephaniah 3:17; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

"[God] will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Song of Solomon 2:4.) 'If thou wilt walk in My ways,' He declares, 'I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by—even among the holy angels that surround His throne. . . . And heaven and earth shall unite in the Father's song of rejoicing: 'For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 206, 207.

"The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. Have we not reason to be thankful every moment, thankful even when there are apparent difficulties in our pathway?

"The Lord Himself is our helper. 'Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.' 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.' Zephaniah 3:14, 17. This is the testimony the Lord desires us to bear to the world. His praise should continually be in our hearts and upon our lips.

"Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. As we seek to turn men from their self-indulgent efforts to secure happiness, we must show them that we have something better than that which they are seeking."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 63, 64.

b. Describe further God's tender care for His children persecuted for their refusal to violate His law of liberty. Zephaniah 3:18-20; Ezekiel 9:3, 4.

"Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done' in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 267.

a. When Haggai was called as a prophet, what was going on—and what should we learn from this situation? Haggai 1:1-4.

“The expression, ‘This people say,’ is significant. In the hour of their opportunity, the Israelites had not shown themselves willing. Prompt obedience is expected of those whom the Lord chooses and leads. Pleas for delay are a dishonor to God. And yet those who choose to follow their own way, often frame ingenious excuses in self-justification. Thus the Israelites declared that they had begun to rebuild, but that they were broken off in their work because of the hindrances devised by their enemies. These hindrances, they reasoned, were an indication that it was not the proper time to rebuild. They declared that the Lord had interposed difficulties to reprove their hot haste. This is why, in a communication through His prophet, He referred to them not as ‘my people,’ but as ‘this people.’

“The Israelites had no real excuse for leaving their work on the temple. The time when the most serious objections were raised, was the time for them to persevere in building. But they were actuated by a selfish dislike to encounter danger by arousing the opposition of their enemies. They did not possess the faith that is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. They hesitated to move forward by faith in the opening providences of God, because they could not see the end from the beginning. When difficulties arose, they were easily turned from the work.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1175.

b. What appeal is made to those distracted by worldly interests? Haggai 1:5-10.

“A striking illustration of the results of selfishly withholding even freewill offerings from the cause of God was given in the days of the prophet Haggai. . . . The Jews undertook to rebuild the temple of the Lord; but meeting determined opposition from their enemies, they discontinued the work.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 527.

c. How did the remnant obtain victory in heart and action? Haggai 1:12, 13.

“[The remnant] dared not disregard the repeated warning that their prosperity and the blessing of God were dependent upon their entire obedience to the instructions given them. As soon as they decided that they would do the words of the Lord, His messages of reproof changed to words of encouragement. O how merciful a God we have!”—*SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G.White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1176.

- a. Explain God's plan for the second temple that was to be built. Haggai 2:6-9.

"After the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar it was rebuilt about five hundred years before the birth of Christ by a people who from a lifelong captivity had returned to a wasted and almost deserted country. There were then among them aged men who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, and who wept at the foundation of the new building, that it must be so inferior to the former. The feeling that prevailed is forcibly described by the prophet: 'Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?' Haggai 2:3; Ezra 3:12. Then was given the promise that the glory of this latter house should be greater than that of the former.

"But the second temple had not equaled the first in magnificence; nor was it hallowed by those visible tokens of the divine presence which pertained to the first temple. There was no manifestation of supernatural power to mark its dedication. No cloud of glory was seen to fill the newly erected sanctuary. No fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifice upon its altar. The Shekinah no longer abode between the cherubim in the most holy place; the ark, the mercy seat, and the tables of the testimony were not to be found therein. No voice sounded from heaven to make known to the inquiring priest the will of Jehovah.

"For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God given by Haggai had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet's words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah's glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily—who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. The 'Desire of all nations' had indeed come to His temple when the Man of Nazareth taught and healed in the sacred courts. In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 23, 24.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In the soon-coming crisis, how can I be a power for good in God's hands?
2. Why is meekness an essential trait to seek in these last days?
3. What characterizes all who are hid in the day of the Lord's anger?
4. What tends to make me lose track of the greatest priority in life?
5. Why was the simpler, humbler temple built in Haggai's day so glorious?

End-Time Events

MEMORY VERSE: “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” (Zechariah 10:1).

Suggested Readings: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 580–592;
Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 506–512;
The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 47–56.

“As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 509.

1. THE APPLE OF HIS EYE

Sun, Mar 15

a. How did Zechariah support the message of Haggai? Zechariah 1:1–4, 15, 16.

“The earnest pleadings and the encouragements given through Haggai were emphasized and added to by Zechariah, whom God raised up to stand by his side in urging Israel to carry out the command to arise and build. Zechariah’s first message was an assurance that God’s word never fails and a promise of blessing to those who would hearken to the sure word of prophecy.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 576.

b. What reveals God’s attentive care for His people? Zechariah 2:1–5, 8.

“God had commanded that Jerusalem be rebuilt; the vision of the measuring of the city was an assurance that He would give comfort and strength to His afflicted ones, and fulfill to them the promises of His everlasting covenant. His protecting care, He declared, would be like ‘a wall of fire round about;’ and through them His glory would be revealed to all the sons of men. That which He was accomplishing for His people was to be known in all the earth.”—Ibid., p. 581.

a. Defective as we are, what illustrates our only hope? Zechariah 3:1-4.

“In the symbolic prophecy of Zechariah, Satan is seen standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord, accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in filthy garments, and resisting the work that the Angel desires to do for him. This represents the attitude of Satan toward every soul whom Christ is seeking to draw unto Himself.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 116, 117.

“[Satan] will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers and will not bless and save us. In ourselves we can see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use; we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper, It is of no use for you to pray; did not you do that evil thing? Have you not sinned against God and violated your own conscience? But we may tell the enemy that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.’ 1 John 1:7. When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, it is then the time to pray. Ashamed we may be and deeply humbled, but we must pray and believe.”—Ibid., p. 115.

b. What divine principle reveals the true source of power to overcome sin and fulfill God’s calling? Zechariah 4:6; John 15:5.

“As the chosen people of God we cannot copy the habits, aims, practices, or fashions of the world. We are not left in darkness to pattern after worldly models and to depend on outward appearance for success. The Lord has told us whence comes our strength. [Zechariah 4:6 quoted.]”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 90.

“Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 410, 411.

“In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven’s resources. . . . If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.”—Ibid., p. 419.

a. Name the most important temple that was to be built—and by whom. Zechariah 6:12, 13, 15; Ephesians 2:19–22.

“Upon the foundation that Christ Himself had laid, the apostles built the church of God. In the Scriptures the figure of the erection of a temple is frequently used to illustrate the building of the church. Zechariah refers to Christ as the Branch that should build the temple of the Lord. He speaks of the Gentiles as helping in the work: ‘They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord;’ and Isaiah declares, ‘The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls.’ Zechariah 6:12, 15; Isaiah 60:10.

“Writing of the building of this temple, Peter says, ‘To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’ 1 Peter 2:4, 5.

“In the quarry of the Jewish and the Gentile world the apostles labored, bringing out stones to lay upon the foundation.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 595, 596.

b. Despite God’s warnings, what had the people done prior to their captivity? Zechariah 7:8–14.

c. How did God nonetheless show an outpouring of longsuffering mercy in offering chance after chance? Zechariah 8:7, 8, 13–17.

“It was still the Lord’s purpose, as it had been from the beginning, that His people should be a praise in the earth, to the glory of His name. During the long years of their exile He had given them many opportunities to return to their allegiance to Him. Some had chosen to listen and to learn; some had found salvation in the midst of affliction. Many of these were to be numbered among the remnant that should return.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 599.

“[Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8 quoted.] These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterized the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated.”—Ibid, p. 704.

a. Now at this time in history, what should be our focus, and why is this so necessary? Zechariah 10:1, 2.

“Unless the members of God’s church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

“‘Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.’ Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man’s cooperation is required. God’s work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.’ The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.

“But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 508, 509.

b. Describe the amazing scene to occur under this power. Zechariah 12:8.

“When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God’s people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81.

a. Relate one beautiful conversation to come in eternity. Zechariah 13:6.

“Jesus will present His hands with the marks of His crucifixion. The marks of this cruelty He will ever bear. Every print of the nails will tell the story of man’s wonderful redemption and the dear price by which it was purchased.”—*Early Writings*, p. 179.

b. When and how will Christ return to the Mount of Olives, and what monumental events will unfold? Zechariah 14:4,5; Revelation 20:7, 12; 21:2, 10.

“[An angel explained:] ‘The saints will rest in the Holy City and reign as kings and priests one thousand years; then Jesus will descend with the saints upon the Mount of Olives, and the mount will part asunder and become a mighty plain for the Paradise of God to rest upon.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.

“At the end of one thousand years, Jesus, the King of Glory, descends from the Holy City, clothed with brightness like the lightning, upon the Mount of Olives—the same mount from whence He ascended after His resurrection. As His feet touch the mountain, it parts asunder, and becomes a very great plain, and is prepared for the reception of the Holy City in which is the paradise of God, the garden of Eden, which was taken up after man’s transgression. Now it descends with the city, more beautiful, and gloriously adorned than when removed from the earth. The city of God comes down and settles upon the mighty plain prepared for it. Then Jesus leaves the city surrounded by the redeemed host, and is escorted on His way by the angelic throng. In fearful majesty He calls forth the wicked dead. They are wakened from their long sleep. What a dreadful waking!”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 83.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Picturing the “wall of fire” God promises, when have I sensed His protection?
2. Why can I effectively dismiss Satan’s attacks that flaunt my sins before me?
3. What is more vital than a physical temple to house the presence of God?
4. Name some requirements essential in order to receive the Latter Rain.
5. When will the feet of Jesus once again stand on the Mount of Olives?

Malachi's Final Appeal

MEMORY VERSE: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3).

Suggested Readings: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 702–721;
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, pp. 45–50.

"Solemnly evildoers were warned of the day of judgment to come and of Jehovah's purpose to visit with swift destruction every transgressor. Yet none were left without hope; Malachi's prophecies of judgment were accompanied by invitations to the impenitent to make their peace with God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 706.

1. FAULTS OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Sun, Mar 22

a. Of what tendency toward selfish greed might we be guilty? Malachi 1:8.

"Many have indulged in needless expense, merely to gratify the feelings, the taste, and the eye, when the cause needed the very means thus used, and when some of the servants of God were poorly clothed and were crippled in their labor for lack of means. Said the angel: 'Their time to do will soon be past. Their works show that self is their idol, and to it they sacrifice.' Self must first be gratified; their feeling is: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Warning after warning many have received, but heeded not. Self is the main object, and to it everything must bow."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 115.

b. In stark contrast to the cultural practices of today's society, how does God view the tender, sacred commitment of marriage? Malachi 2:12–16; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4–6.

"Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 360.

a. Explain the prophetic fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-3; John 2:13-16.

“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah. . . . The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world’s buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

“God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified. . . .”

“The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble? If prosperity or adversity discover falseness, pride, or selfishness in our hearts, what shall we do when God tries every man’s work as by fire, and lays bare the secrets of all hearts?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 85.

b. Name some ways in which God’s people are rebuked for forgetting Him, and what does robbing God truly involve? Malachi 3:5-8; James 1:27; Luke 12:15; Proverbs 3:9,10.

“We must deliberately resolve that we will honor God with our substance; and then we must let nothing tempt us to rob Him of the tithes and offerings that are His due. We must be intelligent, systematic, and continuous in our acts of charity to men and our expressions of gratitude to God for His bounties to us. This is too sacred a duty to be left to chance or to be controlled by impulse or feeling. We should regularly reserve something for God’s cause, that He may not be robbed of the portion which He claims. When we rob God we rob ourselves also. We give up the heavenly treasure for the sake of having more of this earth. This is a loss that we cannot afford to sustain. If we live so that we can have the blessing of God we shall have His prospering hand with us in our temporal affairs, but if His hand is against us He can defeat all our plans and scatter faster than we can gather.”—Ibid, vol. 5, pp. 271, 272.

a. Name some blessings resulting from the return of a faithful tithe and liberal offerings—and explain our need to avoid delay in this. Malachi 3:10-12.

“Deathbed charity is not what Christ requires of His followers; it cannot excuse the selfishness of the living. Those who hold fast their property till the last moment, surrender it to death rather than to the cause. Losses are occurring continually. Banks fail, and property is consumed in very many ways. Many purpose to do something, but they delay the matter, and Satan works to prevent the means from coming into the treasury at all. It is lost before it is returned to God, and Satan exults that it is so.

“If you would do good with your means, do it at once lest Satan get it in his hands and thus hinder the work of God. Many times, when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance His cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could double their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 154.

b. What painfully accurate record of ourselves should we determine to see blotted out? Ecclesiastes 12:14; Isaiah 65:6, 7.

c. Besides having their names in the book of life, what reveals the deeds in God’s record of His faithful children? Malachi 3:16; Psalm 56:8.

“‘A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.’ Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says: ‘Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.’ Nehemiah 13:14. In the book of God’s remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake, is recorded.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 481.

a. What joy does God express toward His faithful people, and how can we reflect that joy in our character and deeds? Malachi 3:17; Matthew 25:34-40.

“When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 25.

b. How do we know the distinction between the wicked and the righteous is soon to be fully apparent? Malachi 3:18; Revelation 22:11, 12.

“The heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.” Psalm 50:6. That holy law, God’s righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God’s ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth.

“It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God’s holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have compared their characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God’s people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised. With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse. . . .

“Too late they see the true nature of their spurious sabbath and the sandy foundation upon which they have been building. They find that they have been fighting against God. Religious teachers have led souls to perdition while professing to guide them to the gates of Paradise.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 639, 640.

- a. Describe the final destiny of evildoers. Malachi 4:1–3.

- b. What final appeal does God send from the minor prophets? Malachi 4:5, 6.

“It is earthliness and selfishness that separate from God. The messages from heaven are of a character to arouse opposition. The faithful witnesses for Christ and the truth will reprove sin. Their words will be like a hammer to break the flinty heart, like a fire to consume the dross. There is constant need of earnest, decided messages of warning. God will have men who are true to duty. At the right time He sends His faithful messengers to do a work similar to that of Elijah.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 254.

“Not until parents themselves walk in the law of the Lord with perfect hearts will they be prepared to command their children after them. A reformation in this respect is needed—a reformation which shall be deep and broad. Parents need to reform; ministers need to reform; they need God in their households. If they would see a different state of things, they must bring His word into their families and must make it their counselor. They must teach their children that it is the voice of God addressed to them, and is to be implicitly obeyed. They should patiently instruct their children, kindly and untiringly teach them how to live in order to please God. The children of such a household are prepared to meet the sophistries of infidelity. They have accepted the Bible as the basis of their faith, and they have a foundation that cannot be swept away by the incoming tide of skepticism.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 143.

“A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion—an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay. . . . If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the ‘light of the world.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 144.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Whether married or not, how can I reinforce God’s plan for marriage?
2. In what ways am I seeing evidence of God’s purification process in me?
3. Name the three record books mentioned in the courts of Heaven.
4. How can I bring joy to the heart of heavenly intelligences?
5. What is the most powerful sermon that is called for in these last days?

First Sabbath Offerings



Sabbath, January 3, 2026

Headquarters in Siguatepeque, Honduras

Now is our chance to help make space for urgently needed offices, meeting rooms, and missionary school classrooms (see p. 6).



Sabbath, February 7, 2026

General Conference Welfare Department

Disasters are increasing everywhere. The Lord calls on every one of us to do what we can to help relieve the pain and suffering! (see p. 32).



Sabbath, March 7, 2026

Maranhão Piauí Field (AMAPI) Headquarters, Brazil

Administrative offices, accommodations, and an auditorium are needed in order to develop this growing Field. Let's help make it happen! (see p. 53).