

“Let Brotherly Love Continue”



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *Hebrews 13, Rom. 12:13, Eph. 5:3–5, 1 Pet. 5:1–4, Heb. 2:9, Heb. 4:16, Gal. 2:20.*

Memory Text: “Let brotherly love continue” (*Hebrews 13:1*).

Hebrews 13 presents the apostle’s concluding admonition: “Let brotherly love continue” (*Heb. 13:1*). He has affirmed throughout the epistle that we are of the household of the King—High Priest, Jesus, His brothers and sisters. The author does not conceive of the audience only as a group of individuals who work on their salvation in a one-on-one relationship with Jesus, but as a family, or household, saved together. Paul has characterized the work of Jesus for us as “brotherly love”: He was “not ashamed to call them brothers” (*Heb. 2:11, ESV*). Thus, believers should do for one another what Jesus did for them.

Throughout the letter, brotherly love involved “exhorting one another” so that no one would fall short of the grace of God (*Heb. 3:13; Heb. 10:24, 25; Heb. 12:15–17*). In chapter 13 it involves numerous elements: hospitality (*Heb. 13:2*), visiting and supporting prisoners and those who have been mistreated (*Heb. 13:3*), honoring marriage (*Heb. 13:4*), avoiding covetousness (*Heb. 13:5, 6*), remembering and obeying the leaders of the church (*Heb. 13:7–17*), and praying for the author himself (*Heb. 13:18, 19*).

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 26.

Caring for God's People

Read Hebrews 13:1, 2; Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; and 1 Peter 4:9. What was the role of hospitality in the early church?

Christianity was a wandering movement that often depended on the hospitality of both Christians and non-Christians. The instruction to “not forget” to show hospitality probably does not simply refer to the failure to think about taking someone in but about willful neglect.

Paul does not have in mind hospitality only for fellow believers. He reminds his readers that by entertaining strangers some have unwittingly entertained angels (*Heb. 13:2*). He probably had in mind the visit of the three men to Abraham and Sarah (*Gen. 18:2–15*). Offering hospitality implies sharing possessions with other people and suffering with them, which is what Jesus did for us (*Heb. 2:10–18*).

Brotherly love toward those in prison implied not only that believers remembered prisoners in their prayers but also that believers provided relief through material and emotional support. There was a risk of willful neglect of prisoners. Those who provided material and emotional support to those condemned by society identified themselves with them. In some sense, they became “partners” with them and made themselves vulnerable to social abuse (*Heb. 10:32–34*).

Paul’s exhortation uses images and language to encourage the readers in regard to prisoners. First, the author evokes the readers’ own support for their incarcerated brethren in the past. They had become “companions” or “partners” to those who had been “publicly exposed to reproach and affliction” (*Heb. 10:33, ESV*). Second, the language of “mistreatment” echoes the example of Moses, who chose “rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin” (*Heb. 11:25, ESV*). Finally, Paul captures the ideal of brotherly love. He reminds the readers that they “also are in the body” (*Heb. 13:3, ESV*). They share the same human condition and should treat others as they would like to be treated if they were in the same circumstances; that is, in prison. The people should, then, provide material and emotional support to prisoners, showing them that they are not abandoned.

What more can we do for those who are in prison, whether church members or not?

Covetousness and Sexual Immorality

Read Hebrews 13:4, 5; Luke 16:10–18; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Ephesians 5:3–5; and Colossians 3:5. What two evils are related in these passages?

Paul warns the readers against sexual immorality and greed because they are two grave threats to brotherly love. In fact, New Testament authors and ancient moralists noted a connection between them.

Paul's call to honor marriage implied the avoidance of anything that would belittle it. This avoidance included abstaining both from violation of the marriage oath and from unwarranted divorces (*compare with Matt. 19:9*). The exhortation to keep the marriage bed undefiled refers to avoiding the profanation of marriage through sexual relationships outside of marriage. The expression “fornicators” refers in the New Testament to every form of sexual immorality (*1 Cor. 5:9–11; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:9, 10; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15*). In addition, Greco-Roman society was lax in regard to sexual ethics. A double standard was common: this allowed men license in their sexual relationships as long as they were discreet. Paul warns, however, that God will judge adulterers. Believers should not let social conventions establish their own ethical standards.

“Love of money” was one of the main categories of vices in the Greco-Roman world. In fact, in another letter, Paul referred to “love of money” as the source of all evils (*1 Tim. 6:10*).

The defense against this vice is an attitude that Paul encourages in several epistles. First, they should “be content” with the things they had (*also 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:11, 12*). Furthermore, Christians should believe and embrace God's promise that God would “never leave . . . nor forsake” them (*Heb. 13:5*). This promise was given in several places and moments to His people and is available to us today (*Gen. 28:15; Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5; 1 Chron. 28:20*). Believers, then, are invited to respond to God's promise with the words of Psalm 118:6: “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (*ESV*). This reference to Psalm 118 is appropriate because the psalmist expressed there his confidence in God, despite the suffering inflicted upon him by unbelievers.

What are the ways that contemporary society undermines sexual purity and, at the same time, feeds the human love of money? In what practical ways can we strengthen our defenses against these two dangerous vices?

Remember Your Leaders

Read Hebrews 13:7–17. What should be our relationship with our leaders?

Hebrews 13:7–17 contains an exhortation to respect and obey the leaders of the congregation. It begins with an invitation to “remember” those leaders of the past who spoke the Word of God to them, and it closes with a call to “obey” the leaders in the present (*Heb. 13:17*). The leaders of the past are most likely those who first preached the Word and founded the congregation. The call to “remember” them does not simply refer to a mental exercise of recollection or to an external tribute honoring them. Paul explains that they are to “remember” them by considering the outcome of their conduct and by imitating their faith.

For Paul, the greatest act of remembrance and praise is emulation. In this way, Paul has added the founding leaders of the congregation to the list of faithful heroes whom believers should carefully consider. This list includes the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11, and Jesus, the consummate Example of faith, in Hebrews 12. The author further notes that Jesus is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (*Heb. 13:8, ESV*). He stands in stark contrast to false teachers who change with time and whose teachings become “various” and “strange” (*Heb. 13:9, NKJV*).

The call to remember the leaders in Hebrews 13:7 is restated in more forceful terms at the end of the section. Believers are exhorted to obey the leaders, because they watch out for their souls. The leaders are described here as pastors who are in charge of the spiritual well-being of the congregation, their flock, and who will give an account to God for their spiritual state (*see also 1 Pet. 5:1–4, 1 Cor. 3:10–15*). Certainly, too, the idea should apply to all our church leaders, as well as at all levels of the denomination today.

The context also suggests that these leaders are undershepherds who serve under Jesus, “the great Shepherd of the sheep” (*Heb. 13:20*). The combination of care and faithfulness from the leaders and obedience or trust from the members will result in joy. This may mean that the leaders will be able to serve the congregation with “joy,” or that they will give an account of the congregation to God with joy and not with grief.

What can you do to strengthen or improve the leader-member relationship in your congregation, as well as around the world?

Beware of Diverse and Strange Teachings

Compare Hebrews 13:9; Hebrews 2:9; Hebrews 4:16; and Hebrews 6:19, 20. Where is grace obtained? How are our hearts strengthened?

The relationship between false teachings and foods, touched on in Hebrews 13:9, probably does not refer to the distinction between clean and unclean foods.

Why?

First, Paul does not seem concerned in the epistle with the distinction between clean and unclean foods. We know from Acts 15 that the early Christian church affirmed both that believers are saved by grace (*Acts 15:7–11*) and that they should continue to observe some food regulations (*Acts 15:19, 20*). The distinction between clean and unclean foods and other biblical regulations are not opposed to grace. In fact, Paul argues that the new covenant has put the law in the heart (*Heb. 8:10–12*). What the author makes very clear, however, is that animal sacrifices and the Levitical priestly mediation in the sanctuary have been superseded by the superior sacrifice and priestly mediation of Jesus (*Heb. 8:4, 5; Heb. 10:1–18*).

Second, the context suggests that Paul is criticizing the audience not for abstaining from certain foods but for partaking of them with the hope of somehow obtaining grace or merit (*Heb. 13:9*). He is probably warning against participating in Jewish ritual or cultic meals that were celebrated as an extension of the animal sacrifices in the temple and which were supposed to provide spiritual benefits, or grace. But grace is not mediated through these meals; grace comes only through the sacrifice and priestly mediation of Jesus Christ. Believers “have an altar” (*Heb. 13:10*), the cross of Christ, from which they can eat (*John 6:47–58*).

In Hebrews, “grace” comes from the throne of God (*Heb. 4:16*). This grace, mediated through Christ, is an “anchor,” “sure and steadfast,” that is fastened to God’s throne itself (*Heb. 6:19, 20; compare with Heb. 4:16*). It is this grace, which we receive through the sacrifice of Christ, that provides stability and assurance to our hearts. When the heart has been “established” in this way, it will not be “carried about” by new doctrines (*Heb. 13:9*), nor will it “drift away” from God (*Heb. 2:1, NKJV*).

Dwell on Christ’s complete sacrifice. Why, then, is the idea of anything that we do “adding” to this sacrifice contrary to the gospel and the grace that is found in Jesus?

Go to Jesus Outside the Camp

Compare Hebrews 13:10–14, Mark 8:34, Matthew 10:38, Luke 14:27, and Galatians 2:20. What does it mean to go to Jesus outside the camp?

The place outside the gate was the most impure of the whole camp. The carcasses of the sacrificial animals were burned there (*Lev. 4:12*). Lepers also were excluded from the camp (*Lev. 13:46*), and blasphemers and other criminals were executed there (*Lev. 24:10–16, 23; 1 Kings 21:13; Acts 7:58*). These regulations presupposed that the presence of God was within the camp. Anything that was impure was cast outside because God was unwilling to see any “unclean” or “indecent” thing in it (*Num. 5:3, Deut. 23:14*).

Jesus suffered on the cross outside Jerusalem (*John 19:17–20*). This emphasizes the shame that was cast upon Him (*Heb. 12:2*). He was officially condemned as one who had “blasphemed the name” and, therefore, was repudiated by Israel and executed outside the wall (*Mark 14:63, 64; see Lev. 24:11, 16*). Jesus was cast outside the camp as a “shameful,” “unclean,” or “indecent” thing (*Heb. 12:2*). Paul, however, exhorts believers to follow Jesus outside the gate, enduring the shame that He endured (*Heb. 12:2; see Heb. 13:13*). This also was the path Moses followed, who chose to bear “the reproach of Christ” instead of the treasures of Egypt (*Heb. 11:26*).

Paradoxically, however, Hebrews suggests that God’s presence is now outside the camp. The action of following Jesus outside the camp means not only “bearing His reproach,” or shame, but also going “forth to Him” (*Heb. 13:13, NKJV*) just as those Israelites who “sought the Lord” went “outside the camp” in the desert when Moses removed God’s tent from the camp after the golden-calf controversy (*Exod. 33:7, NKJV*). This account suggests that the rejection of Jesus by unbelievers also implied the rejection of God, as Israel did in the golden-calf apostasy (*Exodus 32, Exodus 33*). Thus, the path of suffering and shame also is the path to God.

Paul invites readers to follow Jesus as “the author and finisher” of their faith (*Heb. 12:2*), implicitly inviting them also to consider their present sufferings a momentary discipline that will yield “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (*Heb. 12:11*). They are leaving behind a corrupted city, or camp, in search of “the city that is to come,” whose architect is God (*Heb. 13:14, ESV; Heb. 11:10, 16*).

**What does it mean for you to follow Jesus “outside the camp”?
What are those aspects of the life of faith in Jesus that may bring
“reproach” or “shame” from those around you?**

Further Thought: “After the descent of the Holy Spirit, . . . [believers] rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth’s sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts. . . .

“But gradually a change came. The believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the Saviour and His love. They became more strict in regard to outward ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their own errors. They lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined, and, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. They did not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they would soon walk in darkness.

“John, realizing that brotherly love was waning in the church, urged upon believers the constant need of this love. His letters to the church are full of this thought. ‘Beloved, let us love one another,’ he writes; ‘for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 547, 548.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Christian life often is considered the personal, individual relationship between Jesus and the believer. This is, however, only one aspect of the Christian life. Why is it important to remember that God is leading us as a group? What are my responsibilities to the group? What can I expect from the group?
- 2 What are the best indicators that brotherly love is strong in a congregation? Be prepared to create a list in your Sabbath School class.
- 3 What is *true* brotherly love? What are its characteristics, causes, and results? How would you differentiate it from *false* brotherly love?

Narrow Escape!

By SAENGSURIN PHONGCHAN

God loves me a lot.

When a friend moved away to Australia, I agreed to visit her parents every once in a while back here in Thailand. It wasn't easy to find the parents' house. I had to look up directions, and I learned that the house was quite some distance from my own. For my first visit, I filled my backpack and several bags with groceries. Carrying the food, I hailed a three-wheeled *tuk-tuk* taxi to take me to the bus station.

Partway through our trip, the *tuk-tuk* driver suddenly said, "I can't take you. Can I call you another *tuk-tuk*?" He didn't give any reason for his change of heart. What could I do? A second *tuk-tuk* picked me up, but the driver took me to the wrong place. I got into a third *tuk-tuk*.

It took nearly two hours to reach the bus station. I was fuming in frustration when I arrived. Why had it taken two hours and three *tuk-tuks* for the usual short and simple trip to the bus station?

"Where are you going?" the ticket seller asked me.

I was so upset that I couldn't talk to anyone, not even to the ticket seller.

"I'll talk to you later," I said, turning away.

After calming down, I bought a ticket and boarded a minivan.

During the trip to the house of my friend's parents, we passed a wrecked minivan on the side of the road. Our driver stopped to see if he could help. Returning to the minivan, he somberly told us that several passengers had died in the crash.

"This is the minivan that left right before us on this route," he said.

At that moment, I realized that I should have been on that minivan. I only missed the minivan because of the many delays in reaching the bus station.

My friend's parents were relieved to see me. They had heard about the crash. "We were so worried because we thought you were on that minivan," the mother said.

"God is so good," I said. Then I told my story about the delays to the parents, who were not Christians.

"The God or angel who protects you is really great!" the father exclaimed.

Yes, God loves me a lot.



Saengsurin Phongchan was principal at the Seventh-day Adventist school in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, that received part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago. Thank you for your offering that helped the school, Adventist International Mission School—Korat, expand into a high school at a new site.

28 FUNDAMENTAL Beliefs

OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Below is an abbreviated version for your reference. A complete version can be found at www.Adventist.org/beliefs.

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

2. THE TRINITY

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

3. THE FATHER

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.)

4. THE SON

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.)

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.)

6. CREATION

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent and literal six-day creation the Lord made “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed. (Gen. 1:2; 5, 11; Exod. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isa. 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; 11:3; Rev. 10:6; 14:7.)

7. THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.)

8. THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9.)

9. THE LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1; Isa. 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 2 John 2:2; 4:10.)

10. THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Substitute and Example. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:1-4, 14-17; 5:6-10; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)

11. GROWING IN CHRIST

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt. 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom. 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)

12. THE CHURCH

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to humanity, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 19:3-7; Matt. 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9)

13. THE REMNANT AND ITS MISSION

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)

14. UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)

15. BAPTISM

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12, 13.)

16. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matt. 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Rev. 3:20.)

17. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church, and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and . . . make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

19. THE LAW OF GOD

The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)

20. THE SABBATH

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Lev. 23:32; Deut. 5:12-15; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Matt. 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb. 4:1-11.)

21. STEWARDSHIP

We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithe and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:7.)

22. CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to re-create in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. (Gen. 7:2; Exod. 20:15; Lev. 11:1-47; Ps. 106:3; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 2:4; 4:8; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.)

23. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

24. CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12.)

25. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

26. DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10.)

27. THE MILLENNIUM AND THE END OF SIN

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close, Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Jer. 4:23-26; Ezek. 28:18, 19; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20; 21:1-5.)

28. THE NEW EARTH

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.)