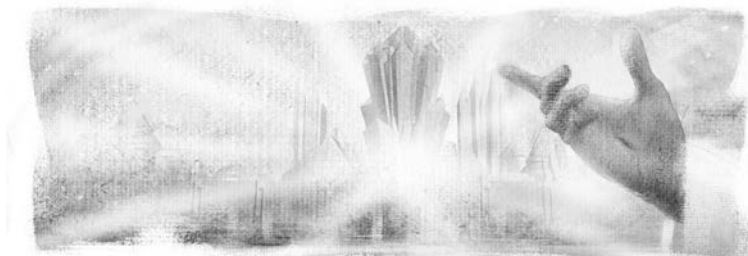


Rewards *of* Faithfulness



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Heb. 11:6, Isa. 62:11, Rom. 6:23, John 14:1–3, Revelation 21, Matt. 25:20–23, Rom. 8:16–18.*

Memory Text: “ ‘His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” ’ ” (*Matthew 25:21, NKJV*).

Though we can never earn salvation, the Bible uses the hope of reward as a motivation for faithful living as undeserving recipients of God's grace, for in the end whatever we receive is, always and only, from God's grace.

As David wrote: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward” (*Ps. 19:7–11, NKJV*).

In various places, the Bible talks about our rewards, what we are promised through Christ after the Second Coming and this terrible detour with sin is once and for all over and done.

What are we promised, and what assurance do we have of getting what we have been promised?

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 25.

Reward for Faithfulness

Read Hebrews 11:6. What should this verse mean to us? How should we respond to what it says? Also read Revelation 22:12, Isaiah 40:10, and Isaiah 62:11. What do all these texts teach us?

The reward from God to His faithful children is unique and, like many spiritual things, may be beyond our finite understanding. “Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

Jesus concluded the Beatitudes, which open the Sermon on the Mount, with these words: “ ‘Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you’ ” (*Matt. 5:11, 12, NKJV*). After listing the people of faith in Hebrews 11, Paul begins the next chapter explaining why Jesus was willing to die on the cross.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witness, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (*Heb. 12:1, 2, NKJV*).

Being rewarded for faithfulness, however, is not the same as salvation by works. Who among us, or among any of the characters in the Bible, had works good enough to give them any merit before God? None, of course. That’s the whole point of the cross. If we could have saved ourselves by works, Jesus never would have gone to the cross. Instead, it must be by grace. “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work” (*Rom. 11:6, NKJV*). Rewards, instead, are the mere outworking of what God has done for us and in us.

How do we understand the difference between salvation by grace and a reward according to works? Bring your answer to class on Sabbath.

Everlasting Life

As human beings (and whether we like it or not), an eternity awaits us. And according to the Bible, this eternity will come in one of two manifestations, at least for each of us individually: either eternal life or eternal death. That's it. No middle ground. No straddling, a bit of one side or another. Instead, it is one (life) or the other (death). This truly is a case of all or nothing.

Read Romans 6:23 and John 3:16. What options are presented to us?

It is hard to imagine two starker or more distinct choices, isn't it?

Chances are that if you are reading this, you have chosen eternal life, or certainly are thinking about it. God has the unique ability to do whatever He says He can do—to fulfill all His promises. Our part is simply to believe Him, rest upon the merits of Jesus, and by faith obey His Word.

Read John 14:1–3. What is the Lord's counsel to us in verse 1, and what does He promise to us in verses 2 and 3?

In the final days of His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke these amazing words of hope and courage to His disciples. These words would lift their spirits in times of discouragement and trial. They should do the same for us. Jesus came from heaven, went back to heaven, and has promised us, "I will come again and I will receive you unto Myself so you can be with Me there" (*see John 14:3*).

And, perhaps more than anything else, Christ's death on the cross at His first coming is our greatest assurance of His second coming, for without the Second Coming, what good was His first one? As sure as we are that Jesus died for us on the cross is as sure as we can be that, yes, as He promised: " 'I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also' " (*John 14:3, NKJV*).

Dwell more on the idea that Christ's first coming is the guarantee of His second. What happened at His first coming that makes His second a promise that we can trust?

The New Jerusalem

The biblical description of the New Jerusalem is what Abraham saw by faith. “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (*Heb. 11:10*). The New Jerusalem is God’s masterpiece, built for those who love Him and keep His commandments. The New Jerusalem will be the home of God’s faithful children in heaven during the millennium and, afterward, on the new earth for eternity. There is good news for those of us who don’t like packing or moving. God takes care of everything. John says he saw the city. “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (*Rev. 21:2, NKJV*).

Read Revelation 21. What are some of the things that we are promised?

There’s so much here that our minds can barely comprehend, damaged as they are by sin, and knowing only a fallen sin-racked world. But what we can understand is so full of hope.

First, just as Jesus dwelt with us in this fallen world when He came in the flesh, He will dwell with us in the new one. What a privilege it must have been for those who saw Jesus up close and personal! We will have that opportunity, only now without the veil of sin distorting what we see.

Then, too, how do we who know only tears and sorrow and crying and pain understand one of the greatest promises in all the Bible: “ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’ ” (*Rev. 21:4, NKJV*)? All those “former things” will have passed away, things that never should have been here to begin with.

Also, flowing from the throne of God is the pure river of life, and on either side of the river is the tree of life. God’s throne will be there, and “they shall see His face” (*Rev. 22:4, NKJV*). Again, the redeemed will live with a closeness to God that, for the most part, we don’t have now.

Read Revelation 21:8, about the fate of those who will face the second death. Which sin of those depicted there could not have been forgiven by Jesus? Why, then, are these people lost when some who have done the same things are saved? What is the crucial difference between these two groups?

The Settling of Accounts

Near the close of Jesus' ministry, His disciples came to Him privately and asked, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (*Matt. 24:3*). Jesus then takes two chapters to answer their questions. Matthew 24 tells of signs in the world around us, such as wars, disasters, and so on. Then Matthew 25 talks about conditions in the church just before Jesus comes again. These conditions are illustrated by three stories, one of which is the parable of the talents, which talks about how God's people have used the gifts that He has given to them.

Read Matthew 25:14–19. Who is the one traveling into a far country? To whom does He entrust His goods? What does it mean to "settle accounts" (*see Matt. 25:19, NKJV*)?

We sometimes think of talents as natural gifts, such as singing, speaking, and so on, but in the similar story of the minas in Luke 19:12–24, money and its management are specifically mentioned. Ellen G. White also stated, "I was shown that the parable of the talents has not been fully understood. This important lesson was given to the disciples for the benefit of Christians living in the last days. And these talents do not represent merely the ability to preach and instruct from the word of God. The parable applies to the temporal means which God has entrusted to His people."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 197.

Read Matthew 25:20–23. What does God say to those who were faithful money managers in supporting His cause? What does it mean to " "enter into the joy of your lord" ' ' (*Matt. 25:23, NKJV*)?

It is quite natural for us to think that another person has more talents than we have and is therefore more responsible to God. In this story, however, it is the person with only one talent—the least money—who proved unfaithful and lost the kingdom. Rather than to think of the responsibilities of others, let us focus on what God has entrusted to us and how we can use it to His glory.

How are you going to fare when God comes to "settle accounts" with you?

Eyes on the Prize

After Paul's conversion, he dove fully into the cause of Christ. Because of his education and sharp mind, he could have been very successful from a worldly perspective. Like Moses, Paul chose to suffer with God's faithful children and for the sake of Christ. He suffered beatings, stoning, prison, shipwreck, hunger, cold, and more as recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:24–33. How was he able to endure all of this?

Read Romans 8:16–18. How was the knowledge that he was a child of God a factor in his faithfulness?

The value Paul placed on the reward of the faithful is what kept him excited about suffering for Christ. He wrote from prison: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil. 3:13, 14, NKJV*).

Read 1 Timothy 6:6–12, which we have looked at already but is worth coming back to. What is the crucial message in these verses, especially for us as Christians?

From the biblical perspective, prosperity is having what you need when you need it. It is not the accumulation of possessions. Prosperity also is claiming the promise of God in Philippians 4:19: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Finally, prosperity is to be thankful for what you have in the Lord and trust in Him in all things.

God does not promise His children that they will all be rich in this world's goods. In fact, He says that all who live godly lives shall suffer persecution. What He does offer is better than any worldly wealth. He says, "I will supply your needs, and wherever you go I will be with you." Then in the end, He will give His faithful ones true wealth and responsibility and eternal life. What an awesome reward!

Near the end of his life, Paul was able to say, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (*2 Tim. 4:6–8*). May we all, through God's grace, be able to say the same thing, and with the same assurance, as well.

Further Thought: Here is a word picture of a church family who are financially faithful managers of God’s business on earth.

The Stewardship Vision for Seventh-day Adventist Churches Around the World

It’s sometime in the future; and pastors and local church leaders have been successful at creating a stewardship environment in the church. They have taught, trained, supported, and encouraged the church family in biblical financial management.

People are implementing biblical principles in their lives. They are growing in generosity, saving on a regular basis for the unexpected, and moving out from under the bondage of consumer debt.

Their lifestyles are marked by moderation, discipline, and contentment. Money has been eliminated as the rival god, and they are growing in their relationship with the Creator God.

It’s Sabbath morning, and people are arriving for services. In their demeanor is a sense of peace—a lack of anxiety over financial matters, a pervading sense of contentment and gratefulness.

Marital conflict over money has been largely eliminated. They enter worship with a sense of anticipation and expectation of God’s presence and work among them.

The church’s ministries are fully funded, and it has a strong outreach. It extends the love of Christ in very tangible ways to those in need.

Funds have been made available to provide church facilities that wonderfully support ministry and that are maintained with excellence.

The question before us all is, “What is God calling us to do with whatever resources He has entrusted to us?”

Discussion Questions:

- 1** In class, talk about the question of how we are to understand two very clear biblical teachings: salvation by faith and a reward according to works. How do we harmonize these two concepts?
- 2** Why does learning to be content with what we have now not mean that we can’t seek to better our financial position? That is, why are these ideas not necessarily in conflict?
- 3** There is no question that eternity awaits us. What choices do we make now, even “little” ones, that will help determine where we will spend that eternity?

Treasure in Old Vessels

By JOHN KAGANZI

Thirteen-year-old Precious cried out in frustration as her father led her through the gates of a Seventh-day Adventist boarding school in Uganda. She wanted to study in the stately buildings of the school associated with her family's denomination, not in the modest buildings of Katerera Primary School. "It's not the magnificence but the academic excellence that matters, my daughter," Father whispered into her ear. He said her preferred school had not performed well academically for the past three years.

Precious bit her tongue, but her face showed her unhappiness as Father enrolled her at the school. When Father waved good-bye at the gate, her tears flowed freely. "Why has my beloved Dad chosen to imprison me in the name of schooling?" she blurted out. "This is ridiculous!"

"Hello, come," a smiling woman said in a kind voice. "Let's go to the dormitory, and I'll show you where to sleep."

Precious sadly followed as the woman carried her mattress and suitcase to the dormitory. That evening, her heart sank further when she saw students lining up outside an old building. She wondered what was happening until she saw the students carrying plates of food. She realized that it was the cafeteria. That evening, she ate a vegetarian meal for the first time in her life.

Later, Precious heard a bell ringing and saw students running joyfully to the campus chapel for evening worship. She decided to return to the dormitory, but the doors were closed. She returned to the chapel and stood on its porch, unsure about what to do. "Come, let's enter the house of the Lord," the same smiling woman said. "It's prayer time. Don't be sad."

Precious felt loved, and she entered the chapel. Immediately, her sadness vanished inside. She had never heard such beautiful singing. She also marveled at the orderly and interesting 30-minute worship service that followed the singing. *At least I will enjoy this part of the school*, she thought.

Father didn't return until the end of the school term. He had feared that Precious would refuse to stay if he came earlier. He was surprised when she announced that she wanted to return to the school. She said she did not want to miss the kind teachers who began every lesson with prayer and a Bible text and who offered practical advice whenever she faced challenges. The next term, the school held a week of prayer, and Precious gave her heart to Jesus in baptism. "Surely a school is more than its buildings," she told me, the pastor who led the week of prayer.



This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will assist six Adventist schools in the East-Central African Division, including in Precious's homeland of Uganda. Thank you for your generous offering.

What We Believe

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; 1 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 tithes 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.)

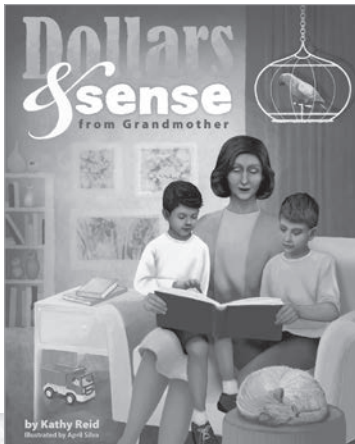
27. THE MILLENNIUM AND THE END OF SIN

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.)

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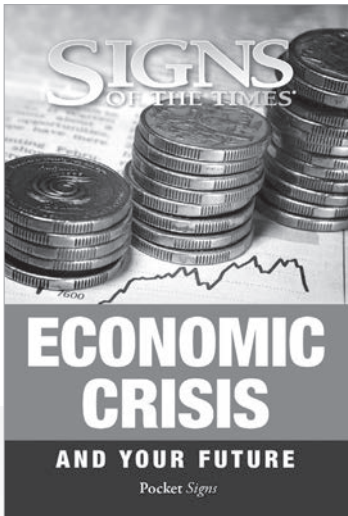
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God has always spoken to His people, giving them whatever relevant truths they needed to hear at the time. In these last days of human history, He has sent a special message to the world, and to His people, designed to meet the need of the hour. He pictures this message as being carried by three angels flying in midheaven with their urgent, end-time message to all the world. The three angels' messages, the focus of our study this quarter by Mark Finley, are Jesus' final message of mercy, a call that leads us from trusting in our own righteousness to, instead, living by faith, and trusting in the righteousness of Jesus to justify us; to sanctify us; and, at the end of time, to glorify us. The three angels' messages are, in a sense, the marching orders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At their core, they are the gospel, pure and simple, but the gospel presented in the context of "present truth" (*2 Peter 1:12, NKJV*).

Lesson 1—Jesus Wins—Satan Loses

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **The Battle in Heaven** (*Rev. 12:7–9*)

MONDAY: **Satan's Attack** (*Rev. 12:4, 5*)

TUESDAY: **Accepting Jesus' Victory** (*Rev. 12:10*)

WEDNESDAY: **The Woman in the Wilderness** (*Rev. 12:6, Rev. 12:14–16*)

THURSDAY: **God's End-time Remnant** (*Rev. 12:17*)

Memory Text—*Revelation 12:17*

Sabbath Gem: Revelation can be summed up in four words: Jesus wins, Satan loses. The heart of the battle is outlined in Revelation 12, the focus of this week's study. The study helps us to better understand Revelation 14 and the three angels' messages.

Lesson 2—A Moment of Destiny

The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **Eternal Choices** (*Matt. 24:14, Rev. 14:6*)

MONDAY: **The Son of Man Returns** (*Rev. 14:14*)

TUESDAY: **The Heavenly Judgment** (*Rev. 14:14*)

WEDNESDAY: **The Victor's Crown** (*Rev. 14:15, Mark 4:26–29*)

THURSDAY: **Every Seed Produces a Harvest** (*Rev. 14:17–20*)

Memory Text—*Revelation 14:15*

Sabbath Gem: We must surrender to Christ and obey Him. The choices we make now will impact the choices we make in the final crisis ahead of us. Thus, now, today, this is the time to prepare.

Lessons for People Who are Legally Blind The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free each month in braille and on CD to sight-impaired and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who, because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact Christian Record Services for the Blind, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097. Phone: 402-488-0981; email: info@christianrecord.org; website:www.christianrecord.org.