

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the First Half Year 2017

***Life, Work, and Teachings
of Jesus, Part 4***

Receiving Jesus' Message

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth part of the series of Sabbath School Lessons on the “Life, Work, and Teachings of Jesus.” Previous lessons on this subject have presented the wonderful teachings, miracles, and life experiences of Jesus while He was on earth. We began with His preexistence and miraculous birth in Bethlehem and followed with His baptism and ministry in Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and other regions. With the lessons for this half year, we will study the final phase of His life and ministry—the closing events of His life on earth that were critical to the plan of redemption. The focus is on receiving Jesus’ message, considering how His contemporaries, including His disciples, received that message and how it should be received today.

Jesus gave His disciples clear information about what was ahead of them: “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” “Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.” “Nevertheless I must walk to day, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.” Matthew 16:21; Luke 18:31; 13:33. He outlined His sufferings, death, and resurrection as well as the prophecies of the immediate future relating to Jerusalem and the end of the world.

The Spirit of prophecy writes: “All who study the life of Christ and practice His teachings will become like Christ. Their influence will be like His. They will reveal soundness of character. As they walk in the humble path of obedience, doing the will of God, they exert an influence that tells for the advancement of the cause of God and the healthful purity of His work. In these thoroughly converted souls the world is to have a witness to the sanctifying power of truth upon the human character.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 96, 97 (1900); *Evangelism*, p. 269.

“As we study the sufferings of Christ, the results of sin are so distressing to us that we cry out to the Lord to take away our sins. As we continue to look, we become more capable of enduring the sight of what Christ suffered, and we realize more and more clearly His love for us. The cross of Christ is invested with a wonderful attraction and unlimited power; for in the suffering connected with the crucifixion scene, God’s love becomes to us more and more impressive.” —*Signs of the Times*, February 22, 1899.

Therefore, “let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set

before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1, 2.

As we learn from Him, through us His example will affect others, for "Those who will study the manner of Christ's teaching, and educate themselves to follow His way, will attract and hold large numbers now, as Christ held the people in His day.... When the truth in its practical character is urged upon the people because you love them, souls will be convicted, because the Holy Spirit of God will impress their hearts." —*Evangelism*, p. 124.

Living among men, Jesus changed their natural current of carnal thoughts and affections through His self-denial, meekness, humility, forbearance, cross-bearing, and devotion. If we learn from Him, we will follow His wonderful example, the world will acknowledge us as His servants, and searching souls will joyfully accept Him.

"'We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Corinthians 3:18. We are to keep the Lord ever before us. Those who do this, walk with God as did Enoch, and imperceptibly to themselves, they become one with the Father and with the Son. Day by day a change is wrought upon mind and hearts, and the natural inclination, the natural ways, are molded after God's ways and Spirit. They increase in spiritual knowledge, and are growing up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. They reflect to the world the character of Christ, and abiding in Him, and He in them, they fulfill the mission for which they were called to be the children of God—they become the light of the world, a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. 'No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.' Luke 8:16. Those who have been lighted from above send forth the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 296.

"Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.' Matthew 24:14." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 111.

As we study these lessons, may the miracle take place that we reflect the love of Jesus and are a light to others.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

Special Sabbath School Offering for the ESTABLISHMENT OF TERTIARY SCHOOLS

God bless every heartfelt, self-denying gift!

1

Sabbath, January 7, 2017

“Happy Are Ye If Ye Do Them”

“Reconciliation one with another is the work for which the ordinance of feet washing was instituted. By the example of our Lord and Master, this humiliating ceremony has been made a sacred ordinance. Whenever it is celebrated, Christ is present by His Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit that brings conviction to hearts.

“As Christ celebrated this ordinance with His disciples, conviction came to the hearts of all save Judas. So we shall be convicted as Christ speaks to our hearts. The fountains of the soul will be broken up. The mind will be energized, and, springing into activity and life, will break down every barrier that has caused disunion and alienation. Sins that have been committed will appear with more distinctness than ever before; for the Holy Spirit will bring them to our remembrance. The words of Christ, ‘If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,’ will be clothed with new power.” —*Review and Herald*, November 4, 1902; *Evangelism*, p. 275.

LOVE TO THE VERY LAST

1. What always motivated Jesus’ feelings and actions toward His disciples? What did He do to the end?

JOHN 13:1 *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

“Christ knew that the time had come for Him to depart out of the world, and go to His Father. And having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end. He was now in the shadow of the cross, and the pain was torturing His heart. He knew that He would be deserted in the hour of His betrayal. He knew that by the most humiliating process to which criminals were subjected He would be put to death. He knew the ingratitude and cruelty of those He had come to save. He knew how great the sacrifice that He must make, and for how many it would be in vain. Knowing all that was before Him, He might naturally have been overwhelmed with the thought of His own humiliation and suffering. But He looked upon the twelve, who had been with Him as His own, and who, after His shame and sorrow and painful usage were over, would be left to struggle in the world. His thoughts of what He Himself must suffer were ever connected with His disciples. He did not think of Himself. His care for them was uppermost in His mind.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 643.

SERVING AND CLEANSING HIS DISCIPLES

2. Knowing that it was time to leave them, what did Jesus do when they were together?

JOHN 13:2-5 *And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; ³Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. ⁵After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

"At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples' part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant.... By their silence they refused to humble themselves.

"How was Christ to bring these poor souls where Satan would not gain over them a decided victory? How could He show that a mere profession of discipleship did not make them disciples, or insure them a place in His kingdom? How could He show that it is loving service, true humility, which constitutes real greatness? How was He to kindle love in their hearts, and enable them to comprehend what He longed to tell them?...

"This action opened the eyes of the disciples.... So Christ expressed His love for His disciples." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 645.

NEW UNDERSTANDING

3. Amazed at what the Lord was doing for His disciples, what did Peter say when Jesus came to him to wash his feet? Did he understand what Jesus was doing?

JOHN 13:6, 7 *Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ⁷Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

"When Peter's turn came, he exclaimed with astonishment, 'Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?' Christ's condescension broke his heart. He was filled with shame to think that one of the disciples was not performing this service. 'What I do,' Christ said, 'thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' Peter could not bear to see his Lord, whom he believed to be the Son of God, acting the part of a servant. His whole soul rose up against this humiliation. He did not realize that for this Christ came into the world. With great emphasis he exclaimed, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 645, 646.

"When God is seen as He is, the blessed truth shines with a new and clearer light. That which kept the mind in perplexity is cleared away by the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. And yet there are many things we shall not comprehend; but we have the blessed assurance that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 184.

HIGHER CLEANSING

- 4. Was Jesus' washing the disciples' feet an act of courtesy, or did it have a much deeper meaning? Without spiritual cleansing, is it possible for one to have communion with and be connected with Jesus?**

JOHN 13:8-11 *Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ⁹Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. ¹⁰Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. ¹¹For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*

"Solemnly Christ said to Peter, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.' The service which Peter refused was the type of a higher cleansing. Christ had come to wash the heart from the stain of sin. In refusing to allow Christ to wash his feet, Peter was refusing the higher cleansing included in the lower. He was really rejecting his Lord. It is not humiliating to the Master to allow Him to work for our purification. The truest humility is to receive with thankful heart any provision made in our behalf, and with earnestness do service for Christ.

"At the words, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,' Peter surrendered his pride and self-will. He could not endure the thought of separation from Christ; that would have been death to him. 'Not my feet only,' he said, 'but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

UNIQUE EXAMPLE

- 5. How typical is it for a master or lord to serve his disciples or servants? No matter what we may think of this service, what does the Lord ask each of us to do?**

JOHN 13:12-14 *So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

"All ye are brethren.' As brethren we are identified with Christ and with one another. As brethren we are identical with Christ, and through His grace identical with one another. And as we wash the feet of Christ's followers, it is as though we were indeed touching the Son of God. We do this act because Christ told us to do it, and Christ Himself is among us. His Holy Spirit does the work of uniting our hearts. To become one with Christ requires self-denial and self-sacrifice at every step.

"The performance of the ordinance of humility calls for self-examination. The noble principles of the soul are strengthened on every such occasion. Christ lives in us, and this draws heart to heart. We are led to love as brethren, to be kind, tender, courteous in daily service, having hearts that can feel another's woe." —(Letter 210, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139.

6. Was the special service that Jesus performed for His disciples one that He alone could do, or was it an example for all His followers? What will happen if we follow His wonderful example?

JOHN 13:15-17 *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. ¹⁷If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

“So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant’s part.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 645.

“Humility is an active principle growing out of a thorough consciousness of God’s great love, and will always show itself by the way in which it works. By taking part in the ordinance of feet washing we show that we are willing to perform this act of humility. We are doing the very thing Christ did, but this is not to be talked of as an act of humiliation. It is an act which symbolizes the condition of the mind and heart.” —(Letter 210, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139.

WASHING AWAY ALIENATION, JEALOUSY, AND PRIDE

7. When we think of Jesus’ washing His disciples’ feet, what purification comes to mind? What impurity must be removed from all who will enter the Lord’s kingdom?

1 JOHN 2:1, 2 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

REVELATION 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*

“... Jesus ... desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet. With the spirit they then had, not one of them was prepared for communion with Christ. Until brought into a state of humility and love, they were not prepared to partake of the paschal supper, or to share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute. Their hearts must be cleansed. Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away in washing their feet. A change of feeling was brought about. Looking upon them, Jesus could say, ‘Ye are clean.’ Now there was union of heart, love for one another. They had become humble and teachable....

“Like Peter and his brethren, we too have been washed in the blood of Christ, yet often through contact with evil the heart’s purity is soiled. We must come to Christ for His cleansing grace. Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in contact with the hands of his Lord and Master; but how often we bring our sinful, polluted hearts in contact with the heart of Christ! How grievous to Him is our evil temper, our vanity and pride! Yet all our infirmity and defilement we must bring to Him. He alone can wash us clean. We are not prepared for communion with Him unless cleansed by His efficacy.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 646-649.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Is it our responsibility to provide only physical cleanliness to our family and acquaintances, or are we also called to share spiritual purity?***
- ***What do we need in order to be able to show others how to be spiritually pure?***
- ***What will happen to us if we are willing to engage in this ministry?***
- ***What are the results when we follow Jesus’ example in His spirit?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“When He whom angels worshiped, He who was rich in honor, splendor, and glory, came to the earth, and found Himself in fashion as a man, He did not plead His refined nature as an excuse to hold Himself aloof from the unfortunate. In His work He was found among the afflicted, the poor, distressed, and needy ones. Christ was the embodiment of refinement and purity; His was an exalted life and character; yet in His labor He was found not among men of high-sounding titles, not among the most honorable of this world, but with the despised and needy. I came, says the divine Teacher, ‘to save that which was lost.’ Yes; the Majesty of heaven was ever found working to help those who most needed help. May the example of Christ put to shame the excuses of that class who are so attracted to their poor selves that they consider it beneath their refined taste and their high calling to help the most helpless.... True, it may not always be agreeable to unite with the Master and become co-workers with Him in helping the very class who stand most in need of help; but this is the work which Christ humbled Himself to do. Is the servant greater than his Lord? He has given the example, and enjoins upon us to copy it.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 467.

“This ceremony means much to us. God would have us take the whole scene, not only the single act of outward cleansing. This lesson does not merely refer to the one act. It is to reveal the great truth that Christ is an example of what we through His grace are to be in our intercourse with each other. It shows that the entire life should be one of humble, faithful ministry.” —(Manuscript 43, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139.

* * *

Blood of the New Testament

"As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

"... The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653.

THE MASTER'S GREATEST DESIRE

1. What did Jesus instruct His disciples to do to prepare for the Passover? When the time came, with whom did He celebrate the sacred service?

MATTHEW 26:17-20 *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? ¹⁸And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. ¹⁹And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. ²⁰Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.*

"Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

"The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 652.

2. What did Jesus tell the disciples He wanted to do? Describe the different meanings for what He said about this very special service at this very special time in history.

LUKE 22:14-16 *And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: ¹⁶For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

"It was the last Passover that Jesus would keep with His disciples. He knew that His hour was come; He Himself was the true Paschal Lamb, and on the day the Passover was eaten He was to be sacrificed. He knew that the circumstances connected with this occasion would never be forgotten by His disciples....

"On this last evening with His disciples, Jesus had much to tell them. If they had been prepared to receive what He longed to impart, they would have been saved from heartbreaking anguish, from disappointment and unbelief. But Jesus saw that they could not bear what He had to say." —(Manuscript 106, 1903) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 261.

"In the place of the national festival which the Jewish people had observed, He instituted a memorial service, the ordinance of feet washing and the sacramental supper, to be observed through all time by His followers in every country. These should ever repeat Christ's act, that all may see that true service calls for unselfish ministry." —(*Signs of the Times*, May 16, 1900) *Evangelism*, pp. 275, 276.

A HEARTFELT INVITATION

3. After giving thanks and breaking the bread, what did Jesus invite His disciples to do? What did the broken bread that He was distributing to them signify?

MATTHEW 26:26 *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*

"Our Lord has said, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.... For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.' John 6:53-55. This is true of our physical nature. To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

REMEMBERING THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

4. For whom would His body soon be broken? Therefore, what was to be their responsibility from that time onward?

LUKE 22:19 *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24-26 *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*

"Our Lord says, Under conviction of sin, remember that I died for you. When oppressed and persecuted and afflicted for My sake and the gospel's, remember

My love, so great that for you I gave My life. When your duties appear stern and severe, and your burdens too heavy to bear, remember that for your sake I endured the cross, despising the shame. When your heart shrinks from the trying ordeal, remember that your Redeemer liveth to make intercession for you....

"As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing Christ's broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber. We seem to be passing through the garden consecrated by the agony of Him who bore the sins of the world. We witness the struggle by which our reconciliation with God was obtained. Christ is set forth crucified among us....

"The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 659, 661-653.

SYMBOL OF THE CLEANSING BLOOD

5. What did the juice of the vine that He offered to them represent? How many disciples did He invite to drink of it?

MATTHEW 26:27 *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.*

"Whenever they met together to commemorate His death, they recounted how 'He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' In their tribulation they found comfort in the hope of their Lord's return. Unspeakably precious to them was the thought, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' 1 Corinthians 11:26." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 659.

"Christ designed that this supper should be often commemorated, in order to bring to our remembrance His sacrifice in giving His life for the remission of the sins of all who will believe on Him and receive Him." —(*Review and Herald*, June 22, 1897) *Evangelism*, p. 276.

BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

6. What testament did He seal with His blood? How far would the great result of His sacrifice in shedding His blood reach?

MATTHEW 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

"In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ. And the administration of the Sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 656, 659.

"In this last act of Christ in partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, He pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer by a new covenant, in which it was written and sealed that upon all who will receive Christ by faith will be bestowed all the blessings that heaven can supply, both in this life and in the future immortal life.

"This covenant deed was to be ratified by Christ's own blood, which it had been the office of the old sacrificial offerings to keep before the minds of His chosen people." —(*Review and Herald*, June 22, 1897) *Evangelism*, p. 276.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

7. Sharing the symbolic bread and wine, with whom do we have communion? Although we may be many, what do we become when we partake of that one bread?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16, 17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

"To the holy Communion this scripture [John 6:54, 56, 57] in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

"The love of Jesus, with its constraining power, is to be kept fresh in our memory. Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus. And nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

8. What is said of those who will participate in the heavenly wedding supper of the Lamb?

LUKE 14:15; 13:29 *And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.... ^{13:29}And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

REVELATION 19:7-9 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.*

"To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts....

“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Revelation 19:6-9.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 421.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Why did Jesus wait until the last days of His life to establish the new covenant?***
- ***Do you think there were some conditions to be met by those participating in the new covenant?***
- ***During the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, why is it important to recall that the Redeemer established this ordinance at the same time as the new covenant? What implications does this have for us?***
- ***In partaking with others of the wine and bread, what feelings of unity and harmony help to establish the spiritual body mentioned by the apostle Paul?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

(*Review and Herald*, June 14, 1898) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1139, 1140.

“He who beholds the Saviour’s matchless love will be elevated in thought, purified in heart, transformed in character. He will go forth to be a light to the world, to reflect in some degree this mysterious love. The more we contemplate the cross of Christ, the more fully shall we adopt the language of the apostle when he said, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Galatians 6:14.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 661.

“In this ordinance, Christ discharged His disciples from the cares and burdens of the ancient Jewish obligations in rites and ceremonies. These no longer possessed any virtue; for type was meeting antitype in Himself, the authority and foundation of all Jewish ordinances that pointed to Him as the great and only efficacious offering for the sins of the world. He gave this simple ordinance that it might be a special season when He Himself would always be present, to lead all participating in it to feel the pulse of their own conscience, to awaken them to an understanding of the lessons symbolized, to revive their memory, to convict of sin, and to receive their penitential repentance. He would teach them that brother is not to exalt himself above brother, that the dangers of disunion and strife shall be seen and appreciated; for the health and holy activity of the soul are involved.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1139.

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The Way to the Father

“... In vain are men’s dreams of progress, in vain all efforts for the uplifting of humanity, if they neglect the one Source of hope and help for the fallen race. ‘Every good gift and every perfect gift’ (James 1:17) is from God. There is no true excellence of character apart from Him. And the only way to God is Christ. He says, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’ John 14:6.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 21.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE AND HOPE

- 1. Considering the coming passion with all its pain and sorrow, how did Jesus encourage His disciples? Despite their uncertainty, what were they to do?**

JOHN 14:1, 27, 28 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me....²⁷Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.²⁸Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

“How precious is the knowledge that we have a faithful Friend, One who will impart to us a noble, elevated character that will fit us for the companionship of the heavenly angels in the courts above! His guardianship is over all His children. They have a peace that the world can neither give nor take away. The loss of earthly treasures does not make them hopeless or homeless....

“Many think to find security in earthly riches. But Christ seeks to remove from their eye the mote that obscures the vision, and thus enable them to behold the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They are mistaking phantoms for realities, and have lost sight of the glories of the eternal world. Christ calls upon them to extend their view beyond the present and add eternity to their vision.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 355.

INVITATION TO THE FATHER’S HOUSE

- 2. Instead of an earthly kingdom, to what home did He direct their minds? Although He made it clear that He would soon be leaving, what wonderful promises did He give to comfort them?**

JOHN 14:2-4 *In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

“For your sake I came into the world. I am working in your behalf. When I go away, I shall still work earnestly for you. I came into the world to reveal Myself

to you, that you might believe. I go to the Father to cooperate with Him in your behalf. The object of Christ's departure was the opposite of what the disciples feared. It did not mean a final separation. He was going to prepare a place for them, that He might come again, and receive them unto Himself. While He was building mansions for them, they were to build characters after the divine similitude." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

"Thus will be fulfilled Christ's promise to His disciples, 'I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.' John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Matthew 25:34." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

THE ONLY WAY TO THE FATHER

3. Had Thomas and the other disciples figured out where Jesus was going? Through whom alone can the Father be approached and reached? What shows that Jesus is the only way?

JOHN 14:5-7 *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?* ⁶*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. ⁷If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

"There are not many ways to heaven. Each one may not choose his own way. Christ says, 'I am the way:... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.' Since the first gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Christ had been uplifted as the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved. He is the way by which alone we can have access to God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 663.

4. What personal desire did Philip express? How are we to understand Jesus' words that one who has seen Him has seen the Father?

JOHN 14:8, 9 *Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. ⁹Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

"Amazed at his dullness of comprehension, Christ asked with pained surprise, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?' Is it possible that you do not see the Father in the works He does through Me? Do you not believe that I came to testify of the Father? 'How sayest thou then, Show us the Father?' 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 663, 664.

CLOSE COMMUNION BETWEEN THE FATHER AND SON

- 5. How close is the relationship between the Father and His Son? Therefore, how should we consider Jesus' words and works? What did He say to make His disciples aware that the Father was acting through His Son?**

JOHN 14:10, 11 *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.*

"If the disciples believed this vital connection between the Father and the Son, their faith would not forsake them when they saw Christ's suffering and death to save a perishing world. Christ was seeking to lead them from their low condition of faith to the experience they might receive if they truly realized what He was—God in human flesh. He desired them to see that their faith must lead up to God, and be anchored there. How earnestly and perseveringly our compassionate Saviour sought to prepare His disciples for the storm of temptation that was soon to beat upon them. He would have them hid with Him in God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

RESULTS OF FAITH AND CLOSE COMMUNION

- 6. What makes it possible for one truly to believe in the Son? Who will reach that level of faith and consecration in which he does the same works that Jesus did, and even greater?**

JOHN 14:12 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

"The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

- 7. What is possible when there is a right relationship between the Father and the disciple? At the same time, what will a disciple do if he truly loves his Lord?**

JOHN 14:13-15 *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

"... To pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. 'If ye love Me,' He says, 'keep My commandments.' He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience...."

"By this Christ did not mean that the disciples' work would be of a more exalted character than His, but that it would have greater extent. He did not refer

merely to miracle working, but to all that would take place under the working of the Holy Spirit....

"After the Lord's ascension, the disciples realized the fulfillment of His promise.... The Saviour's promise to His disciples is a promise to His church to the end of time. God did not design that His wonderful plan to redeem men should achieve only insignificant results. All who will go to work, trusting not in what they themselves can do, but in what God can do for and through them, will certainly realize the fulfillment of His promise. 'Greater works than these shall ye do,' He declares; 'because I go unto My Father.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 668, 664, 667.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Comparing the central message of this lesson, what light does it cast on the popular idea that all ways, or all religions, lead to the same place—to God?***
- ***What is the reason why only one way leads to God and why this presents not a limitation but a great opportunity, which then facilitates finding it?***
- ***What will a child who is taken by force from his father's house do when his freedom is restored? How will he feel when someone like Jesus helps him to return home?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"In carrying out his enmity to Christ until He hung upon the cross of Calvary, with wounded, bruised body and broken heart, Satan completely uprooted himself from the affections of the universe. It was then seen that God had in His Son denied Himself, giving Himself for the sins of the world, because He loved mankind. The Creator was revealed in the Son of the infinite God. Here the question, 'Can there be self-denial with God?' was forever answered. Christ was God, and condescending to be made flesh, He assumed humanity and became obedient unto death, that He might undergo infinite sacrifice." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 342.

"Man must not only read the Word of God, supposing that a casual knowledge of this Word will bring about in him a reformation of character. This work only the One who is the way, the truth, and the life can accomplish. Firmly may certain doctrines of truth be held. Again and again they may be reiterated, till the holders come to think that they are indeed in possession of the great blessings which these doctrines represent. But the greatest, most powerful truths may be held, and yet kept in the outer court, exerting little influence to make the daily life wholesome and fragrant. The soul is not sanctified through the truth that is not practiced." —*Evangelism*, p. 290.

"Jesus has done all in His power to give you a home in the mansions that are prepared for them that love and serve Him here. He left His heavenly home, and came to a world marred by sin—came to a people who did not appreciate Him, who did not love His purity and holiness, who slighted His teachings, and finally put Him to a most cruel death. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' " —*Messages to Young People*, p. 346.

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“He Shall Give You Another Comforter”

“At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 669, 670.

THE PROMISE

- 1. What supremely important, comforting promise did Jesus give His disciples before the great trial of the crucifixion? He was soon to return to the Father, but what would the other Comforter do?**

JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*

“Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, Christ sought for the most essential and complete gift to bestow upon His followers, a gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of grace....

“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 668, 669.

“When Christ gave His disciples the promise of the Spirit, He was nearing the close of His earthly ministry. He was standing in the shadow of the cross, with a full realization of the load of guilt that was to rest upon Him as the Sin Bearer. Before offering Himself as the sacrificial victim, He instructed His disciples regarding a most essential and complete gift which He was to bestow upon His followers—the gift that would bring within their reach the boundless resources of His grace.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 47.

WITH AND IN THEM

- 2. In this context, what did Jesus say about the Holy Spirit? According to His words, who will receive this special gift? How close would be the relationship between the Spirit of truth and the Lord’s disciples?**

JOHN 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

“Christ was about to depart to His home in the heavenly courts, but He assured His disciples that He would send them the Comforter, who would abide with

them forever. To the guidance of this Comforter all may implicitly trust. He is the Spirit of truth; but this truth the world can neither see nor receive....” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 171.

“The Comforter is called ‘the Spirit of truth.’ His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

TEACHING AND BRINGING TO REMEMBRANCE

3. Would the teaching of the Comforter be restricted or limited? What would He bring to their remembrance?

JOHN 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

“The disciples still failed to understand Christ’s words in their spiritual sense, and again He explained His meaning. By the Spirit, He said, He would manifest Himself to them. ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things.’ No more will you say, I cannot comprehend. No longer will you see through a glass, darkly. You shall ‘be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ Ephesians 3:18, 19.

“The disciples were to bear witness to the life and work of Christ. Through their word He was to speak to all the people on the face of the earth. But in the humiliation and death of Christ they were to suffer great trial and disappointment. That after this experience their word might be accurate, Jesus promised that the Comforter should ‘bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ ” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

4. Were the disciples in a condition to understand everything that the Master wished to teach them? Therefore, what extensive work would the Holy Spirit do at the proper time?

JOHN 16:12, 13 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*

“Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of truth. But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and it still held a power over their minds, and molded their sentiments. Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. They did not comprehend the value of the scriptures Christ presented. Many of His lessons

seemed almost lost upon them. Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words. He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds. And He had left unsaid many things that could not be comprehended by the disciples. These also would be opened to them by the Spirit. The Spirit was to quicken their understanding, that they might have an appreciation of heavenly things. 'When He, the Spirit of truth, is come,' said Jesus, 'He will guide you into all truth.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 670, 671.

INSPIRATION TO TESTIFY OF JESUS

5. What other mission would the Holy Spirit carry out in the name of Jesus?

JOHN 16:14; 15:26 *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you....* ^{15:26}*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.*

"Of the Spirit Jesus said, 'He shall glorify Me.' The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour." —*Evangelism*, p. 615.

CHANGE AND REGENERATION

6. What deep, powerful work is necessary to convince people of sin and give them the desire and power to be transformed?

JOHN 16:8-11 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

" 'When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit. This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken. No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the cooperation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, 'Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.' Acts 5:28." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 671, 672.

PROMISE AND OBEDIENCE

7. Was the Lord's great promise of the Holy Spirit limited to the disciples of the first century? To whom has He given this special gift?

ACTS 2:39; 5:32 *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call....^{5:32} And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us.... But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

"Then let us cease to look to ourselves, but look to Him from whom all virtue comes. No one can make himself better, but we are to come to Jesus as we are, earnestly desiring to be cleansed from every spot and stain of sin, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.... By living faith we must lay hold of His promise...." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 213.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***What spiritual conditions prevailed in the early church when the Lord granted the gift of the Spirit?***
- ***What wonderful effects followed the descent of the Spirit in the preaching of the message?***
- ***What is the divine purpose in giving the Spirit of truth to His people today?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 668-672.

"Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation." —*My Life Today*, p. 36.

"Some have asked, What shall I do to receive the Holy Ghost? Ask God to search your hearts as with a lighted candle. Do nothing for selfish gratification. Suppose that Christ's professed followers were representatives of Christ in our earth; would not worldlings see this and take knowledge of such that they had learned of Jesus? Will

not such be a power? We want the religion of Christ. This will bring forth the fruits of love, joy, and peace.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 300.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth.... By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

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Sabbath, February 4, 2017

“I Will Not Deny Thee”

“Brethren, we must sink the shaft deep in the mine of truth. You may question matters with yourselves and with one another, if you only do it in the right spirit; but too often self is large, and as soon as investigation begins, an unchristian spirit is manifested. This is just what Satan delights in, but we should come with a humble heart to know for ourselves what is truth. The time is coming when we shall be separated and scattered, and each one of us will have to stand without the privilege of communion with those of like precious faith; and how can you stand unless God is by your side, and you know that He is leading and guiding you? Whenever we come to investigate Bible truth, the Master of assemblies is with us.” —*This Day with God*, p. 93.

A TEST AHEAD

- 1. Having in view the events of the last days of the Messiah’s life, what prophecy did the prophet Zechariah record? How did Jesus put the fulfillment of this prophecy in context?**

ZECHARIAH 13:7 *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*

MATTHEW 26:31 *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

“Of the multitude that followed the Saviour to Calvary, many had attended Him with joyful hosannas and the waving of palm branches as He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem. But not a few who had then shouted His praise, because it was popular to do so, now swelled the cry of ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him.’ When Christ rode into Jerusalem, the hopes of the disciples had been raised to the highest pitch. They had pressed close about their Master, feeling that it was a high honor to be connected with Him. Now in His humiliation they followed Him at a distance. They were filled with grief, and bowed down with disappointed hopes.

How were the words of Jesus verified: 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.' Matthew 26:31." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 743.

"We are now living in the last days, when the truth must be spoken, when in reproof and warning it must be given to the world, irrespective of consequences. If there are some who will become offended and turn from the truth, we must bear in mind that there were those who did the same in Christ's day...." —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 422.

2. Having the above prophecy in mind, what did the Master tell Peter? For whom would the coming crisis be especially severe?

LUKE 22:31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*

"The disciples listened in sorrow and amazement. They remembered how in the synagogue at Capernaum, when Christ spoke of Himself as the bread of life, many had been offended, and had turned away from Him. But the twelve had not shown themselves unfaithful. Peter, speaking for his brethren, had then declared his loyalty to Christ. Then the Saviour had said, 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' John 6:70. In the upper chamber Jesus said that one of the twelve would betray Him, and that Peter would deny Him. But now His words include them all." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 673.

"The reason so many of Christ's professed disciples fall into grievous temptation is that they have not a correct knowledge of themselves. Here is where Peter was so thoroughly sifted by the enemy. If we could understand our own weakness, we should see so much to do for ourselves that we would humble our hearts under the mighty hand of God. Hanging our helpless souls upon Christ, we would supplement our ignorance with His wisdom, our weakness with His strength, our frailty with His enduring might. Peter fell because he did not know his own frailty. He thought himself strong." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 91.

ASSISTANCE IN CRISIS

3. Did He only tell the disciples about the coming crisis, or did He provide something to protect the disciples?

LUKE 22:32 *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

"To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken, 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Luke 22:31, 32. Christ will never abandon those for whom He has died. We may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 175, 176.

CONFIDENCE THAT CANNOT BE TRUSTED

4. Was Peter conscious of his human weakness? What was his reaction to Jesus' words of warning?

MATTHEW 26:33 *Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*

LUKE 22:33 *And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

JOHN 13:37 *Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.*

"When Peter said he would follow his Lord to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it; but he did not know himself. Hidden in his heart were elements of evil that circumstances would fan into life. Unless he was made conscious of his danger, these would prove his eternal ruin. The Saviour saw in him a self-love and assurance that would overbear even his love for Christ. Much of infirmity, of unmortified sin, carelessness of spirit, unsanctified temper, heedlessness in entering into temptation, had been revealed in his experience. Christ's solemn warning was a call to heart searching. Peter needed to distrust himself, and to have a deeper faith in Christ. Had he in humility received the warning, he would have appealed to the Shepherd of the flock to keep His sheep. When on the Sea of Galilee he was about to sink, he cried, 'Lord, save me.' Matthew 14:30. Then the hand of Christ was outstretched to grasp his hand. So now if he had cried to Jesus, Save me from myself, he would have been kept. But Peter felt that he was distrusted, and he thought it cruel. He was already offended, and he became more persistent in his self-confidence." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 673, 674.

5. Although he absolutely refused to believe that he would ever deny his Master, what did the Lord tell him? Was he really prepared to give his life for Him?

MATTHEW 26:34 *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

LUKE 22:34 *And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.*

JOHN 13:38 *Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.*

"We see how human nature can be deceived, how human nature can be misled, because Satan is allowed to step in between the human soul and Jesus. The word of Christ needs to be spoken with authority, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Let Me come close to My servants, that they may not be overcome, that they may believe My words rather than the words of deceivers, for what I speak is truth and righteousness...." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 275.

"Had Peter walked humbly with God, hiding self in Christ; had he earnestly looked for divine help; had he been less self-confident; had he received the Lord's instruction and practised it, he would have been watching unto prayer.... Had he closely examined himself, the Lord would have given him divine help and there would have been no need of Satan's sifting.... There is no power in the whole sa-

tanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 91.

6. What did Peter reaffirm even more vehemently? Did the other disciples feel less secure than he? What counsel did Jesus give them, in view of their natural human weakness?

MATTHEW 26:35 *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

MARK 14:31 *But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.*

MATTHEW 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

“The watchcare of Christ for Peter was the cause of his restoration. Satan could do nothing against the all-powerful intercession of Christ. And the prayer that Christ offered for Peter He offers in behalf of all who are humble and contrite in heart.... Peter sinned against light and knowledge, and against great and exalted privileges. It was self-confidence that caused him to fail, and it is this same evil that is now working in human hearts. It may be our purpose to be right and to do right, but we shall most surely err unless we are constant learners in the school of Christ. Our only safety is in walking humbly with God.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 91.

TESTED BUT NOT ABANDONED

7. Although the sheep were scattered at the time of trial, what did the Lord tell them for their encouragement? Does God leave His children alone in the moment of temptation?

MATTHEW 26:32 *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

2 PETER 2:9 *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.*

PSALM 34:17-19 *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. ¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*

“Jesus looks with compassion on His disciples. He cannot save them from the trial, but He does not leave them comfortless. He assures them that He is to break the fetters of the tomb, and that His love for them will not fail. ‘After I am risen again,’ He says, ‘I will go before you into Galilee.’ Matthew 26:32. Before the denial, they have the assurance of forgiveness. After His death and resurrection, they knew that they were forgiven, and were dear to the heart of Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 674.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Can we imagine what our tests will be in the future and how we will face them?*
- *Are we more aware of and prepared to deal with a crisis than were Peter and the disciples?*
- *What do you believe is necessary to keep from leaving Jesus, as did Peter and the other disciples?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The Saviour’s manner of dealing with Peter had a lesson for him and his brethren. Although Peter had denied his Lord, the love which Jesus bore him had never faltered. And as the apostle should take up the work of ministering the word to others, he was to meet the transgressor with patience, sympathy, and forgiving love. Remembering his own weakness and failure, he was to deal with the sheep and lambs committed to his care as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 516.

“To every Christian comes the word that was addressed to Peter, ‘Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.’ Luke 22:31, 32. Thank God we are not left alone. This is our safety. Satan can never touch with eternal disaster one whom Christ has prepared for temptation by His previous intercession, for grace is provided in Christ for every soul, and a way of escape has been made, so that no one need fall under the power of the enemy.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 286.

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6

Sabbath, February 11, 2017

Branches That Bear Fruit

“Jesus and the disciples were on the way to Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, a retired spot which He had often visited for meditation and prayer. The Saviour had been explaining to His disciples His mission to the world, and the spiritual relation to Him which they were to sustain. Now He illustrates the lesson. The moon is shining bright, and reveals to Him a flourishing grapevine. Drawing the attention of the disciples to it, He employs it as a symbol.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 674.

PRECIOUS SYMBOLS

1. **How is Israel pictured as God’s chosen people in the Old Testament? To whom did Jesus apply the vine as a symbol?**

PSALM 80:8 *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*

ISAIAH 5:1, 7 *Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill.... ⁷For the vineyard*

of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

JOHN 15:1, FIRST PART *I am the true vine,...*

“‘I am the true Vine.’ The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. Israel had been represented as a vine which God had planted in the Promised Land. The Jews based their hope of salvation on the fact of their connection with Israel. But Jesus says, I am the real Vine. Think not that through a connection with Israel you may become partakers of the life of God, and inheritors of His promise. Through Me alone is spiritual life received.

“‘I am the true Vine,’ He says. Instead of choosing the graceful palm, the lofty cedar, or the strong oak, Jesus takes the vine with its clinging tendrils to represent Himself. The palm tree, the cedar, and the oak stand alone. They require no support. But the vine entwines about the trellis, and thus climbs heavenward. So Christ in His humanity was dependent upon divine power. ‘I can of Mine own self do nothing,’ He declared. John 5:30.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 674, 675.

2. If Jesus is the true vine, who is the Husbandman? In the parable, whom do the branches represent?

JOHN 15:1, LAST PART, 5, FIRST PART ... *And my Father is the husbandman.... ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches.*

“‘I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman.’ On the hills of Palestine our heavenly Father had planted this goodly Vine, and He Himself was the husbandman. Many were attracted by the beauty of this Vine, and declared its heavenly origin....

“‘I am the Vine, ye are the branches,’ Christ said to His disciples. Though He was about to be removed from them, their spiritual union with Him was to be unchanged. The connection of the branch with the vine, He said, represents the relation you are to sustain to Me. The scion is engrafted into the living vine, and fiber by fiber, vein by vein, it grows into the vine stock. The life of the vine becomes the life of the branch. So the soul dead in trespasses and sins receives life through connection with Christ. By faith in Him as a personal Saviour the union is formed. The sinner unites his weakness to Christ’s strength, his emptiness to Christ’s fullness, his frailty to Christ’s enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

3. What does it mean spiritually to be branches? Can a branch bear fruit or survive apart from the vine?

JOHN 15:4, 5 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

"This union with Christ, once formed, must be maintained. Christ said, 'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.' This is no casual touch, no off-and-on connection. The branch becomes a part of the living vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the root to the branches is unobstructed and constant. Separated from the vine, the branch cannot live. No more, said Jesus, can you live apart from Me. The life you have received from Me can be preserved only by continual communion. Without Me you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.

"'Abide in Me, and I in you.' Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character.

"The root sends its nourishment through the branch to the outermost twig. So Christ communicates the current of spiritual strength to every believer. So long as the soul is united to Christ, there is no danger that it will wither or decay." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION WITH THE VINE

4. What will happen if a branch is disconnected from the vine? If our connection remains constant with Jesus, what will happen through prayer?

JOHN 15:6, 7 *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

"'My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.' While the graft is outwardly united with the vine, there may be no vital connection. Then there will be no growth or fruitfulness. So there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ. If they bear no fruit, they are false branches. Their separation from Christ involves a ruin as complete as that represented by the dead branch. 'If a man abide not in Me,' said Christ, 'he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

GOD'S METHOD FOR IMPROVEMENT

5. What does the Husbandman do with a branch that produces no fruit? What does He do with a branch that bears fruit?

JOHN 15:2, 3 *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ³Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

"'And every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [pruneth] it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' From the chosen twelve who had followed Jesus, one as a withered branch was about to be taken away; the rest were to pass under the pruning knife of bitter trial. Jesus with solemn tenderness explained the purpose

of the husbandman. The pruning will cause pain, but it is the Father who applies the knife. He works with no wanton hand or indifferent heart. There are branches trailing upon the ground; these must be cut loose from the earthly supports to which their tendrils are fastening. They are to reach heavenward, and find their support in God. The excessive foliage that draws away the life current from the fruit must be pruned off. The overgrowth must be cut out, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The husbandman prunes away the harmful growth, that the fruit may be richer and more abundant." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 676, 677.

FRUITFUL BRANCHES

6. What is the test of true discipleship? Who will receive the glory when His disciples bear good fruit?

JOHN 15:8 *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:11 *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

"The life of the vine will be manifest in fragrant fruit on the branches. 'He that abideth in Me,' said Jesus, 'and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.' When we live by faith on the Son of God, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen in our lives; not one will be missing." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

"The faithful Christian will bear much fruit; he is a worker; he will not lazily drift, but will put on the whole armor to fight the battles of the Lord. The essential work is to conform the tastes, the appetite, the passions, the motives, the desires, to the great moral standard of righteousness. The work must begin at the heart. That must be pure, wholly conformed to Christ's will, else some master passion, or some habit or defect, will become a power to destroy. God will accept of nothing short of the whole heart." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 118, 119.

7. What is the Lord's goal when He calls and ordains people? What does He expect of every church and member in the world?

JOHN 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

" 'Herein is My Father glorified,' said Jesus, 'that ye bear much fruit.' God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. 'If ye abide in Me,' He says, 'and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 677.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Spiritually speaking, are branches that lack many virtues supposed to bear fruit?*
- *On the other hand, are only those who have special gifts responsible for producing fruit?*
- *Do you appreciate the great privilege and mission of being considered a fruitful disciple?*
- *When can we become fruitful branches, as the Lord desires for His church?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others—you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 67, 68.

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7

Sabbath, February 18, 2017

Victory over Hatred and Persecution

“We must not think that by walking in the path of obedience, we shall escape trials, for the enemy will do all in his power to hinder us from gaining heaven. But the Saviour has promised to help us. Have you trials? So had Jesus. Are you tempted? So was He—in all points like as we are. ‘He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.’ John 1:10-12.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 325.

WHAT THE WORLD GIVES

1. **Knowing what was waiting them in the world, what did Jesus tell His disciples ahead of time? What should we expect, since Jesus was hated?**

JOHN 15:18 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

“As we separate from the world and its customs, we shall meet with the displeasure of worldlings. The world hated the One who was the very embodiment of virtue, because He was better than they were. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If our ways please God, the world will hate us. If the Majesty of heaven came to this

world, and endured a life of humiliation and a death of shame, why should we shrink back because obedience involves a cross? If He was persecuted, can we expect better treatment?... I point you to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He will comfort and sustain all who come to Him for help....” —*The Upward Look*, p. 325.

2. What is the reason for this hatred? Truthfully, can we say that we do not belong to the world and therefore are hated?

JOHN 15:19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

“You have entertained the opinion that the reason why the world is so much opposed to us as a people is that we are too unsocial, too plain in our dress, and too strict in regard to amusements, withdrawing ourselves from them too much in practice as well as in precept. You have thought that if we would be less exclusive and would mingle more with the world, their opinions and impressions of us would be greatly modified. But no greater mistake could affect the human mind.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 433.

REJECTION AND PERSECUTION

3. What will be the world’s attitude toward the gospel message as the coming of Jesus draws nearer? What is the real reason for such attitudes against the people of God?

JOHN 15:20, 21 *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. ²¹But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

“Like Israel, Christians too often yield to the influence of the world and conform to its principles and customs, in order to secure the friendship of the ungodly; but in the end it will be found that these professed friends are the most dangerous of foes. The Bible plainly teaches that there can be no harmony between the people of God and the world. ‘Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.’ 1 John 3:13. Our Saviour says, ‘Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.’ John 15:18. Satan works through the ungodly, under cover of a pretended friendship, to allure God’s people into sin, that he may separate them from Him; and when their defense is removed, then he will lead his agents to turn against them and seek to accomplish their destruction.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 559.

“The friends of Christ’s truth will ever be persecuted by a time-serving generation. They will be termed enthusiasts and fanatics by the enemies of reform. The burning truths of God’s word, condemning sin, and admonishing to righteousness are not palatable to the wrong-doer. Every true follower of Christ should have the spirit of a martyr, being ready to sacrifice any and everything rather than forfeit the favor of God.” —*Signs of the Times*, February 7, 1878.

KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

4. Can we say that the generation of Jesus’ time just did not have enough evidence to believe in Him and His message? Could they give to the Lord some excuse for not believing Him?

JOHN 1:5; 15:22, 24 *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....^{15:22}If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin....²⁴If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

“There are many at the present day thus clinging to the customs and traditions of their fathers. When the Lord sends them additional light, they refuse to accept it, because, not having been granted to their fathers, it was not received by them. We are not placed where our fathers were; consequently our duties and responsibilities are not the same as theirs. We shall not be approved of God in looking to the example of our fathers to determine our duty instead of searching the word of truth for ourselves. Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the word of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 164.

WHY THE MESSAGE IS REJECTED

5. If a person loves darkness, how can he, logically speaking, appreciate and accept light? What are the real reasons for denying the gospel message?

JOHN 3:19, 20 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.²⁰For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*

“Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected it. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In His sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision made for willful blindness....

“We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused. A man could not apprehend the truth which had never been presented to him, and therefore could not be condemned for light he had never had. But if he had opportunity to hear the message, and to become acquainted with the truth, and yet refused to improve his opportunity, he will be among the number of whom Christ said, ‘Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.’ Those who deliberately place themselves where they will not have an opportunity of hearing the truth, will be reckoned among those who have heard the truth, and persistently resisted its evidences.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 25, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1145.

LOVE FOR THE FATHER AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE SON

6. If someone rejects and hates Jesus, can he then love and obey the Father? What will those who truly believe and love the Father do?

JOHN 15:23 *He that hateth me hateth my Father also.*

1 JOHN 2:23 *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

2 JOHN 1:9 *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

JOHN 8:42 *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

“He who denies the personality of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ. ‘If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.’ If you continue to believe and obey the truths you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, you will be joined together with Him in love. There will be seen that union for which Christ prayed just before His trial and crucifixion.” —*Review and Herald*, March 8, 1906.

ENDURANCE AND BLESSING

7. Is it possible to imagine that a person can hate someone without a real reason? Exactly what will God’s children experience when they suffer hatred and persecution?

PSALM 35:19; 69:4 *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause....^{69:4} They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.*

JOHN 15:25 *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

MATTHEW 5:10-12 *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

“While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God’s keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as ‘seeing Him who is invisible’ (Hebrews 11:27); looking ‘not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.’ 2 Corinthians 4:18.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 32.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Is opposition to the gospel message something that was present at the time of Jesus, or does it go very far back in history?*
- *Since Jesus was the purest, holiest One who ever lived on earth, how can we explain the hatred and violence unleashed against Him?*

- ***Do you feel ready to face such spiritual opposition should it come against you at any moment?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Christ is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misrepresented by men. His children can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels....

“‘When men shall revile you, and persecute you,’ said Jesus, ‘rejoice, and be exceeding glad.’ And He pointed His hearers to the prophets who had spoken in the name of the Lord, as ‘an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.’ James 5:10. Abel, the very first Christian of Adam’s children, died a martyr. Enoch walked with God, and the world knew him not. Noah was mocked as a fanatic and an alarmist. ‘Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.’ ‘Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.’ Hebrews 11:36, 35.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 32, 33.

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***Please read the Appeal for Support for the
General Conference World Assembly on page 42***

8

Sabbath, February 25, 2017

Jesus’ Intercessory Prayer for Protection and Joy

“This chapter contains the intercessory prayer offered by Christ to His Father just before His trial and crucifixion. This prayer is a lesson regarding the intercession that the Saviour would carry on within the veil, when His great sacrifice in behalf of men, the offering of Himself, should have been completed. Our Mediator gave His disciples this illustration of His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary in behalf of all who will come to Him in meekness and humility, emptied of all selfishness, and believing in His power to save.” —(Manuscript 29, 1906) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1145.

PRAYER FOR THE FATHER TO BE GLORIFIED

- 1. As the hour of His passion neared, what earnest prayer did Jesus address to His Father? What did Jesus mean when He asked the Father to glorify Him? How did He handle the responsibility of the work that the Father had entrusted to Him?**

JOHN 17:1, 2, 4, 5 *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

²As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.... ⁴I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

"We need to study the words that Christ uttered in the prayer that He offered just before His trial and crucifixion." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 197.

"In the intercessory prayer of Jesus with His Father, He claimed that He had fulfilled the conditions which made it obligatory upon the Father to fulfill His part of the contract made in heaven, with regard to fallen man. He prayed: 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. [That is, He had wrought out a righteous character on earth as an example for men to follow.] And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' In this prayer He further goes on to state what is comprehended by the work which He has accomplished, and which has given Him all those who believe on His name. He values this recompense so highly that He forgets the anguish it has cost Him to redeem fallen man. He declares Himself glorified in those who believe on Him. The church, in His name, is to carry to glorious perfection the work which He has commenced; and when that church shall be finally ransomed in the Paradise of God, He will look upon the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Through all eternity the ransomed host will be His chief glory." —(*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 260, 261) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1146.

PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES

- 2. According to Jesus' words, what is the way to obtain eternal life? Are we deeply interested in such knowledge? Having been given the manifestation of the Father and the Son, did the disciples keep His word?**

JOHN 17:3, 6 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.... ⁶I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

"In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. 'This is life eternal,' He said, 'that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' John 17:3. This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe.

"This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 114.

- 3. Did Jesus fulfill His mission so the disciples could know where He came from? How do we know that His teaching was so clear that His followers could fully believe that the Heavenly Father had sent their Master?**

JOHN 17:7, 8 *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. ⁸For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they*

have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"Here is the work laid before us, to be representatives of Christ, as He in our world was the representative of the Father. We are to teach the words given us in the lessons of Christ. 'I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me.' We have our work, and every instructor of the youth in any capacity is to receive in a good and honest heart what God has unfolded and recorded in His holy word in the lessons of Christ, meekly to accept the words of life. We are in the antitypical day of atonement, and not only are we to humble our hearts before God and confess our sins but we are, by all our educating talent, to seek to instruct those with whom we are brought in contact, and to bring them by precept and example to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 272.

"There is a great work to be done in the world, and every one of us should let his light shine upon the pathway of others. We need to gather divine rays of light from Christ. We need to search the Scriptures, and dig deep in the mines of truth; for the precious jewels do not always lie on the surface; we should search for them as for hidden treasure." —(*Signs of the Times*, December 8, 1890) *Lift Him Up*, p. 239.

4. As the High Priest once prayed for the people, for whom did Jesus pray in this solemn hour? What did He mean when He said that He did not pray for the world, for on the cross He even prayed for His executioners?

JOHN 17:9, 10 *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. ¹⁰And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

"He will not forget His church in the world of temptation. He looks upon His tried and suffering people, and prays for them.... Yes, He beholds His people in this world, which is a persecuting world, and all seared and marred with the curse, and [He] knows that they need all the divine resources of His sympathy and His love. Our Forerunner hath for us entered within the veil, and yet by the golden chain of love and truth, He is linked with His people in closest sympathy.

"He is making intercession for the most lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.' God loves to hear, and responds to the pleadings of His Son...." —(*Review and Herald*, August 15, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948.

PRAYER FOR UNITY AND PROTECTION

5. Having stated that eternal life comes from knowing the Father and the Son, what did Jesus mean when He requested that the Father keep the disciples through His name? As the true Shepherd, what did Jesus do while He was in the world?

JOHN 17:11, 12 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

"Christ had finished the work that was given Him to do. He had gathered out those who were to continue His work among men. And He said: 'I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.' " —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 24.

"If we draw nigh to God, individually, then don't you see what the result will be? Can't you see that we will draw nigh to one another? We cannot draw nigh to God, and come to the same cross, without our hearts being blended together in perfect unity, answering the prayer of Christ 'that they may be one' as He is one with the Father. And therefore we should seek in spirit, in understanding, in faith, that we may be one, that God may be glorified in us as He is glorified in the Son; and that God shall love us as He loves the Son." —(Manuscript 7, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 937.

PRAYER FOR JOY AND PROTECTION

6. What other request did Jesus make on behalf of the disciples, knowing that no one else could give it to them? What did He mean when He said that the disciples, like Him, were not of the world?

JOHN 17:13, 14; 15:18, 19 *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.... ^{15:18}If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

"Why do we not have the consciousness of sins forgiven? It is because we are unbelieving. We are not practicing the teachings of Christ and bringing His virtues into our lives. Should the joy and exaltation and hope imparted by the Lord Jesus Christ be given to many of us, it would administer to self-esteem and pride. When Jesus is abiding in the heart by faith, the lessons which Christ has given us will be practiced. We will have such exalted views of Jesus Christ that self will be abased. Our affections will center in Jesus, our thoughts will be strongly drawn heavenward. Christ will increase, I will decrease." —*This Day with God*, p. 261.

"Let your influence be persuasive, binding people to your heart because you love Jesus, and they are His. This is a great work. If, by your Christlike words and actions, you make impressions that will kindle in their hearts a hungering and thirsting after righteousness and truth, you are a co-laborer with Christ. Your words and deportment are representing Jesus." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 205.

7. Continuing to pray, what did He ask for the disciples? In our prayers, how earnestly do we make request for others?

JOHN 17:15, 16 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

"Christ prayed for His disciples, not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from evil—that they might be kept from yielding to the temptations they would meet on every hand. This is a prayer that should be offered up by every father and mother." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 153.

“There are duties to be performed and responsibilities to be borne. The world has not enough true Christians; the church has need of them; society cannot spare them. Christ’s prayer for His disciples was: ‘I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.’ Jesus knows we are in the world, exposed to its temptations, but He loves us and will give us grace to triumph over its corrupting influences. He would have us perfect in character, that our waywardness may not occasion moral deformity in others.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 333.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***How can we understand Jesus, being under the shadow of the cross, praying not for Himself but for His disciples?***
- ***If we were on the verge of such a supreme sacrifice, would we pray so deeply and earnestly for our brothers and sisters?***
- ***Considering that sanctification and unity were fundamental issues of His prayer, how important should these principles be to us?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“This was Christ’s last prayer with His disciples. It was offered just before He went into the Garden of Gethsemane, where He was to be betrayed and taken. When He reached Gethsemane, He fell prostrate upon the ground, in an agony of distress. What caused His agony? The weight of the sins of the whole world was resting upon His soul. As we study this prayer, let us remember that it was just before this experience and just before His betrayal and trial, that these words were uttered.” —Manuscript 52, 1904) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1145.

“The term world here [in John 17:9], as elsewhere, refers to wicked, rebellious, vicious men. The meaning of this expression here seems to be this: Jesus is praying for His disciples. As a reason why God should bless them, He says that they were not of the world; that they had been taken out of the world; that they belonged unto God. The petition was not offered for wicked, perverse, rebellious men, but for those who were the friends of God and were disposed to receive His favors. This passage, then, settles nothing about the question whether Christ prayed for sinners. He then prayed for His disciples, who were not those who hated Him and disregarded His favors. He afterward extended the prayer for all who should become Christians. John 17:20. When on the cross, He prayed for His crucifiers and murderers. Luke 23:34.” —*Albert Barnes’ Notes*, comments on John 17:9.

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APPEAL FOR SUPPORT for the General Conference World Assembly

To be read on Sabbath, February 25, 2017

*The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, March 4, 2017*

God has high expectations for His chosen ones to press together spiritually and to pull forward together financially to meet the objectives He has given us for His worldwide work. To carry out the gospel commission assigned in the Scriptures, the General Conference has worked very hard to advance the gospel message into many new countries. Beginning and sustaining these fledgling foreign missions requires a lot of funding until they become self-supporting.

In accordance with the resolution of the General Conference delegates in session, a World Assembly is convened once every five years in a designated country. This is in accordance with the example given in Acts 15:6-29, in which the apostles and elders counseled together in Jerusalem. Protestants follow a similar practice, as do Adventists.

The last World Assembly was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2012; and the one before that was in Mexico in 2007. A special motivation for holding the 2017 World Assembly in Europe is to remember the five hundred years since the most significant events of the Protestant Reformation took place, thus honoring the men and women who secured their faith at the cost of their lives. It is expected that 120 to 150 delegates and General Conference officers will be present to represent approximately 100 countries.

This year's General Conference Delegates' Meetings will convene in Torontoro, Italy, from Tuesday, September 12, to Wednesday, September 27. The public conference will take place from Wednesday, September 27, to Sunday, October 1.

The European Division will help bear part of the financing for this gathering, but the General Conference is responsible for many additional costs. A major factor is that most of the representatives from Africa, Asia, and some other countries are dependent on the General Conference to pay for their travel and expenses, including food, lodging, and incidental costs during the Delegates' Meetings and public meetings. Therefore, the General Conference is asking all Sabbath school and church members, visitors, local churches, fields, and unions to contribute to the Special Sabbath School Offering to be gathered next week to help cover the General Conference World Assembly costs.

The global requirements of the church for personnel and financing are many times greater than what was needed in the time of the Israelites to

support the priesthood, the temple, and the temple activities. With so large a challenge before us, let every minister, worker, member, and visitor make the following commitment in the sincere spirit expressed by Nehemiah and the people of Israel: "We will not forsake the house of our God." Nehemiah 10:39.

We wish you the Lord's abundant blessings as we all look forward to the special meetings to be held in just six months. Let us be of one mind and heart to make this special event and every action the very best they can be to hasten the Saviour's coming in the clouds of heaven, remembering the following important words of counsel: "Our hearts must be filled with unselfishness before we can enter the city of God. God's people should bring their offerings to Him in much greater abundance, and with much more cheerfulness." —*Review and Herald*, November 26, 1901.

—*Douglas Francis, General Conference Treasurer*

Francesco Domenico Caputo, European Division Leader

**Special Sabbath School Offering for the
GENERAL CONFERENCE WORLD ASSEMBLY**

*Let us give generously and pray earnestly
for the unity and blessing of God's people!*

9

Sabbath, March 4, 2017

Jesus' Intercessory Prayer for Sanctification and Unity

"The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.

PLEADING FOR THE DISCIPLES

1. What did Jesus say about God's word? What other request did He make, and what did He do for the sake of His followers?

JOHN 17:17, 19 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

"Christ declared He sanctified Himself, that we also might be sanctified. He took upon Himself our nature, and became a faultless pattern for men. He made no mistake, that we also might become victors, and enter into His kingdom as overcomers. He prayed that we might be sanctified through the truth. What is truth? He declared, 'Thy word is truth.' His disciples were to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. He says, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.' That prayer was for us; we have believed in the testimony of the disciples of Christ. He prays that His disciples may be one, even as He and the Father are one; and this unity of believers is to be as testimony to the world that He has sent us, and that we bear the evidence of His grace."—*Review and Herald*, July 2, 1889.

"God is the author of all truth; and truth practiced prepares the way for more advanced truth. When God's delegated servants proclaim fresh truth, the Holy Spirit moves upon the mind which has been prepared by walking in the light, quickening the perceptive faculties to discern the beauty and majesty of truth."—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (1923), p. 378.

A GREAT MISSION

- 2. What great mission did He entrust to His disciples before His death? For whom else did He pray for help and guidance besides the twelve apostles?**

JOHN 17:18, 20 *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world....²⁰Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*

“Christ’s followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, ‘have I also sent them into the world.’ John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God’s blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven’s appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven’s light and power to souls that are ready to perish. Shall the human agent fail of accomplishing his appointed work?” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

THE DESIRE FOR UNITY

- 3. What other request did the Lord present to His Father for the disciples? What bond did there need to be among Jesus’ followers for them to give a correct representation of Him to the world?**

JOHN 17:21 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

“The Lord desires His chosen servants to learn how to unite together in harmonious effort. It may seem to some that the contrast between their gifts and the gifts of a fellow laborer is too great to allow them to unite in harmonious effort; but when they remember that there are varied minds to be reached, and that some will reject the truth as it is presented by one laborer, only to open their hearts to God’s truth as it is presented in a different manner by another laborer, they will hopefully endeavor to labor together in unity. Their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same Spirit. In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed; and as each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 145.

4. What did the Lord give the disciples to help them to be one? How deep and broad should be the unity of believers requested by the Saviour?

JOHN 17:22, 23 *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

"The powers of darkness stand a poor chance against believers who love one another as Christ has loved them, who refuse to create alienation and strife, who stand together, who are kind, courteous, and tender-hearted, cherishing the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. We must have the Spirit of Christ, or we are none of His.

"In unity there is strength; in division there is weakness.

"The closer our union with Christ, the closer will be our union with one another. Variance and disaffection, selfishness and conceit, are striving for supremacy. These are the fruits of a divided heart, open to the suggestions of the enemy of souls. Satan exults when he can sow seeds of dissension.

"In unity there is a life, a power, that can be obtained in no other way." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.

SEEING THE MASTER'S GLORY

5. What deep desire did Jesus have for His disciples? Therefore, what is He doing now for His people?

JOHN 17:24; 14:3 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.... ^{14:3}And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

"The prayer of Christ was answered. He was glorified with the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. But amid this glory, Christ does not lose sight of His toiling, struggling ones upon earth. He has a request to make of His Father. He waves back the heavenly host until He is in the direct presence of Jehovah, and then He presents His petition in behalf of His chosen ones." —(*Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899)...

"O, how the divine Head longed to have His church with Him! They had fellowship with Him in His suffering and humiliation, and it is His highest joy to have them with Him to be partakers of His glory. Christ claims the privilege of having His church with Him. 'I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.' To have them with Him is according to covenant promise and agreement with His Father." —(*Review and Herald*, October 17, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1146, 1148.

RECEIVING THE BEST KNOWLEDGE

6. While the world does not know the Father or the Son, what did the Master say about the disciples? Can we say that we know God as they did?

JOHN 17:25; 16:27 *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.... ^{16:27}For the Father*

himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

"The Son of God declared in positive terms that the world was destitute of the knowledge of God; but this knowledge was of the highest value, and it was His own peculiar gift, the inestimable treasure which He brought into the world. In the exercise of His sovereign prerogative He imparted to His disciples the knowledge of the character of God, in order that they might communicate it to the world." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 36.

"But those who receive and believe the truth have that faith which works by love and purifies the soul from everything sensual. The world cannot know them, for they are keeping in view eternal realities. A motive power is working within to transform the character. A constraining influence received from heaven is working like the leaven hid in the meal. The love of Jesus has come into the heart with its redeeming power to conquer the entire being, soul, body, and spirit." —(Manuscript 82, June 26, 1898, "The Leaven of Truth") *This Day with God*, p. 186.

7. What did the Redeemer do to instill His love in His disciples? How does this apply to God's children today?

JOHN 17:26 *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

"Christ came into the world to represent the Father to man; for Satan had presented Him before the world in a false light. Because God is a God of justice, of terrible majesty, who has power to destroy as well as to preserve man, Satan caused men to regard Him with fear, to look upon Him as a tyrant. Jesus had been with the Father from the everlasting ages, before the creation of man, and He came to reveal the Father, declaring, 'God is love.' Jesus represented God as a kind Father, who careth for the subjects of His kingdom. He declared that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the Father, and that the children of men are of more value in His sight than many sparrows, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 36.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *What prayers in ancient times were intercessory prayers for individuals or groups of people?*
- *When was the prayer of Job accepted after he was healed and restored?*
- *How frequent are your intercessory prayers for others?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"But the truth is no truth to the one who does not reveal, by his elevated spiritual character, a power beyond that which the world can give, an influence corresponding in its sacred, peculiar character to the truth itself. He who is sanctified by the truth will exert a saving, vital influence upon all with whom he comes in contact. This is Bible religion." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 378.

"What a wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of

God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin." —(Manuscript 111, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1148.

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10

Sabbath, March 11, 2017

Prayer in Gethsemane

"I beheld Jesus in the garden with His disciples. In deep sorrow He bade them watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. He knew that their faith was to be tried, and their hopes disappointed, and that they would need all the strength which they could obtain by close watching and fervent prayer. With strong cries and weeping, Jesus prayed, 'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.' The Son of God prayed in agony. Great drops of blood gathered upon His face and fell to the ground. Angels were hovering over the place, witnessing the scene, but only one was commissioned to go and strengthen the Son of God in His agony..., for the plan had been laid, and it must be fulfilled." —*Early Writings*, p. 167.

TOGETHER IN PRAYER

1. **Where did Jesus go with the disciples after the last supper and their last conversation? Why did He go there?**

JOHN 18:1 *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.*

LUKE 22:39 *And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.*

MATTHEW 26:36 *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*

"Jesus and the disciples were on the way to Gethsemane, at the foot of Mount Olivet, a retired spot which He had often visited for meditation and prayer. The Saviour had been explaining to His disciples His mission to the world, and the spiritual relation to Him which they were to sustain." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 674.

"Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption. The Saviour's lowly birth; His early life of simplicity and obedience; His baptism in Jordan; the fast and temptation in the wilderness; His public ministry, unfolding to men heaven's most precious blessings; the days crowded with

deeds of love and mercy, the nights of prayer and watching in the solitude of the mountains; the plottings of envy, hate, and malice which repaid His benefits; the awful, mysterious agony in Gethsemane beneath the crushing weight of the sins of the whole world;..." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 666.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

2. What was the Saviour's concern at this moment? What did He ask His disciples to do at that particularly sorrowful time?

MATTHEW 26:37, 38 *And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. ³⁸Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

"In the wilderness of temptation, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross, our Saviour measured weapons with the prince of darkness. His wounds became the trophies of His victory in behalf of the race. When Christ hung in agony upon the cross, while evil spirits rejoiced and evil men reviled, then indeed His heel was bruised by Satan. But that very act was crushing the serpent's head. Through death He destroyed 'him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Hebrews 2:14. This act decided the destiny of the rebel chief, and made forever sure the plan of salvation. In death He gained the victory over its power; in rising again, He opened the gates of the grave to all His followers. In that last great contest we see fulfilled the prophecy, 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise His heel.' Genesis 3:15." –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 701, 702.

CHOOSING BETWEEN THE HUMAN WILL AND GOD'S WILL

3. In what position did He pray? Facing the bitter cup of the consequences of human sin, what did He ask the Father? Nevertheless, what was He willing to accept?

MATTHEW 26:39 *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

MARK 14:35, 36 *And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

LUKE 22:41, 42 *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, ⁴²Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

"God knows the end from the beginning. He is acquainted with the hearts of all men. He reads every secret of the soul. He knows whether those for whom prayer is offered would or would not be able to endure the trials that would come upon them should they live. He knows whether their lives would be a blessing or a curse to themselves and to the world. This is one reason why, while presenting our petitions with earnestness, we should say, 'Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.' Luke 22:42. Jesus added these words of submission to the wisdom and will of God when in the Garden of Gethsemane He pleaded, 'O My Father, if it be

possible, let this cup pass from Me.' Matthew 26:39. And if they were appropriate for Him, the Son of God, how much more are they becoming on the lips of finite, erring mortals!" —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 230.

"In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ suffered in man's stead, and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin, until from His pale and quivering lips was forced the agonizing cry, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.'... Human nature would then and there have died under the horror of the sense of sin, had not an angel from heaven strengthened Him to bear the agony.... Christ was suffering the death that was pronounced upon the transgressors of God's law." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 168.

IMPORTANT COUNSEL

4. When He returned to seek comfort from the disciples, what did He find? What earnest instruction did He give them so they would not fall in the hour of temptation?

MATTHEW 26:40, 41 *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

"Rising with painful effort, He staggered to the place where He had left His companions. But He 'findeth them asleep.' Had He found them praying, He would have been relieved. Had they been seeking refuge in God, that satanic agencies might not prevail over them, He would have been comforted by their steadfast faith. But they had not heeded the repeated warning, 'Watch and pray.'... They did not realize the necessity of watchfulness and earnest prayer in order to withstand temptation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 688.

"In the warning to 'watch and pray,' Jesus has indicated the only safe course. There is need of watchfulness. Our own hearts are deceitful; we are compassed with the weaknesses and frailties of humanity, and Satan is intent to destroy. We may be off our guard, but our adversary is never idle. Knowing his tireless vigilance, let us not sleep, as do others, but 'watch and be sober.' The spirit and influence of the world must be met, but they must not be allowed to take possession of the mind and heart." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 409.

5. Were the disciples aware of how serious the situation was? While the Lord again sought intimate contact with His Father, what did the drowsy disciples do?

MATTHEW 26:42, 43 *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. ⁴³And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.*

MARK 14:40 *And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.*

"When in the garden of Gethsemane, the cup of suffering was placed in the Saviour's hand, the thought came to Him, Should He drink it or should He leave the world to perish in sin? His suffering was too great for human comprehension. As the agony of soul came upon Him, 'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' Luke 22:44. The mysterious cup trembled in His hand." —*This Day with God*, p. 49.

HELP TO DRINK THE CUP

- 6. When the disciples were incapable of supplying comfort or help, who came to support Jesus in that most trying hour? How intense was His agony as He communed with His Father? Share your thoughts about how difficult you imagine it was for the Saviour as His life was being drained away for man's benefit.**

LUKE 22:43, 44 *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

"In this awful crisis, when everything was at stake, the mighty angel who stands in God's presence, came to the side of Christ, not to take the cup from His hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love.

"Christ drank of the cup, and this is the reason that sinners can come to God and find pardon and grace. But those who share in Christ's glory must share also in His suffering..." —*This Day with God*, p. 49.

"This is a self-denying way. And when you think that the way is too strait, that there is too much self-denial in this narrow path; when you say, How hard to give up all, ask yourselves the question, What did Christ give up for me? This question puts anything that we may call self-denial in the shade. Behold Him in the garden, sweating great drops of blood. A solitary angel is sent from heaven to strengthen the Son of God. Follow Him on His way to the judgment hall, while He is derided, mocked, and insulted by that infuriated mob.

"... Behold Him hanging upon the cross those dreadful hours of agony until the angels veil their faces from the horrid scene, and the sun hides its light, refusing to behold. Think of these things, and then ask, Is the way too strait? No, no." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 240.

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH

- 7. The disciples gave Jesus no comfort or relief through prayer when they could have done so. Did they do it later as the danger increased? How might their experience have been very different if they had stayed awake and prayed with their Master?**

MATTHEW 26:44-46 *And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.*

LUKE 22:45, 46 *And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

"The Saviour of the world arose and sought His disciples, and, for the third time, found them fast asleep. He looked sorrowfully upon them. His words, however, aroused them..." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 102.

"Again Christ sought His disciples, and again He found them sleeping. Had they remained awake, watching and praying with their Saviour, they would have re-

ceived help for the trial before them. Missing this, they had no strength in their hour of need.” —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 106.

“If they had remained watching they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This important night watch should have been signalized by noble mental struggles and prayers, which would have brought them strength to witness the unspeakable agony of the Son of God. It would have prepared them, as they should behold His sufferings upon the cross, to understand something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which He endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to recall the words He had spoken to them in reference to His sufferings, death, and resurrection; and, amid the gloom of that terrible, trying hour, some rays of hope would have lighted up the darkness and sustained their faith.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 205.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Has anyone ever made an experience such as Jesus suffered in Gethsemane?***
- ***Think about the times when you received strength to cope with the most difficult situations in life.***
- ***What lesson can we learn from Jesus’ great endurance in prayer?***
- ***What attitudes do we need to change?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“It is a fearful thing for the unrepenting sinner to fall into the hands of the living God. This is proved by the history of the destruction of the old world by a flood, by the record of the fire which fell from heaven and destroyed the inhabitants of Sodom. But never was this proved to so great an extent as in the agony of Christ, the Son of the infinite God, when He bore the wrath of God for a sinful world. It was in consequence of sin, the transgression of God’s law, that the Garden of Gethsemane has become pre-eminently the place of suffering to a sinful world. No sorrow, no agony, can measure with that which was endured by the Son of God.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 168.

* * *

Jesus in the Hands of Sinners

“Let the repenting sinner fix his eyes upon ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’... When we see Jesus, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, working to save the lost, slighted, scorned, derided, driven from city to city till His mission was accomplished; when we behold Him in Gethsemane,... looking unto Jesus, we shall be ashamed of our coldness, our lethargy, our self-seeking. We shall be willing to be anything or nothing, so that we may do heart service for the Master. We shall rejoice to bear the cross after Jesus, to endure trial, shame, or persecution for His dear sake.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 107.

MOB ATTACK

1. Who came while Jesus was still speaking with His disciples in Gethsemane? Who was their guide?

MARK 14:43 *And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.*

JOHN 18:2-5 *And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples. ³Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? ⁵They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.*

“Could mortals have viewed the amazement and the sorrow of the angelic host as they watched in silent grief the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from the beloved Son of His bosom, they would better understand how offensive sin is in His sight. The sword of justice was now to awake against His dear Son. He was betrayed by a kiss into the hands of His enemies, and hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided and condemned to death by sinful mortals. There the glorious Son of God was ‘wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.’ He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until ‘His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 206, 207.

THE TRAITOR—FROM JESUS’ RANKS

2. With what pretended concern did Judas approach Jesus? What happened that showed the multitude that they were dealing with God’s Son?

MARK 14:45 *And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.*

JOHN 18:6-8 *As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. ⁷Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. ⁸Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.*

MATTHEW 26:48, 49 *Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. ⁴⁹And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.*

“Even as He spoke these words, He heard the footsteps of the mob in search of Him, and said, ‘Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me.’

“No traces of His recent agony were visible as Jesus stepped forth to meet His betrayer. Standing in advance of His disciples He said, ‘Whom seek ye?’ They answered, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus replied, ‘I am He.’ As these words were spoken, the angel who had lately ministered to Jesus moved between Him and the mob. A divine light illuminated the Saviour’s face, and a dovelike form overshadowed Him. In the presence of this divine glory, the murderous throng could not stand for a moment. They staggered back. Priests, elders, soldiers, and even Judas, fell as dead men to the ground.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 694.

3. How did the Master let Judas know that his falseness and betrayal were clearly recognized? What did the armed multitude do to the Master?

LUKE 22:48 *But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

MATTHEW 26:50 *And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.*

“Judas the betrayer did not forget the part he was to act. When the mob entered the garden, he had led the way, closely followed by the high priest. To the pursuers of Jesus he had given a sign, saying, ‘Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast.’ Matthew 26:48. Now he pretends to have no part with them. Coming close to Jesus, he takes His hand as a familiar friend. With the words, ‘Hail, Master,’ he kisses Him repeatedly, and appears to weep as if in sympathy with Him in His peril.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, wherefore art thou come?’ His voice trembled with sorrow as He added, ‘Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?’ This appeal should have aroused the conscience of the betrayer, and touched his stubborn heart; but honor, fidelity, and human tenderness had forsaken him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to Satan, and he had no power to resist him. Jesus did not refuse the traitor’s kiss.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 695, 696.

HUMAN REACTION

4. When the disciples saw what was happening, what did they ask the Lord? Despite His clear answer, what did Peter do when he saw how his Master was being treated? What did Jesus do to counteract Peter’s act?

LUKE 22:49-51 *When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? ⁵⁰And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

MATTHEW 26:51 *And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.*

JOHN 18:10 *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*

"The disciples had thought that their Master would not suffer Himself to be taken. For the same power that had caused the mob to fall as dead men could keep them helpless, until Jesus and His companions should escape. They were disappointed and indignant as they saw the cords brought forward to bind the hands of Him whom they loved. Peter in his anger rashly drew his sword and tried to defend his Master, but he only cut off an ear of the high priest's servant. When Jesus saw what was done, He released His hands, though held firmly by the Roman soldiers, and saying, 'Suffer ye thus far,' He touched the wounded ear, and it was instantly made whole." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 696.

WEAPONS NOT OF GOD

- 5. What principle concerning the use of deadly weapons did Jesus give to Peter and thus to all His followers in all time? What is shown by the fact that, although the Saviour could have called for twelve legions of angels to defend Him, He did not do so?**

MATTHEW 26:52-54 *Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. ⁵³Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

JOHN 18:11 *Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

"The disciples began to hope as they saw the multitude with their staves and swords fall so quickly. As they arose and again surrounded the Son of God, Peter drew his sword and smote a servant of the high priest and cut off an ear. Jesus bade him to put up the sword, saying, 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?' I saw that as these words were spoken, the countenances of the angels were animated with hope. They wished then and there to surround their Commander and disperse that angry mob. But again sadness settled upon them, as Jesus added, 'But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' The hearts of the disciples also sank in despair and bitter disappointment, as Jesus suffered Himself to be led away by His enemies." —*Early Writings*, pp. 167, 168.

A LESSON FOR PRIESTS, ELDERS, AND LEADERS

- 6. What message did Jesus thus give to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders? How did His consistent behavior demonstrate meekness from the very first moment when He was arrested?**

LUKE 22:52, 53 *Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with*

swords and staves? ⁵³When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

ISAIAH 53:7, FIRST PART *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter....*

1 PETER 2:23 *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*

“The official dignity of the Jewish leaders had not prevented them from joining in the pursuit of Jesus. His arrest was too important a matter to be trusted to subordinates; the wily priests and elders had joined the temple police and the rabble in following Judas to Gethsemane. What a company for those dignitaries to unite with—a mob that was eager for excitement, and armed with all kinds of implements, as if in pursuit of a wild beast!

“Turning to the priests and elders, Christ fixed upon them His searching glance. The words He spoke they would never forget as long as life should last. They were as the sharp arrows of the Almighty. With dignity He said: You come out against Me with swords and staves as you would against a thief or a robber. Day by day I sat teaching in the temple. You had every opportunity of laying hands upon Me, and you did nothing. The night is better suited to your work. ‘This is your hour, and the power of darkness.’ “—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 696, 697.

LEFT ALONE BY HIS DISCIPLES

7. What happened to the disciples at this crucial moment? What prophecy was fulfilled when they left Jesus alone and fled, even though earlier they had absolutely denied such a possibility?

MATTHEW 26:56 *But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*

ZECHARIAH 13:7 *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.*

“Nothing is more offensive to God than a self-sufficient spirit. In the life of Peter is a sad lesson which should be a warning to all the professed followers of Christ. The Saviour had faithfully warned him of the approaching danger, but, self-confident and presumptuous, he asserted his constant fidelity and zeal, and declared himself willing to follow his Master to prison and to death. The test came for Peter when the storm burst upon the disciples by the humiliation of their Leader. Mournful are the words traced by the pen of inspiration: ‘Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled.’ Matthew 26:56. And the ardent, zealous, self-confident Peter repeatedly denied his Lord. He afterward bitterly repented; but this example should admonish all to beware of self-confidence and self-righteousness.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 138.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- **How can we explain how one disciple, who was responsible for guiding people to Jesus, became His betrayer, handing Him over to His bitter enemies?**
- **How would we respond if a close friend would betray us as Judas did Christ?**

- **What evidence of His divinity appeared, even when He was taken captive by the mob?**

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The men who humble themselves even as a little child are the men who will be taught by God. The Lord is not dependent on any man’s talents; for He is the Source of all perfect gifts. The very humblest man, if he loves and fears God, is the possessor of heavenly gifts. The Lord can use such a man, because he does not strive to work himself according to his own standard. He works with fear and trembling lest he will spoil the pattern. His life is an expression of the life of Christ.

“We must constantly cherish meekness and humility, if we would possess the spirit of Christ.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 138.

“The strength given to Christ in the hour of bodily suffering and mental anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, has been and will be given to those who suffer for His dear name’s sake. The same grace given to Jesus, the same comfort, the more than mortal steadfastness, will be given to every believing child of God, who is brought into perplexity and suffering, and threatened with imprisonment and death, by Satan’s agents. Never has a soul that trusts in Christ been left to perish. The rack, the stake, the many inventions of cruelty, may kill the body, but they cannot touch the life that is hid with Christ in God.” —(*Signs of the Times*, June 3, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1123, 1124.

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12

Sabbath, March 25, 2017

Judged by the Jewish Council

“The mock trial of Christ shows how base the priesthood had become. The priests hired people to testify under oath to falsehood, that Jesus might be condemned. But on this occasion, truth came to the help of Christ.... Thus it was shown that the testimonies borne against Him were false, that the witnesses had been hired by men who cherished in their hearts the basest elements of corruption. It was God’s design that the men who delivered Jesus should hear the testimony of His innocence. ‘I find no fault in Him,’ Pilate declared. And Judas, throwing at the feet of the priests the money he had received for betraying Christ, bore testimony, ‘I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.’” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 269.

THE FIRST TRIAL

- 1. What did the high priest Annas ask Jesus in an attempt to find a reason to prosecute and condemn Him? Having never done anything in secret, what did Jesus reply?**

JOHN 18:19-21 *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.*

²⁰*Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue,*

and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. ²¹*Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.*

“Christ read the priest’s purpose as an open book. As if reading the inmost soul of His questioner, He denied that there was between Him and His followers any secret bond of union, or that He gathered them secretly and in the darkness to conceal His designs. He had no secrets in regard to His purposes or doctrines....

“The Saviour contrasted His own manner of work with the methods of His accusers. For months they had hunted Him, striving to entrap Him and bring Him before a secret tribunal, where they might obtain by perjury what it was impossible to gain by fair means. Now they were carrying out their purpose. The midnight seizure by a mob, the mockery and abuse before He was condemned, or even accused, was their manner of work, not His. Their action was in violation of the law. Their own rules declared that every man should be treated as innocent until proved guilty. By their own rules the priests stood condemned.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 699.

2. How did an officer react when Jesus answered the high priest? How did Jesus let him know that his action was improper?

JOHN 18:22, 23 *And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? ²³Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?*

“Christ suffered keenly under abuse and insult. At the hands of the beings whom He had created, and for whom He was making an infinite sacrifice, He received every indignity. And He suffered in proportion to the perfection of His holiness and His hatred of sin. His trial by men who acted as fiends was to Him a perpetual sacrifice. To be surrounded by human beings under the control of Satan was revolting to Him....

“... They expected Him [the Messiah], by one flash of overmastering will, to change the current of men’s thoughts, and force from them an acknowledgment of His supremacy. Thus, they believed, He was to secure His own exaltation, and gratify their ambitious hopes. Thus when Christ was treated with contempt, there came to Him a strong temptation to manifest His divine character. By a word, by a look, He could compel His persecutors to confess that He was Lord above kings and rulers, priests and temple. But it was His difficult task to keep to the position He had chosen as one with humanity.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 700.

SECOND TRIAL

3. Where was Jesus taken to be judged? What interest did the chief priests, elders, and council have in these proceedings?

MATTHEW 26:57, 59 *And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.... ⁵⁹Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death.*

“When the council had assembled in the judgment hall, Caiaphas took his seat as presiding officer. On either side were the judges, and those specially interested in the trial. The Roman soldiers were stationed on the platform below the throne.

At the foot of the throne stood Jesus. Upon Him the gaze of the whole multitude was fixed. The excitement was intense. Of all the throng He alone was calm and serene. The very atmosphere surrounding Him seemed pervaded by a holy influence.

“Caiaphas had regarded Jesus as his rival. The eagerness of the people to hear the Saviour, and their apparent readiness to accept His teachings, had aroused the bitter jealousy of the high priest. But as Caiaphas now looked upon the prisoner, he was struck with admiration for His noble and dignified bearing. A conviction came over him that this Man was akin to God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 703, 704.

4. How did these men attempt to achieve their goals? Did they correctly understand Jesus’ words and motives?

MATTHEW 26:60, 61 *But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, ⁶¹And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.*

MARK 14:57, 58 *And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.*

“Early in His ministry Christ had said, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ In the figurative language of prophecy, He had thus foretold His own death and resurrection. ‘He spake of the temple of His body.’ John 2:19, 21. These words the Jews had understood in a literal sense, as referring to the temple at Jerusalem. Of all that Christ had said, the priests could find nothing to use against Him save this. By misstating these words they hoped to gain an advantage.... Thus Christ’s words were misstated. If they had been reported exactly as He spoke them, they would not have secured His condemnation even by the Sanhedrin. Had Jesus been a mere man, as the Jews claimed, His declaration would only have indicated an unreasonable, boastful spirit, but could not have been construed into blasphemy. Even as misrepresented by the false witnesses, His words contained nothing which would be regarded by the Romans as a crime worthy of death.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 705, 706.

HE WAS SILENT

5. Did Jesus attempt to refute the allegations in self-defense? What question of the high priest did Jesus answer, and why?

MATTHEW 26:62, 63 *And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? ⁶³But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*

“Patiently Jesus listened to the conflicting testimonies. No word did He utter in self-defense. At last His accusers were entangled, confused, and maddened. The trial was making no headway; it seemed that their plottings were to fail. Caiaphas was desperate. One last resort remained; Christ must be forced to condemn Himself. The high priest started from the judgment seat, his face contorted with passion, his voice and demeanor plainly indicating that were it in his power he would strike down the prisoner before him. ‘Answerest Thou nothing?’ he exclaimed; ‘what is it which these witness against Thee?’...

"To this appeal Christ could not remain silent. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until directly questioned. He knew that to answer now would make His death certain. But the appeal was made by the highest acknowledged authority of the nation, and in the name of the Most High.... He must plainly declare His character and mission." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 706.

CONDEMNING THE INNOCENT ONE

6. When Jesus told the truth, how did Caiaphas react? As what did he consider the Lord's answer?

MATTHEW 26:64, 65 *Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. ⁶⁵Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.*

"In these words Christ presented the reverse of the scene then taking place. He, the Lord of life and glory, would be seated at God's right hand. He would be the judge of all the earth, and from His decision there could be no appeal. Then every secret thing would be set in the light of God's countenance, and judgment be passed upon every man according to his deeds....

"The words of Christ startled the high priest. The thought that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, when all would stand at the bar of God, to be rewarded according to their works, was a thought of terror to Caiaphas.... There rushed before his mind as a panorama the scenes of the final judgment. For a moment he saw the fearful spectacle of the graves giving up their dead, with the secrets he had hoped were forever hidden. For a moment he felt as if standing before the eternal Judge, whose eye, which sees all things, was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 707, 708.

7. What sentence was pronounced after Jesus spoke? How was He treated and judged?

LUKE 22:64 *And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*

MATTHEW 26:66-68 *What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. ⁶⁷Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, ⁶⁸Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?*

"The Sanhedrin had pronounced Jesus worthy of death; but it was contrary to the Jewish law to try a prisoner by night. In legal condemnation nothing could be done except in the light of day and before a full session of the council. Notwithstanding this, the Saviour was now treated as a condemned criminal, and given up to be abused by the lowest and vilest of humankind. The palace of the high priest surrounded an open court in which the soldiers and the multitude had gathered. Through this court, Jesus was taken to the guardroom, on every side meeting with mockery of His claim to be the Son of God.... The ignorant rabble had seen the cruelty with which He was treated before the council, and from this they took license to manifest all the satanic elements of their nature. Christ's very nobility

and godlike bearing goaded them to madness. His meekness, His innocence, His majestic patience, filled them with hatred born of Satan. Mercy and justice were trampled upon. Never was criminal treated in so inhuman a manner as was the Son of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 710.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Were the chief priests, scribes, and elders trying to determine the truth or accomplish their own purposes through the judgment process?*
- *Considering how the Jewish leaders treated Jesus and what they wanted to achieve, how could Jesus stay calm and quiet?*
- *In critical moments, how will we be able to control ourselves and be at peace, as He was?*
- *When our consciences are clear and we are confident that we have done no wrong, how will we feel when we must appear before the authorities for the Lord's sake?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"It was difficult for the angels to endure the sight. They would have delivered Jesus, but the commanding angels forbade them, saying that it was a great ransom which was to be paid for man; but it would be complete and would cause the death of him who had the power of death. Jesus knew that angels were witnessing the scene of His humiliation. The weakest angel could have caused that mocking throng to fall powerless and could have delivered Jesus. He knew that if He should desire it of His Father, angels would instantly release Him. But it was necessary that He should suffer the violence of wicked men, in order to carry out the plan of salvation." —*Early Writings*, p. 170.

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Denying His Lord

“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.’ What a flood of evil and rubbish flows forth because of the talent of speech. And how many are denying Christ by their speech! Instead of making a good confession of Christ by their manner of conversation they say, ‘I know not the Man.’ It is easy enough to have a form of godliness; but to make a whole-sided confession of our faith in Christ, means that our words, and dress, and spirit shall testify to the fact.” —(Letter 19, 1897) *The Voice in Speech and Song*, p. 65.

FOLLOWING AT A DISTANCE

1. While the authorities held Jesus in the court, what were two of His disciples doing?

MATTHEW 26:58 *But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.*

JOHN 18:15, 16 *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*

“After deserting their Master in the garden, two of the disciples had ventured to follow, at a distance, the mob that had Jesus in charge. These disciples were Peter and John. The priests recognized John as a well-known disciple of Jesus, and admitted him to the hall, hoping that as he witnessed the humiliation of his Leader, he would scorn the idea of such a one being the Son of God. John spoke in favor of Peter, and gained an entrance for him also.

“In the court a fire had been kindled; for it was the coldest hour of the night, being just before the dawn. A company drew about the fire, and Peter presumptuously took his place with them. He did not wish to be recognized as a disciple of Jesus. By mingling carelessly with the crowd, he hoped to be taken for one of those who had brought Jesus to the hall.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 710.

ATTEMPTS TO HIDE

2. Seeing the disciple Peter in the crowd, what did a young woman who was in the service of the high priest say to him? Did Peter acknowledge that he was Jesus' disciple?

JOHN 18:18, FIRST PART *And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves....*

MARK 14:66-68 *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: ⁶⁷And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁶⁸But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.*

“But as the light flashed upon Peter’s face, the woman who kept the door cast a searching glance upon him. She had noticed that he came in with John, she marked the look of dejection on his face, and thought that he might be a disciple of Jesus. She was one of the servants of Caiaphas’ household, and was curious to know. She said to Peter, ‘Art not thou also one of this Man’s disciples?’ Peter was startled and confused; the eyes of the company instantly fastened upon him.... Peter felt compelled to answer, and said angrily, ‘Woman, I know Him not.’

“Peter had not designed that his real character should be known. In assuming an air of indifference he had placed himself on the enemy’s ground, and he became an easy prey to temptation. If he had been called to fight for his Master, he would have been a courageous soldier; but when the finger of scorn was pointed at him, he proved himself a coward. Many who do not shrink from active warfare for their Lord are driven by ridicule to deny their faith. By associating with those whom they should avoid, they place themselves in the way of temptation.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 710-712.

3. When another young woman recognized him as Jesus’ disciple, what did Peter answer the second time?

MATTHEW 26:71, 72 *And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁷²And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.*

“Peter tried to show no interest in the trial of his Master, but his heart was wrung with sorrow as he heard the cruel taunts, and saw the abuse He was suffering. More than this, he was surprised and angry that Jesus should humiliate Himself and His followers by submitting to such treatment. In order to conceal his true feelings, he endeavored to join with the persecutors of Jesus in their untimely jests. But his appearance was unnatural. He was acting a lie, and while seeking to talk unconcernedly he could not restrain expressions of indignation at the abuse heaped upon his Master.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 712.

FORGETTING THE MASTER’S COUNSEL

4. At this moment, did Peter remember the caution the Lord had given him just a few hours before?

LUKE 22:31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*

“Many today stand where Peter stood when in self-confidence he declared that he would not deny his Lord. And because of their self-sufficiency, they fall an easy prey to Satan’s devices. Those who realize their weakness trust in a power higher than self. And while they look to God, Satan has no power against them. But those who trust in self are easily defeated. Let us remember that if we do not heed the cautions that God gives us, a fall is before us. Christ will not save from wounds the one who places himself unbidden on the enemy’s ground. He lets the self-suf-

ficient one, who acts as if he knew more than his Lord, go on in his supposed strength. Then comes suffering and a crippled life, or perhaps defeat and death.” –(Manuscript 115, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1102.

LACK OF COURAGE

5. When Peter was questioned for the third time about his connection to Jesus, did he have the courage to confess his faith in the Master? Using foul language, how did he deny his Lord again?

JOHN 18:26 *One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?*

MARK 14:70, SECOND PART, 71 ... *And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. ⁷¹But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.*

“Still another opportunity was given him. An hour had passed, when one of the servants of the high priest, being a near kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked him, ‘Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?’ ‘Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.’ At this Peter flew into a rage. The disciples of Jesus were noted for the purity of their language, and in order fully to deceive his questioners, and justify his assumed character, Peter now denied his Master with cursing and swearing.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 712.

THE FATEFUL MOMENT WHEN THE COCK CROWED

6. What was heard as he was still speaking and denying the Master for the third time? What effect did the Lord’s look upon him have, even as the cock’s crowing was still sounding in his ears?

LUKE 22:60, LAST PART-62 ... *And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

“While the degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter’s lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter’s eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there.

“The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, that look of compassion and forgiveness, pierced his heart like an arrow. Conscience was aroused. Memory was active. Peter called to mind his promise of a few short hours before that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. He remembered his grief when the Saviour told him in the upper chamber that he would deny his Lord thrice that same night. Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now realized with bitter grief how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately He had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself.” –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 712, 713.

DOOR OF MERCY STILL OPEN

7. Did Jesus shut the door of mercy and brotherly relationship against Peter after his shameful denial? What lesson is there in this for us when we face the hour of temptation?

LUKE 22:32 *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

MATTHEW 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

“Peter denied his Lord in the hour of trial, but Jesus did not forsake His poor disciple. Although Peter hated himself, the Lord loved him, and after His resurrection He called him by name and sent him a loving message. O what a kind, loving, compassionate Saviour we have! And He loves us though we err.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 285.

“It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and entire reliance upon divine power, that he received his call to act as an undershepherd. Christ had said to Peter, before his denial of Him, ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ Luke 22:32. These words were significant of the wide and effectual work which this apostle was to do in the future for those who should come to the faith. For this work, Peter’s own experience of sin and suffering and repentance had prepared him. Not until he had learned his weakness, could he know the believer’s need of dependence on Christ. Amid the storm of temptation he had come to understand that man can walk safely only as in utter self-distrust he relies upon the Saviour.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 515.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Considering the experiences you have made in the past, do you feel more or less secure than did Peter when it comes to depending on yourself?*
- *Were Peter and Saul the only ones who had to give up their self-confidence, or does everyone have to make such an experience?*
- *If we are no more able to control ourselves than was Peter, how do we deal with those who hurt us, as Peter hurt Christ?*
- *Are we willing and prepared to deal with such circumstances and people in the way that Jesus did with Peter?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Those who make Christ first in everything can be trusted. They will not be self-confident, nor will they sink their religious interest in their business. Has God entrusted men with sacred responsibilities? Then He would have them feel their own weakness and their dependence upon Him. It is unsafe for men to lean to their own understanding; therefore they should daily seek strength and wisdom from above. God should be in all their thoughts; then all the wiles and subtleties of the old serpent cannot betray them into sinful neglect of duty. They will meet the adversary with the simple weapon that Christ used, ‘It is written,’ or will repulse him with, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan.’

“In the warning to ‘watch and pray,’ Jesus has indicated the only safe course. There is need of watchfulness. Our own hearts are deceitful; we are compassed with the weaknesses and frailties of humanity, and Satan is intent to destroy. We may be off our guard, but our adversary is never idle. Knowing his tireless vigilance, let us not sleep, as do others, but ‘watch and be sober.’ The spirit and influence of the world must be met, but they must not be allowed to take possession of the mind and heart.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 409.

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14

Sabbath, April 8, 2017

Betrayal and Ruin

“The history of Judas presents the sad ending of a life that might have been honored of God. Had Judas died before his last journey to Jerusalem he would have been regarded as a man worthy of a place among the twelve, and one who would be greatly missed. The abhorrence which has followed him through the centuries would not have existed but for the attributes revealed at the close of his history. But it was for a purpose that his character was laid open to the world. It was to be a warning to all who, like him, should betray sacred trusts.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 716.

THE CONDEMNATION

1. **The following morning, after the overnight judgment of Jesus before Ananias and Caiaphas, what terrible conclusion did the chief priests and elders of the people reach?**

MATTHEW 27:1 *When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.*

“As soon as it was day, the Sanhedrin again assembled, and again Jesus was brought into the council room. He had declared Himself the Son of God, and they had construed His words into a charge against Him. But they could not condemn Him on this, for many of them had not been present at the night session, and they had not heard His words. And they knew that the Roman tribunal would find in them nothing worthy of death. But if from His own lips they could all hear those words repeated, their object might be gained. His claim to the Messiahship they might construe into a seditious political claim....

“And so by the third condemnation of the Jewish authorities, Jesus was to die. All that was now necessary, they thought, was for the Romans to ratify this condemnation, and deliver Him into their hands.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 714.

SOLD FOR THE PRICE OF A SLAVE

2. **Centuries before the Messiah’s birth, what did prophecy say about the Saviour’s being betrayed for money? What price did the Jewish authorities pay Judas to betray the Saviour? In ancient times, what people were sold for such a small sum of money?**

ZECHARIAH 11:12 *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.*

MATTHEW 26:14, 15 *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, ¹⁵And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

EXODUS 21:32 *If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.*

"A little before the Passover, Judas had renewed his contract with the priests to deliver Jesus into their hands. Then it was arranged that the Saviour should be taken at one of His resorts for meditation and prayer. Since the feast at the house of Simon, Judas had had opportunity to reflect upon the deed which he had covenanted to perform, but his purpose was unchanged. For thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave—he sold the Lord of glory to ignominy and death.

"Judas had naturally a strong love for money; but he had not always been corrupt enough to do such a deed as this. He had fostered the evil spirit of avarice until it had become the ruling motive of his life. The love of mammon overbalanced his love for Christ. Through becoming the slave of one vice he gave himself to Satan, to be driven to any lengths in sin." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 716.

RECONSIDERATION TOO LATE

- 3. After pocketing the money, what took hold of Judas' mind when he realized that Jesus was condemned to death? What did he do with the money that he had received from the priests?**

MATTHEW 27:3 *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.*

"Christ was infinite in wisdom and yet He thought best to accept Judas, although He knew what were his imperfections of character. John was not perfect; Peter denied his Lord; and yet it was of men like these that the early Christian church was organized. Jesus accepted them that they might learn of Him what constitutes a perfect Christian character. The business of every Christian is to study the character of Christ....

"Judas alone did not respond to divine enlightenment.... He braced his soul to resist the influence of the truth; and while he practiced criticizing and condemning others, he neglected his own soul, and cherished and strengthened his natural evil traits of character until he became so hardened that he could sell his Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

"O let us encourage our souls to look to Jesus!..." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 182.

DESPERATION

- 4. How did the chief priests and elders react when Judas came before them and confessed that Jesus was innocent? What did the betrayer do when they responded to him with indifference and contempt? What desperate act followed?**

MATTHEW 27:4, 5 *Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. ⁵And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

"It was God's design that the men who delivered Jesus should hear the testimony of His innocence. 'I find no fault in him,' Pilate declared. And Judas, throwing at the feet of the priests the money he had received for betraying Christ, bore testimony, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.' " —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 269.

"Judas now cast himself at the feet of Jesus, acknowledging Him to be the Son of God, and entreating Him to deliver Himself. The Saviour did not reproach His betrayer. He knew that Judas did not repent; his confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a looking for of judgment, but he felt no deep, heartbreaking grief that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God, and denied the Holy One of Israel. Yet Jesus spoke no word of condemnation. He looked pityingly upon Judas, and said, For this hour came I into the world." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 722.

"Perceiving that his entreaties to spare the life of Jesus availed nothing with the high priest, he rushed from the hall in despair, crying, It is too late! It is too late! He felt unable to live to see Jesus crucified, and, in an agony of remorse, went out and hanged himself." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 126.

THE PRIESTS AND BLOOD MONEY

- 5. What did the priests eventually do with the money they had paid for Jesus' betrayal, knowing that it was stained with blood? What prophecy was thus fulfilled?**

MATTHEW 27:6-10 *And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. ⁷And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. ⁸Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. ⁹Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; ¹⁰And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.*

"Afterward the money which Judas had cast down before the priest was used for the purchase of a public burial ground." —*Redemption; or the Sufferings of Christ, His Trial and Crucifixion*, p. 46.

"After the rejection of this Messiah as initiated by Judas, no more could be done for the continuance of the temple and Jerusalem,... Naturally, this was not the argument of the high priests and elders when they were left with the money flung down in the temple. On the contrary, 'they took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.' In this way they themselves [high priests and elders] confirm that the deed for which they had given the money to Judas was an unclean deed, a deed of blood. In this way they indirectly accuse themselves." —Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 2, p. 468.

CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN MANIPULATION

- 6. Despite Judas' being considered a disciple and having been part of the sacred ministry, what happened to him when he agreed to lead the mob to the divine Master?**

ACTS 1:16-20 *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. ¹⁸Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. ²⁰For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.*

PSALM 41:9 *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

"A murmur of surprise ran through the assembly. With amazement they beheld the forbearance of Christ toward His betrayer. Again there swept over them the conviction that this Man was more than mortal. But if He was the Son of God, they questioned, why did He not free Himself from His bonds and triumph over His accusers?

"Judas saw that his entreaties were in vain, and he rushed from the hall exclaiming, It is too late! It is too late! He felt that he could not live to see Jesus crucified, and in despair went out and hanged himself." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 722.

A TERRIBLE LESSON TO LEARN

7. How terrible is it to betray the Son of God? Yet, in what ways can we also betray or offend Him? What great lesson do we learn from this part of Jesus' life?

MARK 14:21 *The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

"We want to seek with all the powers that God has given us to unfold the Scriptures to those who are in darkness. There is happiness, hope, and peace for the desponding. We cannot afford to give our God-given ability and devote it to the commonplace things of this earth. We want a faith that will grasp the promise set before us in the gospel. What if we should lose our soul? It would be better for us had we never been born. One soul is worth more than all the gold and silver that could be heaped up on this earth...." —*This Day with God*, p. 271.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***How is it possible to explain how Jesus was totally innocent and yet suffered the most cruel treason at the hands of His disciple?***
- ***What tendencies did Judas cultivate in his life that ended up controlling him to the point of their counteracting the holy teachings of the One he called Master and Lord?***

- *If Jesus experienced such rejection, should we be surprised when it happens in the family? Yet what should we ask ourselves if this happens?*
- *While we must not speak evil of anyone, when we see the fruit of the flesh manifested in another, what can each of us decide to ask the Saviour regarding our own condition?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"If any testimony had been needed to prove the innocence of Jesus, it was given in the confession of Judas. Not only was it an evidence of the innocence of the Saviour, but the event was a direct fulfillment of prophecy. In prophetic vision Zechariah had looked down the ages and seen the trial of God's dear Son. The act of Judas is thus described: 'And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.' " —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 126.

"Humble yourselves, pray much, and the Holy Spirit's power will attend your labors. Our richest blessings will come to us as we see our need and walk humbly with God...." —(Letter 260, 1906) *The Publishing Ministry*, p. 183.

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15

Sabbath, April 15, 2017

Before the Roman Governor

"Satan assailed Him [Christ] in every point, yet He sinned not in thought, word, or deed. He did no violence, neither was guile found in His mouth. Walking in the midst of sin, He was holy, harmless, undefiled. He was wrongfully accused, yet He opened not His mouth to justify Himself. How many now, when accused of that of which they are not guilty, feel that there is a time when forbearance ceases to be a virtue, and losing their temper, speak words which grieve the Holy Spirit?" —(Manuscript 42, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1148.

FROM ONE COURT TO ANOTHER

1. **After condemning and binding Jesus, where did the chief priests and elders take Him? Who surrounded the divine Master when He was taken from the Jewish tribunal to the court of Pilate?**

MARK 15:1 *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

MATTHEW 27:2 *And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

LUKE 23:1 *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.*

JOHN 18:28 *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.*

"In the judgment hall of Pilate, the Roman governor, Christ stands bound as a prisoner. About Him are the guard of soldiers, and the hall is fast filling with spectators. Just outside the entrance are the judges of the Sanhedrin, priests, rulers, elders, and the mob.

"After condemning Jesus, the council of the Sanhedrin had come to Pilate to have the sentence confirmed and executed. But these Jewish officials would not enter the Roman judgment hall. According to their ceremonial law they would be defiled thereby, and thus prevented from taking part in the feast of the Passover. In their blindness they did not see that murderous hatred had defiled their hearts. They did not see that Christ was the real Passover lamb, and that, since they had rejected Him, the great feast had for them lost its significance." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 723.

ACCUSATIONS

2. When Pilate saw the Innocent One, what did he ask Jesus' accusers?

JOHN 18:29 *Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?*

"Pilate looked at the men who had Jesus in charge, and then his gaze rested searchingly on Jesus. He had had to deal with all kinds of criminals; but never before had a man bearing marks of such goodness and nobility been brought before him. On His face he saw no sign of guilt, no expression of fear, no boldness or defiance. He saw a man of calm and dignified bearing, whose countenance bore not the marks of a criminal, but the signature of heaven.

"Christ's appearance made a favorable impression upon Pilate. His better nature was roused. He had heard of Jesus and His works. His wife had told him something of the wonderful deeds performed by the Galilean prophet, who cured the sick and raised the dead....

"Who is this Man, and wherefore have ye brought Him? he said. What accusation bring ye against Him? The Jews were disconcerted. Knowing that they could not substantiate their charges against Christ, they did not desire a public examination. They answered that He was a deceiver called Jesus of Nazareth." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 724.

3. What did the Jewish accusers answer the Roman governor? What was implied in their response?

JOHN 18:30 *They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.*

"When those composing the Sanhedrin, the first men of the nation, bring to you a man they deem worthy of death, is there need to ask for an accusation against him? They hoped to impress Pilate with a sense of their importance, and thus lead him to accede to their request without going through many preliminaries. They were eager to have their sentence ratified; for they knew that the people who had witnessed Christ's marvelous works could tell a story very different from the fabrication they themselves were now rehearsing.

"The priests thought that with the weak and vacillating Pilate they could carry through their plans without trouble. Before this he had signed the death warrant hastily, condemning to death men they knew were not worthy of death. In his estimation the life of a prisoner was of little account; whether he were innocent or guilty was of no special consequence. The priests hoped that Pilate would now inflict the death penalty on Jesus without giving Him a hearing. This they besought as a favor on the occasion of their great national festival." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 724, 725.

4. Did this convince Pilate that the Accused was guilty? What did he tell them?

JOHN 18:31 *Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*

"If your judgment is sufficient, he said, why bring the prisoner to me? 'Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law.' Thus pressed, the priests said that they had already passed sentence upon Him, but that they must have Pilate's sentence to render their condemnation valid. What is your sentence? Pilate asked. The death sentence, they answered; but it is not lawful for us to put any man to death. They asked Pilate to take their word as to Christ's guilt, and enforce their sentence. They would take the responsibility of the result.

"Pilate was not a just or a conscientious judge; but weak though he was in moral power, he refused to grant this request. He would not condemn Jesus until a charge had been brought against Him." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 725.

5. When the Jews saw that they could not obtain the death sentence without a judicial action, what false accusations did they begin to make?

LUKE 23:2 *And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.*

"Only a few days before this the Pharisees had tried to entrap Christ with the question, 'Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar?' But Christ had unveiled their hypocrisy. The Romans who were present had seen the utter failure of the plotters, and their discomfiture at His answer, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's.' Luke 20:22-25.

"Now the priests thought to make it appear that on this occasion Christ had taught what they hoped He would teach. In their extremity they called false witnesses to their aid, 'and they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King.' Three charges, each without foundation. The priests knew this, but they were willing to commit perjury could they but secure their end." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 725, 726.

ADDRESSING THE ACCUSED

6. After hearing the accusations, what did Pilate ask Jesus? What answer did the Saviour give to one of those allegations?

JOHN 18:33 *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?*

LUKE 23:3 *And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.*

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

QUIET AS A LAMB

7. What attitude did Jesus maintain as the priests raised all kinds of objections and accusations? What prophecy had foretold this?

MARK 15:3-5 *And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.⁴ And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.⁵ But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.*

ISAIAH 53:7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

“When they heard His answer, Caiaphas and those that were with him called Pilate to witness that Jesus had admitted the crime with which He was charged. With noisy cries, priests, scribes, and rulers demanded that He be sentenced to death. The cries were taken up by the mob, and the uproar was deafening. Pilate was confused. Seeing that Jesus made no answer to His accusers, Pilate said to Him, ‘Answerest Thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against Thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing.’

Standing behind Pilate, in view of all in the court, Christ heard the abuse; but to all the false charges against Him He answered not a word. His whole bearing gave evidence of conscious innocence. He stood unmoved by the fury of the waves that beat about Him. It was as if the heavy surges of wrath, rising higher and higher, like the waves of the boisterous ocean, broke about Him, but did not touch Him. He stood silent, but His silence was eloquence. It was as a light shining from the inner to the outer man.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 726.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Was it just Pilate’s demand that meant the defendant needed to be examined, or did the Holy Scriptures require proper procedures in such cases?*
- *How can one explain the fact that the Jewish leaders, who knew the Bible and had the instructions concerning justice in their hands, came to a wrong conclusion, while a pagan—Pilate—could understand who Jesus was and what He stood for?*
- *Are we able to suffer false accusation and still maintain a calm, inoffensive spirit, as did Jesus?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Jesus held His peace. ‘He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.’ Isaiah 53:7.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 706.

“One class have come up without self-control; they have not bridled the temper or the tongue; and some of these claim to be Christ’s followers, but they are not. Jesus has set them no such example.... Some are ... unreasonable, and not easily persuaded or convinced. They are not sane; Satan for the time has full control. Every one of these exhibitions of wrath weakens the nervous system and the moral powers, and makes it difficult to restrain anger on another provocation.

“With this class there is only one remedy—positive self-control under all circumstances. The effort to get into a favorable place, where self will not be annoyed, may succeed for a time; but Satan knows where to find these poor souls, and will assail them in their weak points again and again. They will be continually troubled so long as they think so much of self.... But there is hope for them. Let this life, so stormy with conflicts and worries, be brought into connection with Christ, and then self will no longer clamor for the supremacy....” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 142.

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16

Sabbath, April 22, 2017

“My Kingdom Is Not of This World”

“God’s people must be a peculiar, holy people, distinct in character and practice from the world, distinguished from all the religionists of the day. They must be patterns in personal piety and good works. There is higher, holier work for us to do than we have yet done. Christ has said, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world.’ It has no principles that will meet the principles of the world. The Lord has set His church as a light in the world, to guide the world to heaven. It is to be a part of heaven on the earth, flashing divine light on the pathway of benighted souls.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 304.

SEEKING HUMAN ANSWERS

- 1. How did the Lord respond when Pilate asked Him if He was the King of the Jews? What was Jesus’ intention in answering with another question?**

JOHN 18:34 *Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?*

“Pilate was astonished at His bearing. Does this Man disregard the proceedings because He does not care to save His life? he asked himself. As he looked at Jesus, bearing insult and mockery without retaliation, he felt that He could not be as unrighteous and unjust as were the clamoring priests. Hoping to gain the truth from Him and to escape the tumult of the crowd, Pilate took Jesus aside with him, and again questioned, ‘Art Thou the King of the Jews?’

"Jesus did not directly answer this question. He knew that the Holy Spirit was striving with Pilate, and He gave him opportunity to acknowledge his conviction. 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself,' He asked, 'or did others tell it thee of Me?' That is, was it the accusations of the priests, or a desire to receive light from Christ, that prompted Pilate's question?" —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 726, 727.

2. What did Pilate's comment to Jesus' question show? What opportunity did the governor thus lose?

JOHN 18:35 *Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?*

"Pilate understood Christ's meaning; but pride arose in his heart. He would not acknowledge the conviction that pressed upon him. 'Am I a Jew?' he said. 'Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done?' Pilate's golden opportunity had passed." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 727.

THE DIVINE KINGDOM

3. What clear explanation did Jesus give Pilate regarding His kingdom? What huge difference is there between His exalted kingdom and the kingdoms of this world? What kind of King is He?

JOHN 18:36, 37, FIRST PART *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. ³⁷Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:13 *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.*

"Yet Jesus did not leave him without further light. While He did not directly answer Pilate's question, He plainly stated His own mission. He gave Pilate to understand that He was not seeking an earthly throne.

" 'My kingdom is not of this world,' He said; 'if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every-one that is of the truth heareth My voice.'

"Christ affirmed that His word was in itself a key which would unlock the mystery to those who were prepared to receive it. It had a self-commanding power, and this was the secret of the spread of His kingdom of truth. He desired Pilate to understand that only by receiving and appropriating truth could his ruined nature be reconstructed." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 727.

4. What is the foundation of Christ's kingdom? Therefore, where does it start and develop?

JOHN 1:12, 13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

LUKE 17:20, LAST PART, 21 ... *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: ²¹Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

"The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

"Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 509, 510.

WHAT IS TRUTH

5. What other truth did Jesus add in His explanation to Pilate? What conviction gripped the governor as the Master spoke about His witness to the truth?

JOHN 18:37, LAST PART, 38 ... *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. ³⁸Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

"Christ affirmed that His word was in itself a key which would unlock the mystery to those who were prepared to receive it. It had a self-commending power, and this was the secret of the spread of His kingdom of truth. He desired Pilate to understand that only by receiving and appropriating truth could his ruined nature be reconstructed.

"Pilate had a desire to know the truth. His mind was confused. He eagerly grasped the words of the Saviour, and his heart was stirred with a great longing to know what it really was, and how he could obtain it. 'What is truth?' he inquired. But he did not wait for an answer. The tumult outside recalled him to the interests of the hour; for the priests were clamorous for immediate action. Going out to the Jews, he declared emphatically, 'I find in Him no fault at all.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 727.

6. While Pilate had authority to decide matters of life and death, even of God's Son, what basic knowledge did he lack? What did Jesus unequivocally confirm about the truth?

JOHN 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

PSALM 119:142, 151 *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth....* ¹⁵¹*Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth.*

"What is truth? He declared, 'Thy word is truth.' " —(*Review and Herald*, July 2, 1889.)

"Truth, Bible truth, you and I want at any cost. Like the noble Bereans we want to search the Scriptures daily with earnest prayer, to know what is truth, and then obey the truth at any cost to ourselves, without reference to prominent people or good people. If truth is in the Bible, we can find it there as well as the good and great ones of earth. God help us to be wise unto salvation is my prayer." —(Letter 35b, 1877) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 78.

"Who of our youth can know anything of what is truth, in comparison with error, unless they are acquainted with the Scriptures? The simplicity of true godliness must be brought into the education of our young people, if they are to have divine knowledge to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Those who are truly the followers of Christ, will not serve God only when it is in accordance with their inclination, but, as well, when it involves self-denial and cross-bearing." —*Christian Education*, p. 113.

OPPOSITE CONCLUSIONS

7. What did the governor openly acknowledge before the chief priests and the people? What violent reaction erupted from the Jewish leaders when the governor openly stated his conviction concerning Jesus?

LUKE 23:4, 5 *Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. ⁵And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.*

"These words from a heathen judge were a scathing rebuke to the perfidy and falsehood of the rulers of Israel who were accusing the Saviour. As the priests and elders heard this from Pilate, their disappointment and rage knew no bounds. They had long plotted and waited for this opportunity. As they saw the prospect of the release of Jesus, they seemed ready to tear Him in pieces....

"Angry voices were now heard, declaring that the seditious influence of Jesus was well known throughout the country. The priests said, 'He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.'

"Pilate at this time had no thought of condemning Jesus. He knew that the Jews had accused Him through hatred and prejudice. He knew what his duty was. Justice demanded that Christ should be immediately released...." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 727, 728.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Can prejudice be so strong that it alone decides whether or not one accepts truth?*
- *What counsel and guidance does the Bible provide to help us grasp the truth in critical moments and make decisions approved of Heaven?*
- *What issues are arising in society today that can confuse minds and arouse severe prejudice and strong hostility against God's people?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Jesus thus sought to convince Pilate that He was innocent of aspiring to kingly honors upon earth. Pilate had been confused by the disturbed and divided elements of the religious world, and his mind grasped eagerly at the words of Jesus declaring that He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Pilate had heard many voices cry, Here is the truth! I have the truth! But this man, arraigned as a criminal, who claimed to have the truth, stirred his heart with a great longing to know what it was, and how it could be obtained.” —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 132, 133.

“The Lord does not accept the service of those who live an inefficient, do-nothing life. They exert an influence that leads away from Christ. Self-denial and nobility of purpose marked His life. From the beginning to the close of His earthly ministry He went about doing good. In His life no sin appeared. No selfishness marred word or act. ‘Which of you convinceth Me of sin?’ (ohn 8:46, He asked the Pharisees, knowing that they could find nothing of which to accuse Him. And at His trial, Pilate declared emphatically, ‘I find in Him no fault at all.’ John 18:38.” —*This Day with God*, p. 68.

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***Please read the Missionary Report from
Emerging Countries of West Africa on page 83***

17

Sabbath, April 29, 2017

Interrogation before Herod

“Christ’s persecutors had tried to measure His character by their own; they had represented Him as vile as themselves. But back of all the present appearance another scene intruded itself—a scene which they will one day see in all its glory. There were some who trembled in Christ’s presence. While the rude throng were bowing in mockery before Him, some who came forward for that purpose turned back, afraid and silenced. Herod was convicted. The last rays of merciful light were shining upon his sin-hardened heart. He felt that this was no common man; for divinity had flashed through humanity. At the very time when Christ was encompassed by mockers, adulterers, and murderers, Herod felt that he was beholding a God upon His throne.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 731.

TRYING TO SHIFT RESPONSIBILITY

- 1. Finding himself in a very difficult situation, what idea occurred to Pilate when he heard that Jesus had preached in Galilee?**

LUKE 23:6 *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.*

2. Therefore, what did Pilate decide to do when he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction? Despite the strong opposition of the priests and leaders, what did Pilate do?

LUKE 23:7 *And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.*

"Pilate at this time had no thought of condemning Jesus. He knew that the Jews had accused Him through hatred and prejudice. He knew what his duty was. Justice demanded that Christ should be immediately released. But Pilate dreaded the ill will of the people. Should he refuse to give Jesus into their hands, a tumult would be raised, and this he feared to meet. When he heard that Christ was from Galilee, he decided to send Him to Herod, the ruler of that province, who was then in Jerusalem. By this course, Pilate thought to shift the responsibility of the trial from himself to Herod." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 728.

HUMAN INTERESTS

3. What were Herod's feelings when he finally had the opportunity to see Jesus? What pleasure would there be in this for him, since his hands were stained with the blood of John the Baptist?

LUKE 23:8; 9:9 *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him....^{9:9} And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.*

"Pilate delivered Jesus again to the soldiers, and amid the jeers and insults of the mob He was hurried to the judgment hall of Herod. 'When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad.' He had never before met the Saviour, but 'he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him.' This Herod was he whose hands were stained with the blood of John the Baptist. When Herod first heard of Jesus, he was terror-stricken, and said, 'It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead;' 'therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.' Mark 6:16; Matthew 14:2. Yet Herod desired to see Jesus. Now there was opportunity to save the life of this prophet, and the king hoped to banish forever from his mind the memory of that bloody head brought to him in a charger. He also desired to have his curiosity gratified, and thought that if Christ were given any prospect of release, He would do anything that was asked of Him." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 728, 729.

ANSWERING WITH SILENCE

4. Did Herod's many questions reveal a genuine interest in knowing the truth, or was he curious and interested in sensationalism? Explain why Jesus refused to answer the king's questions.

LUKE 23:9 *Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.*

"Herod questioned Christ in many words, but throughout the Saviour maintained a profound silence. At the command of the king, the decrepit and maimed were then called in, and Christ was ordered to prove His claims by working a mira-

cle. Men say that Thou canst heal the sick, said Herod. I am anxious to see that Thy widespread fame has not been belied. Jesus did not respond, and Herod still continued to urge: If Thou canst work miracles for others, work them now for Thine own good, and it will serve Thee a good purpose. Again he commanded, Show us a sign that Thou hast the power with which rumor hath accredited Thee. But Christ was as one who heard and saw not. The Son of God had taken upon Himself man's nature. He must do as man must do in like circumstances. Therefore He would not work a miracle to save Himself the pain and humiliation that man must endure when placed in a similar position." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 729.

5. **While Herod was asking for signs and a demonstration of Jesus' ability to heal and trying thus to bribe Him to be released, what did the priests and leaders vehemently protest? In this case, did Jesus attempt to deny the accusations of the Jews and justify Himself?**

LUKE 23:10 *And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.*

"A large company of the priests and elders had accompanied Christ to Herod. And when the Saviour was brought in, these dignitaries, all speaking excitedly, urged their accusations against Him. But Herod paid little regard to their charges. He commanded silence, desiring an opportunity to question Christ. He ordered that the fetters of Christ should be unloosed, at the same time charging His enemies with roughly treating Him. Looking with compassion into the serene face of the world's Redeemer, he read in it only wisdom and purity. He as well as Pilate was satisfied that Christ had been accused through malice and envy....

"Herod promised that if Christ would perform some miracle in his presence, He should be released.... Again the priests and rulers, in great anxiety, urged their accusations against Him. Raising their voices, they declared, He is a traitor, a blasphemer. He works His miracles through the power given Him by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. The hall became a scene of confusion, some crying one thing and some another." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 729, 730.

6. **Why did Jesus reply to many questions presented to Him during His ministry and yet refuse to say a word to the king under these circumstances?**

ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 7, LAST PART *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:... ⁷A time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

"Herod's conscience was now far less sensitive than when he had trembled with horror at the request of Herodias for the head of John the Baptist. For a time he had felt the keen stings of remorse for his terrible act; but his moral perceptions had become more and more degraded by his licentious life. Now his heart had become so hardened that he could even boast of the punishment he had inflicted upon John for daring to reprove him. And he now threatened Jesus, declaring repeatedly that he had power to release or to condemn Him. But no sign from Jesus gave evidence that He heard a word.

"Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority.... Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved and silent.

"The mission of Christ in this world was not to gratify idle curiosity. He came to heal the brokenhearted.... But He had no words for those who would but trample the truth under their unholy feet." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 730.

WHY HE WAS SILENT

- 7. What abuse against Jesus did Herod sanction when his curiosity and ego were not satisfied? What other reasons does the Spirit of prophecy give for the Master's silence?**

LUKE 23:11, FIRST PART *And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him,...*

ISAIAH 53:3 *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

“Christ might have spoken words to Herod that would have pierced the ears of the hardened king.... But Christ's silence was the severest rebuke that He could have given. Herod had rejected the truth spoken to him by the greatest of the prophets, and no other message was he to receive.... Those eyes that had ever rested upon the penitent sinner in pitying, forgiving love had no look to bestow upon Herod. Those lips that had uttered the most impressive truth, that in tones of tenderest entreaty had pleaded with the most sinful and the most degraded, were closed to the haughty king who felt no need of a Saviour.

“Herod's face grew dark with passion. Turning to the multitude, he angrily denounced Jesus as an impostor. Then to Christ he said, If You will give no evidence of Your claim, I will deliver You up to the soldiers and the people. They may succeed in making You speak. If You are an impostor, death at their hands is only what You merit; if You are the Son of God, save Yourself by working a miracle.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 730, 731.

- 8. Although not pleased with his interview with Jesus, did Herod agree to the condemnation of Him that the Jews demanded? What did the fact that he sent Him back to Pilate reveal? Did his meeting with the Redeemer change his relationship with God? In what way?**

LUKE 23:11, LAST PART, 12 *And arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. ¹²And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

DEUTERONOMY 4:29 *But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.*

“Hardened as he was, Herod dared not ratify the condemnation of Christ. He wished to relieve himself of the terrible responsibility, and he sent Jesus back to the Roman judgment hall.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 731.

“Herod had heard many things of Jesus in Galilee, and out of curiosity longed to see him. The poorest beggar that asked a miracle for the relief of his necessity, was never denied; but this proud prince, who asked for a miracle only to gratify his curiosity, is refused. He might have seen Christ and His wondrous works in Galilee, and would not, therefore it is justly said, Now he would see them, and shall not. Herod sent Christ again to Pilate: the friendships of wicked men are often formed by union in wickedness. They agree in little, except in enmity to God, and contempt of Christ.” —*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* on Luke 23:6-12.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *Having previously heard of Jesus, was Herod in a better position than Pilate to give a correct judgment?*
- *Herod was happy to see Christ, but was he happy also to hear and accept His message?*
- *What can we learn from the fact that the Lord did not answer the repeated requests of the king?*
- *The day that Jesus was condemned, Pilate and Herod became friends; but what alone is the true friendship that is valuable to God? Psalm 83:5-7; James 4:4; Matthew 6:24.*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Paul declared that in his unconverted state he had known Christ, not by personal acquaintance, but merely by the conception which he, in common with others, cherished concerning the character and work of the Messiah to come. He had rejected Jesus of Nazareth as an impostor because He did not fulfill this conception. But now Paul’s views of Christ and His mission were far more spiritual and exalted, for he had been converted. The apostle asserted that he did not present to them Christ after the flesh. Herod had seen Christ in the days of His humanity; Annas had seen Him; Pilate and the priests and rulers had seen Him; the Roman soldiers had seen Him. But they had not seen Him with the eye of faith; they had not seen Him as the glorified Redeemer. To apprehend Christ by faith, to have a spiritual knowledge of Him, was more to be desired than a personal acquaintance with Him as He appeared on the earth. The communion with Christ which Paul now enjoyed was more intimate, more enduring, than a mere earthly and human companionship.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 452.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

from Emerging Countries of West Africa

To be read on Sabbath, April 29, 2017

***The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, May 6, 2017***

“But when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth His labourers into His harvest.” Matthew 9:36-38.

The missionary work is progressing well in the African continent, even as we face many obstacles and challenges of different kinds. The message of Adventist Reformation (IMS) began in Africa back in the early 1930s in southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Republic of South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, and Swaziland) and then spread to eastern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s. Later the message reached Malawi, Mozambique, Burundi, and Rwanda. In early 1990, the message entered central Africa and western Africa (D.R. Congo, Cameroon, Ghana, and Angola). From 2000 to 2010, the message spread even faster into other countries, especially in West Africa. Many countries were evangelized during this time, including Madagascar, Seychelles, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Liberia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Senegal, South Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast. Recently the message entered Lesotho, and soon we will have baptisms in Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, and Djibouti, where our co-workers are busy evangelizing.

Africa is a vast continent, the second largest in the world after Asia, with 55 sovereign countries. The church’s objective is to reach all of the African countries with the message of Reformation, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

So far 35 countries in Africa have been reached, and we still have 20 countries waiting for the message. Most of the latter are in West and North Africa, and they are predominantly Muslim. To work in such countries is a huge challenge. However, the main obstacle is a lack of financial resources. This has made it necessary to move slowly while time is flying fast. The new territories we are focusing on right now are Gabon, Congo Brazzaville, Central Africa Republic, and Djibouti.

The General Conference and the African Division have received requests for funds from countries that desire to advance church activities in their new-

ly established fields. Therefore, the plan of the General Conference is to use the income from next week's Special Sabbath School offerings to support the advancement of missionary activities in the newly established fields in West Africa and to cover the expenses for purchasing headquarters facilities. Such facilities have been purchased recently in Ghana, The Gambia, and Sierra Leone. Headquarters are needed in Ivory Coast, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Senegal. Although prior Sabbath School Offerings have been collected for many of these countries, the costs of church buildings, headquarters, and schools have far exceeded the amounts collected. Thus, this offering is also being gathered to replenish the exhausted accounts. We earnestly entreat you to give a heartfelt offering to help advance the evangelistic programs in those fields and also obtain houses of worship.

May our gracious Lord give us cheerful, willing hearts as we join hands in this project of extending the gospel message to the dark areas of this planet. We need to be serious with the matters pertaining to the Lord's cause, especially by giving for missionary activities and places of worship. While you are stretching out your hand to present your gift, please remember the following Biblical challenge: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:14, 15.

God grant you His abundant blessings!

*—Parmenas Shirima,
African Division Leader*

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
EMERGING COUNTRIES OF WEST AFRICA**

Let your gift reflect your longing for Jesus' soon return!

18

Sabbath, May 6, 2017

Whom They Desired

"One other course suggested itself to Pilate whereby he might save Him whom he dared not give up to that maddened power, knowing that for envy they had brought Jesus to the judgment hall. Pagan invention, without one particle of justice in it, had made a custom that at the great national festival there should be set at liberty one prisoner who had been condemned to death. Could the convicted Pilate make use of this subterfuge and bring about that which he desired—save an innocent man, whose power, even while bound and under accusation, he knew to be the power of no common man, but of God? His soul was in terrible conflict. He would present the true and innocent Christ side by side with the notable Barabbas, and he flattered himself that the contrast between innocence and guilt would be so convincing that Jesus of Nazareth would be their choice." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 273.

OPPORTUNITY TO RECONSIDER

1. What did Pilate conclude when Herod sent Jesus back to him without judgment? What did he figure he would do to end the case?

LUKE 23:13-16 *And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: ¹⁵No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. ¹⁶I will therefore chastise him, and release him.*

"Pilate was disappointed and much displeased. When the Jews returned with their prisoner, he asked impatiently what they would have him do. He reminded them that he had already examined Jesus, and found no fault in Him; he told them that they had brought complaints against Him, but they had not been able to prove a single charge. He had sent Jesus to Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, and one of their own nation, but he also had found in Him nothing worthy of death. 'I will therefore chastise Him,' Pilate said, 'and release Him.'

"Here Pilate showed his weakness. He had declared that Jesus was innocent, yet he was willing for Him to be scourged to pacify His accusers. He would sacrifice justice and principle in order to compromise with the mob. This placed him at a disadvantage. The crowd presumed upon his indecision, and clamored the more for the life of the prisoner. If at the first Pilate had stood firm, refusing to condemn

a man whom he found guiltless, he would have broken the fatal chain that was to bind him in remorse and guilt as long as he lived. Had he carried out his convictions of right, the Jews would not have presumed to dictate to him. Christ would have been put to death, but the guilt would not have rested upon Pilate.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 731, 732.

DREAM AT A CRITICAL MOMENT

2. While this was happening, who sent a message to Pilate? How was Jesus presented in that message?

MATTHEW 27:19 *When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.*

“Even now Pilate was not left to act blindly. A message from God warned him from the deed he was about to commit. In answer to Christ’s prayer, the wife of Pilate had been visited by an angel from heaven, and in a dream she had beheld the Saviour and conversed with Him. Pilate’s wife was not a Jew, but as she looked upon Jesus in her dream, she had no doubt of His character or mission. She knew Him to be the Prince of God. She saw Him on trial in the judgment hall. She saw the hands tightly bound as the hands of a criminal. She saw Herod and his soldiers doing their dreadful work. She heard the priests and rulers, filled with envy and malice, madly accusing. She heard the words, ‘We have a law, and by our law He ought to die.’ She saw Pilate give Jesus to the scourging, after he had declared, ‘I find no fault in Him.’ She heard the condemnation pronounced by Pilate, and saw him give Christ up to His murderers. She saw the cross uplifted on Calvary. She saw the earth wrapped in darkness, and heard the mysterious cry, ‘It is finished.’ Still another scene met her gaze. She saw Christ seated upon the great white cloud, while the earth reeled in space, and His murderers fled from the presence of His glory. With a cry of horror she awoke, and at once wrote to Pilate words of warning.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 732.

FOLLOWING CUSTOM

3. At that time, what custom existed on the occasion of the Passover festival? What did Pilate propose?

MARK 15:6, 8 *Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired....⁸ And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.*

MATTHEW 27:17 *Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?*

“Pilate’s face grew pale. He was confused by his own conflicting emotions. But while he had been delaying to act, the priests and rulers were still further inflaming the minds of the people. Pilate was forced to action. He now bethought himself of a custom which might serve to secure Christ’s release. It was customary at this feast to release some one prisoner whom the people might choose. This custom was of pagan invention; there was not a shadow of justice in it, but it was greatly prized by the Jews.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 733.

THE OTHER PRISONER

- 4. What report do the gospels give about the prisoner, Barabbas? Proposing that Jesus be released, what thought did the governor attempt to arouse in the consciences of the people?**

JOHN 18:40 *Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.*

MARK 15:7 *And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.*

“The Roman authorities at this time held a prisoner named Barabbas, who was under sentence of death. This man had claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed authority to establish a different order of things, to set the world right. Under satanic delusion he claimed that whatever he could obtain by theft and robbery was his own. He had done wonderful things through satanic agencies, he had gained a following among the people, and had excited sedition against the Roman government. Under cover of religious enthusiasm he was a hardened and desperate villain, bent on rebellion and cruelty. By giving the people a choice between this man and the innocent Saviour, Pilate thought to arouse them to a sense of justice. He hoped to gain their sympathy for Jesus in opposition to the priests and rulers. So, turning to the crowd, he said with great earnestness, ‘Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?’ “—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 733.

THE JEWS CHOOSE

- 5. While a heathen governor repeatedly proposed that Jesus be released, what did the Jewish leaders continue to demand? Given the opportunity to choose between two people—and knowing that one was guilty—whom did they twice demand should be released?**

MARK 15:9, 11 *But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?...¹¹ But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.*

LUKE 23:18 *And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.*

“Like the bellowing of wild beasts came the answer of the mob, ‘Release unto us Barabbas!’ Louder and louder swelled the cry, Barabbas! Barabbas! Thinking that the people had not understood his question, Pilate asked, ‘Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?’ But they cried out again, ‘Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas!’ ‘What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?’ Pilate asked. Again the surging multitude roared like demons. Demons themselves, in human form, were in the crowd, and what could be expected but the answer, ‘Let Him be crucified?’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 733.

CROWD BEHAVIOR AND JUDGMENT

- 6. What did Pilate say for the third time, trying to help Jesus? What was the multitude’s single demand? Who was really behind the frenzy demanding the death penalty for the world’s Redeemer?**

LUKE 23:20-22 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. ²¹But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. ²²And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

MATTHEW 27:22, 23 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. ²³And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

“Pilate was troubled. He had not thought it would come to that. He shrank from delivering an innocent man to the most ignominious and cruel death that could be inflicted. After the roar of voices had ceased, he turned to the people, saying, ‘Why, what evil hath He done?’ But the case had gone too far for argument. It was not evidence of Christ’s innocence that they wanted, but His condemnation.

“Still Pilate endeavored to save Him. ‘He said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go.’ But the very mention of His release stirred the people to a tenfold frenzy. ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him,’ they cried. Louder and louder swelled the storm that Pilate’s indecision had called forth.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 733, 734.

THE SAVIOUR IN MEN’S HANDS

7. What did Pilate allow at this point in the trial? What abuse was committed against the divine Son of God? How did He react to the mistreatment?

JOHN 19:1-3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. ²And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, ³And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

“Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A maddened throng enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy....

“His abasement was the pledge of His exaltation. The blood drops of agony that from His wounded temples flowed down His face and beard were the pledge of His anointing with ‘the oil of gladness’ (Hebrews 1:9) as our great high priest....

“All the abuse inflicted upon the Saviour had not forced the least murmur from His lips. Although He had taken upon Him the nature of man, He was sustained by a godlike fortitude, and departed in no particular from the will of His Father.

“When Pilate gave Jesus up to be scourged and mocked, he thought to excite the pity of the multitude. He hoped they would decide that this was sufficient punishment. Even the malice of the priests, he thought, would now be satisfied. But with keen perception the Jews saw the weakness of thus punishing a man who had been declared innocent. They knew that Pilate was trying to save the life of the prisoner, and they were determined that Jesus should not be released. To please and satisfy us, Pilate has scourged Him, they thought, and if we press the matter to a decided issue, we shall surely gain our end.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 734, 735.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***What had happened to the consciences of the people that allowed them to reach the point of demanding the release of the one who was guilty and the condemnation of the One who was innocent?***

- *Where was the people's gratitude for all the healing, miracles, help, and blessings they had received at the Saviour's hand as they now demanded the crucifixion of the Saviour?*
- *What benefit could the people and rulers receive from the release of Barabbas?*
- *How can we be sure always to choose Jesus, not someone like Barabbas?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Pilate longed to deliver Jesus. But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honor. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another....

"Pilate yielded to the demands of the mob. Rather than risk losing his position, he delivered Jesus up to be crucified. But ... the very thing he dreaded afterward came upon him. His honors were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life. So all who compromise with sin will gain only sorrow and ruin. 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' Proverbs 14:12." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 324.

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19

Sabbath, May 13, 2017

"Take Ye Him, and Crucify Him"

"Through fear of losing his power and authority, Pilate consented to the death of Jesus. And notwithstanding he placed the blood of Jesus upon His accusers, and the multitude received it, crying, 'His blood be on us, and on our children,' yet Pilate was not clear; he was guilty of the blood of Christ. For his own selfish interest, his love of honor from the great men of earth, he delivered an innocent man to die. If Pilate had followed his own convictions, he would have had nothing to do with condemning Jesus." —*Early Writings*, p. 174.

CROWN OF THORNS

1. **What was the Son of God wearing when Pilate presented Him to the crowd beside the robber? What positive testimony did he still give about Him?**

JOHN 19:4, 5 *Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. ⁵Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!*

MARK 15:15, FIRST PART *And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them.*

"Pilate now sent for Barabbas to be brought into the court. He then presented the two prisoners side by side, and pointing to the Saviour he said in a voice of solemn entreaty, 'Behold the Man!' 'I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.'

"There stood the Son of God, wearing the robe of mockery and the crown of thorns. Stripped to the waist, His back showed the long, cruel stripes, from which the blood flowed freely. His face was stained with blood, and bore the marks of exhaustion and pain; but never had it appeared more beautiful than now. The Saviour's visage was not marred before His enemies. Every feature expressed gentleness and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes. In His manner there was no cowardly weakness, but the strength and dignity of long-suffering. In striking contrast was the prisoner at His side. Every line of the countenance of Barabbas proclaimed him the hardened ruffian that he was. The contrast spoke to every beholder. Some of the spectators were weeping. As they looked upon Jesus, their hearts were full of sympathy. Even the priests and rulers were convicted that He was all that He claimed to be." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 735.

GIVEN INTO THEIR HANDS

2. What concession did Pilate make to the priests and officers to avoid being responsible for the Saviour's death?

JOHN 19:6 *When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*

"Pilate was filled with amazement at the uncomplaining patience of the Saviour. He did not doubt that the sight of this Man, in contrast with Barabbas, would move the Jews to sympathy. But he did not understand the fanatical hatred of the priests for Him, who, as the Light of the world, had made manifest their darkness and error. They had moved the mob to a mad fury, and again priests, rulers, and people raised that awful cry, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.' At last, losing all patience with their unreasoning cruelty, Pilate cried out despairingly, 'Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 736.

3. What accusation was considered sufficient to secure the death sentence? What did Pilate feel when he heard that Jesus had declared Himself God's Son?

JOHN 19:7, 8 *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. ⁸When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid.*

"The Roman governor, though familiar with cruel scenes, was moved with sympathy for the suffering prisoner, who, condemned and scourged, with bleeding brow and lacerated back, still had the bearing of a king upon his throne. But the priests declared, 'We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'

"Pilate was startled. He had no correct idea of Christ and His mission; but he had an indistinct faith in God and in beings superior to humanity. A thought that had once before passed through his mind now took more definite shape. He questioned whether it might not be a divine being that stood before him, clad in the purple robe of mockery, and crowned with thorns." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 736.

THE GREATER SIN

4. Was he aware that the authority he had at that time was not his exclusive property but for the purpose of justice?

JOHN 19:9-11 *And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? ¹¹Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

“... The Saviour had spoken freely to Pilate, explaining His own mission as a witness to the truth. Pilate had disregarded the light. He had abused the high office of judge by yielding his principles and authority to the demands of the mob. Jesus had no further light for him....

“ ‘He that delivered Me unto thee,’ said Jesus, ‘hath the greater sin.’ By this Christ meant Caiaphas, who, as high priest, represented the Jewish nation. They knew the principles that controlled the Roman authorities. They had had light in the prophecies that testified of Christ, and in His own teachings and miracles. The Jewish judges had received unmistakable evidence of the divinity of Him whom they condemned to death. And according to their light would they be judged.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 737.

THREATENING THE GOVERNOR

5. How did the Jews threaten Pilate when they saw that he still wanted to set Jesus free? While they accused Pilate, did they have a genuine interest in Caesar?

JOHN 19:12-14 *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. ¹³When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. ¹⁴And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

“Thus these hypocrites pretended to be jealous for the authority of Caesar. Of all the opponents of the Roman rule, the Jews were most bitter. When it was safe for them to do so, they were most tyrannical in enforcing their own national and religious requirements; but when they desired to bring about some purpose of cruelty, they exalted the power of Caesar. To accomplish the destruction of Christ, they would profess loyalty to the foreign rule which they hated.

“ ‘Whosoever maketh himself a king,’ they continued, ‘speaketh against Caesar.’ This was touching Pilate in a weak point. He was under suspicion by the Roman government, and he knew that such a report would be ruin to him. He knew that if the Jews were thwarted, their rage would be turned against him. They would leave nothing undone to accomplish their revenge....

“Thus by choosing a heathen ruler, the Jewish nation had withdrawn from the theocracy. They had rejected God as their king. Henceforth they had no deliverer. They had no king but Caesar. To this the priests and teachers had led the people.

For this, with the fearful results that followed, they were responsible. A nation's sin and a nation's ruin were due to the religious leaders." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 737, 738.

MOTIVE BEHIND THE JUDGMENT

- 6. What did Pilate do when he could see no way out? Is it possible in some situations to make a compromise between circumstances and the voice of conscience? What consequences did Pilate suffer for sacrificing the truth?**

MATTHEW 27:24 *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.*

"Turning to the multitude he declared, I am clear of His blood. Take ye Him, and crucify Him. But mark ye, priests and rulers, I pronounce Him a just man. May He whom He claims as His Father judge you and not me for this day's work. Then to Jesus he said, Forgive me for this act; I cannot save You. And when he had again scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

"Pilate longed to deliver Jesus. But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honor. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another. The current sets strongly in the wrong direction, and he who compromises with evil is swept away into the thick darkness of guilt.

"Pilate yielded to the demands of the mob. Rather than risk losing his position, he delivered Jesus up to be crucified. But in spite of his precautions, the very thing he dreaded afterward came upon him. His honors were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life. So all who compromise with sin will gain only sorrow and ruin." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 738.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

- 7. While Pilate sought in every way to free himself from his responsibility, what terrible curse were the Jewish leaders and people willing to take upon themselves and their descendants? What led them to desire such a horrible condemnation upon themselves and their nation?**

MATTHEW 27:25 *Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.*

"When Pilate declared himself innocent of the blood of Christ, Caiaphas answered defiantly, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' The awful words were taken up by the priests and rulers, and echoed by the crowd in an inhuman roar of voices. The whole multitude answered and said, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.'...

"Looking upon the smitten Lamb of God, the Jews had cried, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' That awful cry ascended to the throne of God. That sentence, pronounced upon themselves, was written in heaven. That prayer was heard. The blood of the Son of God was upon their children and their children's children, a perpetual curse.

“Terribly was it realized in the destruction of Jerusalem. Terribly has it been manifested in the condition of the Jewish nation for eighteen hundred years—a branch severed from the vine, a dead, fruitless branch, to be gathered up and burned. From land to land throughout the world, from century to century, dead, dead in trespasses and sins!” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 738, 739.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *If the Jews were so mistaken in preferring Barabbas to Christ, is there a possibility that we can also make similar mistakes? How?*
- *If God’s professed people had asked for divine guidance, would they have made the choices they did?*
- *What nature must prevail in us to be able to recognize and accept wholeheartedly the Son of God as our Master and Saviour?*
- *What can be said about that human justice that would condemn the innocent and acquit the guilty?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

“The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 294.

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The Crucifixion

“The love of God was Christ’s theme when speaking of His mission and His work. ‘Therefore doth My Father love Me,’ He says, ‘because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.’ John 10:17. My Father loves you with a love so unbounded that He loves Me the more because I have given My life to redeem you. He loves you, and He loves Me more because I love you, and give My life for you.... Well did the disciples understand this love as they saw their Saviour enduring shame, reproach, doubt, and betrayal, as they saw His agony in the Garden, and His death on Calvary’s cross. This is a love the depth of which no sounding can ever fathom. As the disciples comprehended it, as their perception took hold of God’s divine compassion, they realized that there is a sense in which the sufferings of the Son were the sufferings of the Father....” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 69.

THE ROAD TO CALVARY

1. **Once condemned and delivered into their hands, how did the soldiers treat Jesus? After smiting, mocking, and ridiculing Him, where did they take Him? What did He carry on His bruised and bleeding shoulders?**

MARK 15:18-20 *And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! ¹⁹And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.*

LUKE 23:33 *And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*

JOHN 19:17 *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.*

“A vast multitude followed Jesus from the judgment hall to Calvary. The news of His condemnation had spread throughout Jerusalem, and people of all classes and all ranks flocked toward the place of crucifixion. The priests and rulers had been bound by a promise not to molest Christ’s followers if He Himself were delivered to them, and the disciples and believers from the city and the surrounding region joined the throng that followed the Saviour.

“As Jesus passed the gate of Pilate’s court, the cross which had been prepared for Barabbas was laid upon His bruised and bleeding shoulders.... The Saviour’s burden was too heavy for Him in His weak and suffering condition.... He had endured the anguish of the betrayal, and had seen His disciples forsake Him and flee. He had been taken to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate. From Pilate He had been sent to Herod, then sent again to Pilate. From insult to renewed insult, from mockery to mockery, twice tortured by the scourge—all that night there had been scene after scene of a character to try the soul of man to the uttermost....

All through the disgraceful farce of a trial He had borne Himself with firmness and dignity." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 741, 742.

A FOREIGNER CARRIES THE CROSS

2. When Jesus was unable to carry the cross, who was compelled to bear it? Was he part of the Jewish people?

LUKE 23:26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

"But when after the second scourging the cross was laid upon Him, human nature could bear no more. He fell fainting beneath the burden.

"... His persecutors saw that it was impossible for Him to carry His burden farther. They were puzzled to find anyone who would bear the humiliating load.... None even of the mob that followed Him would stoop to bear the cross.

"At this time a stranger, Simon a Cyrenian, coming in from the country, meets the throng. He hears the taunts and ribaldry of the crowd; he hears the words contemptuously repeated, Make way for the King of the Jews! He stops in astonishment at the scene; and as he expresses his compassion, they seize him and place the cross upon his shoulders.

"Simon had heard of Jesus. His sons were believers in the Saviour, but he himself was not a disciple. The bearing of the cross to Calvary was a blessing to Simon, and he was ever after grateful for this providence. It led him to take upon himself the cross of Christ from choice, and ever cheerfully stand beneath its burden." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 741, 742.

WARNING OF COMING DISASTER

3. What feelings were expressed by some women who witnessed the terrible scenes on the way to Golgotha? How did this affect Jesus as He looked forward to the coming years and saw the suffering that would come to those who were His chosen people?

LUKE 23:27-29 *And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. ²⁸But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. ²⁹For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.*

"Not a few women are in the crowd that follow the Uncondemned to His cruel death. Their attention is fixed upon Jesus. Some of them have seen Him before. Some have carried to Him their sick and suffering ones. Some have themselves been healed.... They wonder at the hatred of the crowd toward Him for whom their own hearts are melting and ready to break.... These women give expression to their sympathy. As Jesus falls fainting beneath the cross, they break forth into mournful wailing.

"... Although full of suffering, while bearing the sins of the world, He was not indifferent to the expression of grief. He looked upon these women with tender compassion. They were not believers in Him; He knew that they were not lamenting Him as one sent from God, but were moved by feelings of human pity. He did

not despise their sympathy, but it awakened in His heart a deeper sympathy for them.... From the scene before Him, Christ looked forward to the time of Jerusalem's destruction. In that terrible scene, many of those who were now weeping for Him were to perish with their children." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 742, 743.

SUFFERING AND PRAYER OF LOVE

4. How did Jesus act consistently throughout the torturous ordeal of the crucifixion? While suffering excruciating sorrow and pain, what did He pray to the Father concerning His enemies?

LUKE 23:32-35 *And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. ³³And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. ³⁴Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. ³⁵And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*

"The Saviour made no murmur of complaint. His face remained calm and serene, but great drops of sweat stood upon His brow. There was no pitying hand to wipe the death dew from His face, nor words of sympathy and unchanging fidelity to stay His human heart. While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies.... No curses were called down upon the soldiers who were handling Him so roughly. No vengeance was invoked upon the priests and rulers, who were gloating over the accomplishment of their purpose. Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness—"for they know not what they do."

"Had they known that they were putting to torture One who had come to save the sinful race from eternal ruin, they would have been seized with remorse and horror. But their ignorance did not remove their guilt....

"That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 744, 745.

KING OF THE JEWS

5. What inscription was put on the cross at Pilate's command? What was the opinion of the chief priests concerning this title?

JOHN 19:19-22 *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. ²¹Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. ²²Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

"As soon as Jesus was nailed to the cross, it was lifted by strong men, and with great violence thrust into the place prepared for it.... This inscription irritated the Jews.... Pilate wrote out the sentiment they had expressed. No offense was mentioned, except that Jesus was the King of the Jews. The inscription was a virtual acknowledgment of the allegiance of the Jews to the Roman power. It declared

that whoever might claim to be the King of Israel would be judged by them worthy of death....

"The priests saw what they had done, and asked Pilate to change the inscription.... But Pilate was angry with himself because of his former weakness, and he thoroughly despised the jealous and artful priests and rulers. He replied coldly, 'What I have written I have written.'

"A higher power than Pilate or the Jews had directed the placing of that inscription above the head of Jesus. In the providence of God it was to awaken thought, and investigation of the Scriptures. The place where Christ was crucified was near to the city. Thousands of people from all lands were then at Jerusalem, and the inscription declaring Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah would come to their notice. It was a living truth, transcribed by a hand that God had guided." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 745, 746.

FULFILLING PROPHECY

6. What happened to Jesus' clothing? Centuries before, what had been foretold in prophecy about His vesture?

JOHN 19:23, 24 *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. ²⁴They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

PSALM 22:16-18 *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. ¹⁸They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

"In the sufferings of Christ upon the cross prophecy was fulfilled. Centuries before the crucifixion, the Saviour had foretold the treatment He was to receive. He said, 'Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.' Psalm 22:16-18. The prophecy concerning His garments was carried out without counsel or interference from the friends or the enemies of the Crucified One. To the soldiers who had placed Him upon the cross, His clothing was given. Christ heard the men's contention as they parted the garments among them. His tunic was woven throughout without seam, and they said, 'Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 746.

7. When He was thirsty, what was He given to drink? What other prophecy was thus fulfilled?

MATTHEW 27:33, 34 *And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, ³⁴They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*

PSALM 69:20, 21 *Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. ²¹They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

"In another prophecy the Saviour declared, 'Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.' Psalm 69:20, 21. To those who suffered death by the cross, it was permitted to give a stupefying potion, to deaden the sense of pain. This was offered to Jesus; but when He had tasted it, He refused it. He would receive nothing that could becloud His mind. His faith must keep fast hold upon God. This was His only strength. To becloud His senses would give Satan an advantage." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 746.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***How many of us would have the strength to endure quietly and calmly all the mistreatment and harassment inflicted upon Jesus?***
- ***What comes to mind when we think about Jesus praying for His executioners, even as the soldiers fixed His hands and feet to the cross with nails?***
- ***What warning is there for all of us when we read that men can become so cruel that they will refuse cool water to the One who gave His life for them?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"When our Redeemer consented to take the cup of suffering in order to save sinners, His capacity for suffering was the only limitation to His suffering.... By dying in our behalf, He gave an equivalent for our debt. Thus He removed from God all charge of lessening the guilt of sin. By virtue of My oneness with the Father, He says, My suffering and death enable Me to pay the penalty of sin. By My death a restraint is removed from His love. His grace can act with unbounded efficiency.

"Christ is our Redeemer. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the fountain in which we may be washed and cleansed from all impurity. He is the costly sacrifice that has been given for the reconciliation of man. The universe of heaven, the worlds unfallen, the fallen world, and the confederacy of evil cannot say that God could do more for the salvation of man than He has done. Never can His gift be surpassed, never can He display a richer depth of love. Calvary represents His crowning work. It is man's part to respond to His great love by appropriating the great salvation the blessing of the Lord has made it possible for man to obtain." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 69.

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Agony on the Cross

“Their Saviour had been rejected and condemned, and nailed to the ignominious cross. The Jewish priests and rulers had declared, in scorn, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.’ But that cross, that instrument of shame and torture, brought hope and salvation to the world. The believers rallied; their hopelessness and conscious helplessness had left them. They were transformed in character, and united in the bonds of Christian love.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 67.

FAR MORE THAN PHYSICAL PAIN

1. **While Jesus hung on the cross, what other torture did men inflict on Him? What disparaging remarks did some make without having the slightest knowledge of what the Saviour’s words meant?**

MATTHEW 27:39, 40 *And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, ⁴⁰And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

“Many would be followers of Christ if He would come down from the cross and appear to them in such a manner as they desire. If He would come with riches and pleasure, many would receive Him gladly and would be in haste to crown Him Lord of all. If He would only lay aside His humiliation and sufferings and cry, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him please himself and enjoy the world and he shall be My disciple,’ multitudes would believe on Him.

“But the blessed Jesus will come to us in no other character than the meek and lowly Crucified One. We must partake of His self-denial and suffering here if we would take the crown hereafter....” —*Our High Calling*, p. 288.

“The teachers of the people had stimulated the ignorant mob to pronounce judgment against One upon whom many of them had never looked, until urged to bear testimony against Him.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 749.

2. **Were the chief priests and Jews leaders more interested in knowing about the prophecies telling of the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God or in mocking Him?**

MATTHEW 27:41, 42 *Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, ⁴²He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

“Jesus, suffering and dying, heard every word as the priests declared, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ Christ could have come down from the cross. But it is because He would not save Himself that the sinner has hope of pardon and favor with God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 749.

"It is because Christ would not save Himself that the sinner has any hope of pardon or favor with God. If, in His undertaking to save the sinner, Christ had failed or become discouraged, the last hope of every son and daughter of Adam would have been at an end. The entire life of Christ was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice; and the reason that there are so few stalwart Christians is because of their self-indulgence and self-pleasing in the place of self-denial and self-sacrifice."
—*This Day with God*, p. 236.

3. Did the religious leaders know the prophecies concerning the Messiah? What is shown by the fact that these men spoke the exact words that the prophecy put in the mouth of unbelievers?

MATTHEW 27:43 *He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*

PSALM 22:7, 8 *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ⁸He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

"In their mockery of the Saviour, the men who professed to be the expounders of prophecy were repeating the very words which Inspiration had foretold they would utter upon this occasion. Yet in their blindness they did not see that they were fulfilling the prophecy. Those who in derision uttered the words, 'He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God,' little thought that their testimony would sound down the ages. But although spoken in mockery, these words led men to search the Scriptures as they had never done before. Wise men heard, searched, pondered, and prayed. There were those who never rested until, by comparing scripture with scripture, they saw the meaning of Christ's mission. Never before was there such a general knowledge of Jesus as when He hung upon the cross. Into the hearts of many who beheld the crucifixion scene, and who heard Christ's words, the light of truth was shining."
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 749.

JOY AND CONSOLATION AMID PAIN AND SORROW

4. Suffering in agony on the cross, what did the thief on one side say to Jesus? What did the other thief say to him, acknowledging their guilt?

LUKE 23:39-41 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. ⁴⁰But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

"To Jesus in His agony on the cross there came one gleam of comfort. It was the prayer of the penitent thief. Both the men who were crucified with Jesus had at first railed upon Him; and one under his suffering only became more desperate and defiant. But not so with his companion. This man was not a hardened criminal; he had been led astray by evil associations, but he was less guilty than many of those who stood beside the cross reviling the Saviour.... The conviction comes back to him that this is the Christ. Turning to his fellow criminal he says, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?' The dying thieves have no longer anything to fear from man. But upon one of them presses the conviction

that there is a God to fear, a future to cause him to tremble. And now, all sin-polluted as it is, his life history is about to close. 'And we indeed justly,' he moans; 'for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.' " –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 749, 750.

5. What did the repentant thief, who recognized the innocence of Jesus, request from Him? What comforting response did he immediately receive?

LUKE 23:42, 43 *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. ⁴³And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

"When condemned for his crime, the thief had become hopeless and despairing; but strange, tender thoughts now spring up.... He has seen and read the title above the Saviour's head. He has heard the passers-by repeat it, some with grieved, quivering lips, others with jesting and mockery. The Holy Spirit illuminates his mind, and little by little the chain of evidence is joined together. In Jesus, bruised, mocked, and hanging upon the cross, he sees the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. 'Lord, remember me,' he cries, 'when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'

"Quickly the answer came. Soft and melodious the tone, full of love, compassion, and power the words: Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise.... on the day of the crucifixion, the day of apparent defeat and darkness, the promise was given. 'Today' while dying upon the cross as a malefactor, Christ assures the poor sinner, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 750, 751.

6. How was the prophecy of the Messiah dying with criminals fulfilled?

MARK 15:27, 28 *And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. ²⁸And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

ISAIAH 53:12 *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

"The thieves crucified with Jesus were placed 'on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.' This was done by the direction of the priests and rulers. Christ's position between the thieves was to indicate that He was the greatest criminal of the three. Thus was fulfilled the scripture, 'He was numbered with the transgressors.' Isaiah 53:12. But the full meaning of their act the priests did not see. As Jesus, crucified with the thieves, was placed 'in the midst,' so His cross was placed in the midst of a world lying in sin. And the words of pardon spoken to the penitent thief kindled a light that will shine to the earth's remotest bounds.

"With amazement the angels beheld the infinite love of Jesus, who, suffering the most intense agony of mind and body, thought only of others, and encouraged the penitent soul to believe. In His humiliation He as a prophet had addressed the daughters of Jerusalem; as priest and advocate He had pleaded with the Father to forgive His murderers; as a loving Saviour He had forgiven the sins of the penitent thief." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 751, 752.

COMFORT FOR HIS MOTHER

- 7. Instead of thinking about Himself, His pain, and His impending death, what love did Jesus reveal when He saw His mother's face lined with pain and tears? To whose care did He entrust her?**

JOHN 19:25-27 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! ²⁷Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

"In His dying hour, Christ remembered His mother.... John understood Christ's words, and accepted the trust. He at once took Mary to his home, and from that hour cared for her tenderly. O pitiful, loving Saviour; amid all His physical pain and mental anguish, He had a thoughtful care for His mother!... Thus He provided for her that which she most needed—the tender sympathy of one who loved her because she loved Jesus. And in receiving her as a sacred trust, John was receiving a great blessing. She was a constant reminder of his beloved Master.

"The perfect example of Christ's filial love shines forth with undimmed luster from the mist of ages. For nearly thirty years Jesus by His daily toil had helped bear the burdens of the home. And now, even in His last agony, He remembers to provide for His sorrowing, widowed mother. The same spirit will be seen in every disciple of our Lord. Those who follow Christ will feel that it is a part of their religion to respect and provide for their parents. From the heart where His love is cherished, father and mother will never fail of receiving thoughtful care and tender sympathy." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 752.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Is there any indication that Jesus felt ashamed to hear a man condemned to death speak to Him?***
- ***How long did the repentant thief have to wait to receive pardon from his sins and the promise of salvation?***
- ***Given the immediacy of the response to the thief, what trust in Jesus should characterize our relationship with Him?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Christ was the Lord of heaven and earth, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He was made in the likeness of God, yet He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, that He might save us. He gave His life for our redemption. Will we accept the sacrifice? The only begotten Son of God was numbered with the transgressors, that human beings might not perish, but have everlasting life. Life eternal will be their inheritance, if they will consent to humble their proud heart and become partakers of His suffering. He patiently endured shame and mockery and derision that He might save every sinful human being who would lay hold of Him by living faith. While He hung on the cross, giving His life for our redemption, His murderers mocked Him, saying, 'He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will

believe him.’ Matthew 27:42.... He could have refused thus to die, but He was suffering that the world through Him might be redeemed from Satan’s claim and authority. Through His death all who believe in Him may have eternal life....” —*The Upward Look*, p. 134.

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22

Sabbath, June 3, 2017

The Last Hours

“Actuated by satanic influences, the crowd clamored for the crucifixion of Christ. All heaven watched the successive steps of Christ’s humiliation—His trial, rejection, and death. When on the cross He exclaimed, ‘It is finished,’ the warfare was ended. The blood of the Innocent was shed for the guilty. The life that He gave up ransomed the human race from eternal death and sealed the doom of him who had the power of death—the devil.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 290.

FROM LIGHT TO DARKNESS

1. **What happened in broad daylight after Jesus was on the cross for several hours? What extraordinary event occurred during His last hours, and what did it signify?**

MARK 15:33 *And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.*

“With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour’s despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. ‘There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.’ There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

“The darkness upon the face of nature expressed her sympathy with Christ in His expiring agony. It evidenced to humanity that the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, was withdrawing His beams from the once favored city of Jerusalem, and from the world. It was a miraculous testimony given of God, that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.” —(*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 167) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1180.

2. **What was significant about the darkness that hid the final moments of Jesus’ life and kept men from beholding His face?**

ISAIAH 63:3, FIRST PART *I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.*

"Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest. He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent love." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 163.

"God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed.... And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

"In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 753, 754.

3. What indicates that the people were all enveloped in darkness? What made some of them think that retribution from God for what they had done to His Son was about to fall?

JOB 5:13, 14; 12:25 *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. ¹⁴They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.... ^{12:25}They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.*

"The silence of the grave seemed to have fallen upon Calvary. A nameless terror held the throng that was gathered about the cross. The cursing and reviling ceased in the midst of half-uttered sentences. Men, women, and children fell prostrate upon the earth. Vivid lightnings occasionally flashed forth from the cloud, and revealed the cross and the crucified Redeemer. Priests, rulers, scribes, executioners, and the mob, all thought that their time of retribution had come. After a while some whispered that Jesus would now come down from the cross. Some attempted to grope their way back to the city, beating their breasts and wailing in fear." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 754.

CRYING TO GOD

4. When the darkness lifted somewhat, what did Jesus cry? What thoughts went through the people's minds?

MARK 15:34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

"At the ninth hour the darkness lifted from the people, but still enveloped the Saviour. It was a symbol of the agony and horror that weighed upon His heart. No eye could pierce the gloom that surrounded the cross, and none could penetrate the deeper gloom that enshrouded the suffering soul of Christ. The angry lightnings seemed to be hurled at Him as He hung upon the cross. Then 'Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' As the outer gloom settled about the Saviour, many voices

exclaimed: The vengeance of heaven is upon Him. The bolts of God's wrath are hurled at Him, because He claimed to be the Son of God. Many who believed on Him heard His despairing cry. Hope left them. If God had forsaken Jesus, in what could His followers trust?" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 754.

5. What did Jesus' cry to His Father reveal? What did some people think His words meant?

MATTHEW 27:47, 49 *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.... ⁴⁹The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.*

"The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196.

"But the priests mocked at His agony. When darkness covered the earth, they had been filled with fear; as their terror abated, the dread returned that Jesus would yet escape them. His words, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' they had misinterpreted. With bitter contempt and scorn they said, 'This man calleth for Elias.' The last opportunity to relieve His sufferings they refused. 'Let be,' they said, 'let us see whether Elias will come to save Him.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 754, 755.

THE FINAL REQUEST

6. As His work on earth and the cross was nearing its end, what did Jesus say? In this and all other aspects of His suffering and death, how was He an example to every person?

JOHN 19:28, 29 *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. ²⁹Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.*

"When the darkness lifted from the oppressed spirit of Christ, He revived to a sense of physical suffering, and said, 'I thirst.' One of the Roman soldiers, touched with pity as he looked at the parched lips, took a sponge on a stalk of hyssop, and dipping it in a vessel of vinegar, offered it to Jesus." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 754, 755.

"The mission of Christ's earthly life was now nearly accomplished. His tongue was parched, and he said, 'I thirst.' They saturated a sponge with vinegar and gall, and offered it Him to drink; and when He had tasted it, he refused it. And now the Lord of life and glory was dying, a ransom for the race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God." —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 224.

"Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He ex-

claimed, 'I thirst.' He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

THE CONCLUSION

7. With what words did He end His mission and His agony?

JOHN 19:30, FIRST PART *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.*

"In silence the beholders watched for the end of the fearful scene. The sun shone forth; but the cross was still enveloped in darkness. Priests and rulers looked toward Jerusalem; and lo, the dense cloud had settled over the city and the plains of Judea. The Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, was withdrawing His beams from the once favored city of Jerusalem. The fierce lightnings of God's wrath were directed against the fated city.

"Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and in clear, trumpetlike tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, 'It is finished.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

"Satan is the author of death. What did Christ do after He brought Satan under the dominion of death? The very last words of Christ while expiring on the cross were 'It is finished.' John 19:30. The devil saw that he had overdone himself. Christ by dying accomplished the death of Satan and brought immortality to light." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 287.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***How did Jesus face the struggle with sin, with the criticism of men, and with the pain of death?***
- ***How much does a cup of cold water cost? Consider that we cannot even offer this to the precious Saviour!***
- ***How many people, as they reach the end of their lives, can say that they have accomplished everything that needed to be done?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Christ's work was finished when He expired on the cross, crying with a loud voice, 'It is finished.' The way was laid open; the veil was rent in twain. Sinners could approach God without sacrificial offerings, without the service of a priest. Christ Himself was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Heaven was His home. He came to this world to reveal the Father. His work on the field of His humiliation and conflict was now done. He ascended up into the heavens, and is forever set down on the right hand of God...." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 293.

"When the last steps of Christ's humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' 'The prince of this world is judged.' Now shall he be cast out. John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31. With prophetic eye Christ traced the scenes to take place in His last great conflict. He knew that when He should exclaim, 'It is finished,' all heaven would triumph. His ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the knell of Satan's empire would then be sounded, and the name of Christ would be heralded from world to world throughout the universe." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 679.

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He Yielded up His Life

“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 755, 756.

JESUS’ LAST WORDS ON THE CROSS

1. What happened after Jesus cried, “It is finished”? To whom were these words directed?

MATTHEW 27:50 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

LUKE 23:46 *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

JOHN 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

“In His dying agony, as He yields up His precious life, He has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been His joy to obey.... Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be His in the future, He cries with a loud voice: ‘Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.’ Luke 23:46. He is acquainted with the character of His Father, with His justice, His mercy, and His great love, and in submission He drops into His hands.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 170.

“The shaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the darkness spread over the earth, and the loud, strong cry of Jesus, ‘It is finished,’ as He yielded up His life, troubled His enemies and made His murderers tremble. The disciples wondered at these singular manifestations....” —*Early Writings*, pp. 179, 180.

POWERFUL NATURAL PHENOMENA

2. At Jesus’ death, what occurred in nature and in the temple?

LUKE 23:45 *And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.*

MATTHEW 27:51 *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.*

"Suddenly the gloom lifted from the cross, and in clear, trumpetlike tones, that seemed to resound throughout creation, Jesus cried, 'It is finished.' 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' A light encircled the cross, and the face of the Saviour shone with a glory like the sun. He then bowed His head upon His breast, and died.

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

3. What happened to some of those in their graves? What should the Jews have understood about these events?

MATTHEW 27:52, 53 *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

"Never before had the earth witnessed such a scene. The multitude stood paralyzed, and with bated breath gazed upon the Saviour. Again darkness settled upon the earth, and a hoarse rumbling, like heavy thunder, was heard. There was a violent earthquake. The people were shaken together in heaps. The wildest confusion and consternation ensued. In the surrounding mountains, rocks were rent asunder, and went crashing down into the plains. Sepulchers were broken open, and the dead were cast out of their tombs. Creation seemed to be shivering to atoms. Priests, rulers, soldiers, executioners, and people, mute with terror, lay prostrate upon the ground." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

4. What great sacrifice did Jesus accomplish in His death? How was man's redemption thus completed?

JOHN 1:29 *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

REVELATION 5:6 *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

HEBREWS 9:12 *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

1 PETER 1:18, 19 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

"When the loud cry, 'It is finished,' came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and

beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people were looking on.... With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt. Here God had manifested His glory above the mercy seat.... But lo, this veil is rent in twain. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred....

"The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 756, 757.

THE CENTURION'S TESTIMONY

5. What conviction was expressed by the Roman centurion and those with him when they saw the upheavals in nature and everything else that happened in connection with Jesus' death?

LUKE 23:47 *Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.*

MATTHEW 27:54 *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

"In the closing events of the crucifixion day, fresh evidence was given of the fulfillment of prophecy, and new witness borne to Christ's divinity. When the darkness had lifted from the cross, and the Saviour's dying cry had been uttered, immediately another voice was heard, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' Matthew 27:54.

"These words were said in no whispered tones. All eyes were turned to see whence they came. Who had spoken? It was the centurion, the Roman soldier. The divine patience of the Saviour, and His sudden death, with the cry of victory upon His lips, had impressed this heathen. In the bruised, broken body hanging upon the cross, the centurion recognized the form of the Son of God. He could not refrain from confessing his faith. Thus again evidence was given that our Redeemer was to see of the travail of His soul. Upon the very day of His death, three men, differing widely from one another, had declared their faith—he who commanded the Roman guard, he who bore the cross of the Saviour, and he who died upon the cross at His side." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 770.

OTHER EFFECTS

6. What did the people in general think about these things?

LUKE 23:48 *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*

"The shaking earth, the piercing cry, the sudden death which called forth in no whispered tones the cry, 'It is finished,' forced from many the words, 'Assuredly this man was righteous'; 'Truly this was the Son of God.' Many who had scoffed and jeered at, and taunted the Son of God were terribly afraid that the shaking

earth, the rent and trembling rocks would put an end to their own lives. They hastened away from the scene, beating upon their breasts, stumbling, falling, in awful terror lest the earth should open and swallow them up. The veil of the temple rent so mysteriously, changed the religious ideas of many of the Jewish priests, and a large company changed their faith.” —(Manuscript 91, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1108.

THEY FOLLOWED HIM TO THE CROSS

7. Who faithfully followed Jesus from Galilee to Judea and from Jerusalem to Golgotha, staying as close as possible to Him?

MATTHEW 27:55, 56 *And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: ⁵⁶Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Josés, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.*

MARK 15:40, 41 *There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Josés, and Salome; ⁴¹(Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.*

“The women who had been Christ’s humble followers while He lived, would not leave Him....” —*Early Writings*, p. 180.

“The disciple John with the women from Galilee had remained at the cross.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 772.

“‘And many women were there.’ At the cross of Christ, at some ... distance from it they had seen His miracles, heard His doctrines, and had been savingly converted by Him; and therefore followed Him wherever He went, though an hundred miles or more, and through many difficulties and discouragements: they attended Him in His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now at His cross; nor did they leave Him when dead, and in His grave.... This respects what they had done heretofore, in their journey with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem; when they ministered to Him of their worldly substance, as a token of their affection for Him....” —*John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible*, comments on Matthew 27:55.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- *During His ministry, the Jews asked Jesus for a sign of His divinity. Did they now believe Him, having seen all of the signs associated with His sacrifice and death?*
- *How significant were the facts that, during the court proceedings, on the way to Golgotha, and when the religious leaders opposed Jesus and requested His death, some foreigners and a malefactor recognized Him and accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord?*
- *What can we learn from the apparent contradiction that the disciples saw Jesus’ death as the greatest trial and disappointment, while it was the greatest victory of all time—for the salvation of man?*

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, ‘It is finished.’ John 19:30. The battle

had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 758.

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Sabbath, June 17, 2017

Resting in the Tomb

"When the people learned that Jesus had been put to death by the priests, inquiries were made regarding His death. The particulars of His trial were kept as private as possible; but during the time when He was in the grave, His name was on thousands of lips, and reports of His mock trial, and of the inhumanity of the priests and rulers, were circulated everywhere. By men of intellect these priests and rulers were called upon to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, and while trying to frame some falsehood in reply, they became like men insane. The prophecies that pointed to Christ's sufferings and death they could not explain, and many inquirers were convinced that the Scriptures had been fulfilled." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 776, 777.

FULFILLMENT OF ADDITIONAL PROPHECIES

- 1. As the Sabbath was about to begin, what did the Jews ask the governor to do? What did the soldiers do to hasten the victims' deaths so they could remove the bodies from the crosses?**

JOHN 19:31, 32 *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.*

"Not on any account would they [the priests and rulers] have had His body remain on the cross during the Sabbath. The Sabbath was now drawing on, and it would be a violation of its sanctity for the bodies to hang upon the cross. So, using this as a pretext, the leading Jews requested Pilate that the death of the victims might be hastened, and their bodies be removed before the setting of the sun." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 771.

- 2. Having found that Jesus had already died, what did a soldier do to be sure of His death? How was the prophecy concerning the Messiah's death fulfilled when His bones were not broken and a soldier pierced His side?**

JOHN 19:33, 34, FIRST PART, 36, 37 *But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ³⁴But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side,... ³⁶For these things were done, that the scripture should be ful-*

filled, A bone of him shall not be broken. ³⁷And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

EXODUS 12:46 *In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*

ZECHARIAH 12:10, FIRST PART *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced....*

"Pilate was as unwilling as they for the body of Jesus to remain upon the cross. His consent having been obtained, the legs of the two thieves were broken to hasten their death; but Jesus was found to be already dead. The rude soldiers had been softened by what they had heard and seen of Christ, and they were restrained from breaking His limbs. Thus in the offering of the Lamb of God was fulfilled the law of the Passover, 'They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.' Numbers 9:12.

"The priests and rulers were amazed to find that Christ was dead. Death by the cross was a lingering process; it was difficult to determine when life had ceased. It was an unheard-of thing for one to die within six hours of crucifixion. The priests wished to make sure of the death of Jesus, and at their suggestion a soldier thrust a spear into the Saviour's side. From the wound thus made, there flowed two copious and distinct streams, one of blood, the other of water. This was noted by all the beholders, and John states the occurrence very definitely." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 771, 772.

CONFIRMATION OF HIS DEATH

3. What flowed from Jesus' body when the soldier pierced His side? Why was this very significant?

JOHN 19:34 *But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*

"A soldier, at the suggestion of the priests who wished to make the death of Jesus sure, thrust his spear into the Saviour's side, inflicting a wound which would have caused instant death if he had not already been dead. From the wide incision made by the spear there flowed two copious and distinct streams, one of blood, the other of water. This remarkable fact was noted by all the beholders...." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 172.

"It seemed a great mystery to the people when it was ascertained that Jesus was already dead. They could not reason that this sudden death was from a supernatural cause." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 387.

"But it was not the spear thrust, it was not the pain of the cross, that caused the death of Jesus. That cry, uttered 'with a loud voice' (Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46), at the moment of death, the stream of blood and water that flowed from His side, declared that He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken by mental anguish. He was slain by the sin of the world." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 772.

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY IN HIS BURIAL

4. Who came forward at this point to ask for Jesus' body? Who were Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus?

MARK 15:43 *Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*

MATTHEW 27:57 *When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple.*

JOHN 19:38, 39 *And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.³⁹ And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.*

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

"Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus. For the first time, Pilate learned that Jesus was really dead. Conflicting reports had reached him in regard to the events attending the crucifixion, but the knowledge of Christ's death had been purposely kept from him. Pilate had been warned by the priests and rulers against deception by Christ's disciples in regard to His body. Upon hearing Joseph's request, he therefore sent for the centurion who had charge at the cross, and learned for a certainty of the death of Jesus. He also drew from him an account of the scenes of Calvary, confirming the testimony of Joseph.

"... While the disciples feared to show themselves openly as His followers, Joseph and Nicodemus came boldly to their aid. The help of these rich and honored men was greatly needed at this time. They could do for their dead Master what it was impossible for the poor disciples to do; and their wealth and influence protected them, in a great measure, from the malice of the priests and rulers." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 773, 774.

5. What services did they provide for Jesus? What other prophecy was thus literally fulfilled?

MATTHEW 27:59, 60 *And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,⁶⁰ And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.*

JOHN 19:40, 41 *Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.*

ISAIAH 53:9 *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

"Gently and reverently they removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the cross. Their tears of sympathy fell fast as they looked upon His bruised and lacerated form. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn in a rock. This he was reserving for himself; but it was near Calvary, and he now prepared it for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the Redeemer was borne to the tomb. There the three disciples straightened the mangled limbs, and folded the bruised hands upon the pulseless breast." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 774.

SABBATH REST AND MOURNING

6. Who accompanied Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus when they placed Jesus' body in the tomb? What did the women who followed Him from Galilee do during the final hours of the preparation day?

LUKE 23:54-56, FIRST PART *And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. ⁵⁵And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments....*

"The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 774.

"Luke, in his account of the Saviour's burial, speaks of the women who were with Him at His crucifixion, and says:

" 'They returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.' Luke 23:56.

"The Saviour was buried on Friday, the sixth day of the week. The women prepared spices and ointments with which to embalm their Lord, and laid them aside, until the Sabbath was past. Not even the work of embalming the body of Jesus would they do upon the Sabbath day." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 157.

7. Although the whole situation was devastating, what did the believers do on the Sabbath day? In the gospels, how is the Sabbath defined? What was special about the Passover that year?

LUKE 23:56, LAST PART ... *And rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

JOHN 19:31, SECOND PART ... *The sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,)...*

"The disciples rested on the Sabbath, sorrowing for the death of their Lord, while Jesus, the King of glory, lay in the tomb." —*Early Writings*, p. 181.

"That was a never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath to the sorrowing disciples, and also to the priests, rulers, scribes, and people. At the setting of the sun on the evening of the preparation day the trumpets sounded, signifying that the Sabbath had begun. The Passover was observed as it had been for centuries, while He to

whom it pointed had been slain by wicked hands, and lay in Joseph's tomb.... But some present were not at rest as the blood of bulls and goats was offered for sin. They were not conscious that type had met antitype, that an infinite sacrifice had been made for the sins of the world. They knew not that there was no further value in the performance of the ritual service.... The place where Jehovah had met with the high priest, to communicate His glory, the place that had been God's sacred audience chamber, lay open to every eye—a place no longer recognized by the Lord. With gloomy presentiments the priests ministered before the altar. The uncovering of the sacred mystery of the most holy place filled them with dread of coming calamity." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 774, 775.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***What do we know about the eleven disciples immediately after Jesus' death? Did they have anything to do with His burial?***
- ***Who could have imagined that Jesus' burial revealed new disciples?***
- ***Did the Jews realize that the suffering, death, and burial of Jesus were the fulfillment of prophecy? What makes it possible for us to understand what they did not?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Many minds were busy with thoughts started by the scenes of Calvary. From the crucifixion to the resurrection many sleepless eyes were constantly searching the prophecies, some to learn the full meaning of the feast they were then celebrating, some to find evidence that Jesus was not what He claimed to be; and others with sorrowful hearts were searching for proofs that He was the true Messiah. Though searching with different objects in view, all were convicted of the same truth—that prophecy had been fulfilled in the events of the past few days, and that the Crucified One was the world's Redeemer. Many who at that time united in the service never again took part in the paschal rites. Many even of the priests were convicted of the true character of Jesus. Their searching of the prophecies had not been in vain, and after His resurrection they acknowledged Him as the Son of God. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 775.

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“I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

“Christ has risen from the dead the first fruits. Hope and faith strengthen the soul to pass through the dark shadows of the tomb, in full faith of coming forth to immortal life in the morning of the resurrection. The Paradise of God, the home of the blessed! There all tears shall be wiped from off all faces! When Christ shall come the second time, to be ‘admired in all them that believe’ (2 Thessalonians 1:10), death shall be swallowed up in victory, and there shall be no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more death!” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 362.

THE PRIESTS’ FEAR ON THE SABBATH

- 1. Although Jesus was resting in the tomb, what fear haunted the chief priests and Pharisees the next day? What did they therefore request the Roman governor to do?**

MATTHEW 27:62-64 *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, ⁶³Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. ⁶⁴Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.*

“They could rest little upon the Sabbath. Though they would not step over a Gentile’s threshold for fear of defilement, yet they held a council concerning the body of Christ. Death and the grave must hold Him whom they had crucified. ‘The chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.’ Matthew 27:62-65.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 777, 778.

- 2. Did the governor grant their request? What did they place in front of the tomb to make sure no one could take the body of Jesus?**

MATTHEW 27:65, 66 *Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. ⁶⁶So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.*

“Christ’s murderers feared that He might yet come to life and escape them. They therefore asked of Pilate a watch to guard the sepulchre until the third day.

This was granted, and the stone at the door was sealed, lest His disciples should steal Him away and say that He had risen from the dead....

"As night drew on, soldiers were stationed to guard the Saviour's resting place, while angels, unseen, hovered above the sacred spot." —*Early Writings*, p. 181.

"The priests gave directions for securing the sepulcher. A great stone had been placed before the opening. Across this stone they placed cords, securing the ends to the solid rock, and sealing them with the Roman seal. The stone could not be moved without breaking the seal. A guard of one hundred soldiers was then stationed around the sepulcher to prevent it from being tampered with. The priests did all they could to keep Christ's body where it had been laid. He was sealed as securely in His tomb as if He were to remain there through all time." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 777, 778.

SOLDIERS WITNESS THE GREATEST EVENT

3. What happened while it was still dark? To whom did the angel turn after removing the stone?

MATTHEW 28:2, 3 *And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. ³His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.*

"The night wore slowly away, and while it was yet dark, the watching angels knew that the time for the release of God's dear Son, their loved Commander, had nearly come. As they were waiting with the deepest emotion the hour of His triumph, a mighty angel came flying swiftly from heaven. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. His light dispersed the darkness from his track and caused the evil angels, who had triumphantly claimed the body of Jesus, to flee in terror from his brightness and glory. One of the angelic host who had witnessed the scene of Christ's humiliation, and was watching His resting place, joined the angel from heaven, and together they came down to the sepulcher. The earth trembled and shook as they approached, and there was a great earthquake." —*Early Writings*, p. 181.

"This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth. The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee. They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.

"An earthquake marked the hour when Christ laid down His life, and another earthquake witnessed the moment when He took it up in triumph. He who had vanquished death and the grave came forth from the tomb with the tread of a conqueror, amid the reeling of the earth, the flashing of lightning, and the roaring of thunder." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 779, 780.

4. What effect did the angel's appearance have on the guards? What did the soldiers see happen with their own eyes?

MATTHEW 28:4 *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:8 *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.*

"At the death of Jesus the soldiers had beheld the earth wrapped in darkness at midday; but at the resurrection they saw the brightness of the angels illuminate the night, and heard the inhabitants of heaven singing with great joy and triumph: Thou hast vanquished Satan and the powers of darkness; Thou hast swallowed up death in victory!

"Christ came forth from the tomb glorified, and the Roman guard beheld Him. Their eyes were riveted upon the face of Him whom they had so recently mocked and derided. In this glorified Being they beheld the prisoner whom they had seen in the judgment hall, the one for whom they had plaited a crown of thorns. This was the One who had stood unresisting before Pilate and Herod, His form lacerated by the cruel scourge. This was He who had been nailed to the cross, at whom the priests and rulers, full of self-satisfaction, had wagged their heads, saying, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.' Matthew 27:42. This was He who had been laid in Joseph's new tomb. The decree of heaven had loosed the captive. Mountains piled upon mountains over His sepulcher could not have prevented Him from coming forth." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 780, 781.

TWISTING THE TRUTH

5. To whom did the guards immediately report the amazing news of Jesus' resurrection? How did the priests and elders react to this?

MATTHEW 28:11, 12 *Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. ¹²And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers.*

"At sight of the angels and the glorified Saviour the Roman guard had fainted and become as dead men. When the heavenly train was hidden from their view, they arose to their feet, and as quickly as their trembling limbs could carry them, made their way to the gate of the garden. Staggering like drunken men, they hurried on to the city, telling those whom they met the wonderful news. They were making their way to Pilate, but their report had been carried to the Jewish authorities, and the chief priests and rulers sent for them to be brought first into their presence. A strange appearance those soldiers presented. Trembling with fear, their faces colorless, they bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ. The soldiers told all, just as they had seen it; they had not had time to think or speak anything but the truth. With painful utterance they said, It was the Son of God who was crucified; we have heard an angel proclaiming Him as the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 781.

6. What did the Jewish leaders do to minimize the spread of the greatest news ever? Could their story or the corruption of the guards keep the news of Jesus' resurrection from spreading?

MATTHEW 28:13-15 *Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. ¹⁴And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and*

secure you. ¹⁵So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

ACTS 2:25-27, 30-32 *For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: ²⁶Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: ²⁷Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.... ³⁰Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; ³¹He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ³²This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

"The faces of the priests were as those of the dead. Caiaphas tried to speak. His lips moved, but they uttered no sound. The soldiers were about to leave the council room, when a voice stayed them. Caiaphas had at last found speech. Wait, wait, he said. Tell no one the things you have seen.

"A lying report was then given to the soldiers. 'Say ye,' said the priests, 'His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.' Here the priests overreached themselves. How could the soldiers say that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept? If they were asleep, how could they know? And if the disciples had been proved guilty of stealing Christ's body, would not the priests have been first to condemn them? Or if the sentinels had slept at the tomb, would not the priests have been foremost in accusing them to Pilate?

"The soldiers were horrified at the thought of bringing upon themselves the charge of sleeping at their post. This was an offense punishable with death. Should they bear false witness, deceiving the people, and placing their own lives in peril? Had they not kept their weary watch with sleepless vigilance? How could they stand the trial, even for the sake of money, if they perjured themselves?" —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 781, 782.

THE PROMISES FULFILLED

7. How were Jesus' words and many prophecies fulfilled by the resurrection? What effect did this greatest of all events have on the disciples? How does it affect our faith?

JOHN 10:17, 18; 11:25 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.... ^{11:25}Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

MATTHEW 16:21 *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

LUKE 9:22 *Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.*

"When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. Now was proved the truth of His words, 'I lay down My life, that I might take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' Now

was fulfilled the prophecy He had spoken to the priests and rulers, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' John 10:17, 18; 2:19.

"Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- ***Jesus did not come down from the cross, as some challenged Him to do; but He arose from the grave. Which of these two events is more convincing of His divinity?***
- ***Considering the falsehoods circulated by the Jewish leaders, is it true that people would believe in the resurrection if they saw someone who died, rose again, and appeared to many?***
- ***After studying this extraordinary event, what assurance does Jesus' resurrection give you?***

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the anti-type of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a thank offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead. 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.' 1 Thessalonians 4:14." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 785, 786.

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MISSIONARY REPORT from Indonesia

To be read on Sabbath, June 24, 2017

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, July 1, 2017*

Greetings of peace in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

A contemporary Indonesian name for the Indonesian archipelago is Nusantara, the Old Javanese expression for "archipelago." Nusa means "island," and Antara means "between," hence a connection. The archipelago is indeed a connection of islands, and Indonesia is known as the country with thousands of islands.

"According to the survey in 2002 by the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN), the Indonesian archipelago has 18,307 islands; and, according to the CIA World Factbook, there are 17,508 islands. The discrepancy in the number of Indonesian islands was because the earlier surveys include 'tidal islands,' sandy cays, and rocky reefs that appeared during low tide and were submerged during high tide. There are 8,844 islands that have been named, according to estimates made by the government of Indonesia, with 922 of those permanently inhabited." –Wikipedia. The largest islands are, Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. More than half of the population lives on Java.

The Republic of Indonesia officially became an independent nation on August 17, 1945, with its capital city of Jakarta.

The country is densely populated with more than 258 million people, making it the world's fourth most populous country. The population is composed of various tribes and languages that embrace and believe various religions and also belief in the one true God. Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Konghuchu are the main religions. Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia, but the country is not an Islamic state.

Indonesia's neighbors include Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and the Philippines on the north. The Indian Ocean is on the west and south, and Papua New Guinea is on the east.

The International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, came to Indonesia in 1974. Missionaries from the General Conference in Germany introduced the message. The first was Elder Juan Barnedo. He was followed by Elders Raul Escobar and Marinus Ringelberg, who met with Brother Johanis Sumayku in the village of Paso Minahasa Pro-

pensi in North Sulawesi. The latter brother accepted this new message and was ordained as the first minister of the Reform Movement in Indonesia. He taught the teachings of the Reformation in Indonesia, and many people accepted the message.

The church was organized and registered in 1976 in North Sulawesi with Elder Sumayku as the first president and the headquarters in Manado. Thus, the organization is recognized as one of the official religions of Indonesia.

The church has faced many problems and challenges over the years, including a rebellion that ended in separation in 1998. However, by the help of God, everything came to a good resolution. The members still maintain their faith, believing that the true church will face many challenges, hardships, and even suffering. For about eight years, the believers all met in private homes; but by the help of God, in 2005, we were able to construct a church in the village of Pinaling Amurang, far from Manado; and 4 years later, after much difficulty, a church was built in Manado.

At present there are 129 members in Indonesia, with 2 ministers, 2 full-time Bible workers, 4 part-time Bible Workers, 6 churches, and 2 groups. The churches are located in Manado, Amurang, Bulu, Bengkol, Sangihe, and Jakarta; and the groups meet in Langowan and Medan. Most have a simple place of worship, except in Jakarta and Medan, where the people meet in private homes.

Over the forty years (1976-2016) that the International Missionary Society has existed in Indonesia, it has never had a central office or headquarters. Although construction of a regional office has been ongoing since 2009, it is not yet complete.

By means of this Missionary Report, we hope that the hearts of our fellow spiritual brothers and sisters around the world will be moved to help us with generous offerings so that we can complete the regional office, cover conference organizational expenses, and continue to expand the Lord's work. To preach the gospel in Indonesia requires a great outlay of means. May the Lord greatly bless all the brothers and sisters who give for this purpose.

Finally, we greet every one of you with 2 Corinthians 9:7, 8: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Greetings from the brothers and sisters of the Indonesian Field. We wish to thank the General Conference for its continued support.

—Adrie Jules Kalengkongan, President

H.J.L. Karinda, Vice President

